

An analysis of the adult education projects socrates programme 1995-1999

messages for the future



Socrates

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Sigi Gruber and Judith Summers

foreword

What can be learnt from the wealth of projects which were carried out in the first phase of SOCRATES under its Adult Education Action? What can they tell us about 'what works' and what needs to be done? What basis do they provide for work in the future and how do they match up to the new agendas for Lifelong Learning which are merging at the start of the 21st Century? And how can we improve project management and dissemination?

This study tries to answer these questions, and to suggest directions not only for the GRUNDTVIG successor action, but for Lifelong Learning policies. Its messages should be of interest both to policy-makers and to those involved in the projects themselves.

The Strategic Messages give the big picture. They are followed by detailed Conclusions and Recommendations drawn from our study, and prefaced by an Introduction which sets the scene and explains our methodology. The Appendices go into our Quantitative Research in more detail and look at one of the major aspects for improvement which we have identified – Dissemination. The complete report of the quantitative analysis will go to the Commission and the data will be on our website.

The EAEA's mission is to work for the creation of a learning society. We hope that this study will signpost some important routes to this and give practical support to those following them.

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introduction

This study analyses 175 projects for adult learning supported by the European Commission under the Adult Education Action^[1] of the Socrates I programme (1995-1999) and was carried out between September 2000 and April 2001. The study was designed to assess the extent to which these projects provide a basis for implementing the new policy framework for Lifelong Learning in Europe and how the GRUNDTVIG Action could contribute to this. In this Introduction we discuss the policy context and the significance of the study, explain the methodology, summarise the profile of the projects and what it suggests, and end with some practical lessons which the study suggests.

Who should read it?

Our study is intended to be useful to:

- ▶ the Commission itself – at both policy and technical levels
- ▶ the National Agencies for GRUNDTVIG – by suggesting how they can best nurture and support projects and partnerships
- ▶ project coordinators and partners, and network members – by showing what is needed for projects to succeed and what the pitfalls are
- ▶ for all – to stimulate ideas on what needs to be done to benefit learners and favour participation, where the gaps are, and how transnational work should be designed to give ‘European added value.’

The Timing of the Study and the Policy Context

The timing of this study is crucial. Following the Lisbon Summit Conclusions in March 2000, the Commission produced a Memorandum on Lifelong Learning in October 2000 as a Commission staff working paper. This drew on extensive dialogue, but not on the kind of analysis we are reporting; indeed, although the Memorandum includes snapshots of good practice to illustrate its ‘key messages’, the Commission had no means of assessing how far the transnational action it had co-funded might relate to the agenda of the Memorandum. Our study enables us both to match the experience of the Adult Education projects of the SOCRATES I programme to the key messages of the Memorandum and to look beyond these to what it has to tell us about the changes which are needed to build a society where all have genuine access to learning, where action starts with the expression of individual and community aspirations for learning, where traditional boundaries and barriers between systems have fallen, and where learning is integral to social well-being and citizenship as well as economic success – in short, a learning society.

The most important experiences from the Adult Education projects which emerge from this study offer a commentary on the Memorandum’s argument for integration between learning systems. Projects which successfully promoted equality of opportunities and access started with the learner’s own expectations and aspirations (it is more accurate to say with the “learners”, as group experience is always crucial); valued these and avoided deficiency models; worked in both informal and non-formal learning contexts, and developed new practice accordingly. But ‘non-formal learning contexts’ does not imply that the players were outside the ‘formal’ system – many projects involved players from the formal system (universities, colleges) working outside their traditional role. Indeed, the information on players in the projects we studied shows that we should avoid

[1] The official title “Adult Education Action” is in a way misleading, at least in English; projects did not involve only “traditional” adult education activities, but covered a very broad range of adult learning activities.

assumptions about the relationship between the sector to which players belong and the nature of the learning opportunities they provide – formal, non-formal or informal. Adult learners and specific target groups may benefit from work by any of the players, and in all learning contexts.

Starting with informal or non-formal learning (whatever the provider) meant that while valuing learning was essential to building motivation and confidence, the learning gain was just as likely to lie in cultural enrichment and active citizenship as in progression to more formal learning. Construction of more formal pathways, or of bridges between learning systems was less prominent in successful projects. Rather than creating structural links between learning systems, the pathways and partnerships which worked, created flexible and permeable networks. These seemed more appropriate to informal and non-formal contexts, and in successful projects crossed sectoral boundaries to engage public authorities, cultural organisations or social partners.

The Significance of the Study

The study, then, helps to define why the GRUNDTVIG Action matters. We note in our recommendations that some clarity is needed in relation to the boundaries with the Actions within the SOCRATES programme (MINERVA, LINGUA) and with the LEONARDO DA VINCI programme; and we could add with actions within the Fifth Framework Programme for Research, with the lifelong learning elements of the European Social Fund, Objective 3, and with the Culture 2000 Programme. To be more precise, the issue is not so much to create discrete boxes as to define complementarity between all of these. Equally, the other Programmes and Actions need to recognise the contribution which GRUNDTVIG can make to their objectives, precisely because of its emphasis on non-formal and informal learning experience and contexts.

The potential of GRUNDTVIG seems to us crucial in two respects. First, the new network sub-action offers a much needed opportunity to capitalise on previous work, to transfer experience and build partnerships which capture the inter-sectoral strengths of the best projects. Second, and strategically, GRUNDTVIG is uniquely positioned to exercise leverage in the non-formal and informal areas of learning where learners start from and which are so important to access and motivation. In other words, GRUNDTVIG can focus on facilitating and responding to the expression of demand and on changing provider behaviour. This is central to the agenda of the Memorandum.

Methodology

The European Association for the Education of Adults is a transnational association and NGO, linking and representing organisations involved in adult learning, primarily NGOs. Its mission is to work for the creation of a learning society. The project work was led by its General Secretary, steered by a transnational group of leading members with a substantial range of experience of work at all levels, and assisted by additional experts and by the Finnish support office of EAEA, whose officer was responsible for the database. EAEA was able to bring to the task an appreciation of both Lifelong Learning policies and the practical realities of transnational working.



Materials for the 175 projects examined^[2] were provided by the SOCRATES & YOUTH Technical Assistance Office: in principle these consisted of applications, interim and final reports, and some products. The quality of documentation was variable: some reports did not include basic information or evaluative material and it was difficult to identify or have access to some products. A few projects did not even have the basic data to permit a full quantitative analysis. At the beginning, much of the documentation was not readily available and this caused considerable logistical difficulty.

A set of matrices was designed and tested by the team to provide the quantitative analysis referred to above. Documentation for every project was read (and in cases of difficulty by a second reader) and the matrices completed, using the judgement of the readers^[3]. This enabled analysis of the scope of the projects – some key points are given below and the headline messages set out in Appendix 1.

Alongside this, a qualitative analysis was made of project objectives, outcomes and outputs, dissemination strategies and policy messages. This enabled us to look at aspects of quality, impact and relevance to policy. Where possible products were examined: for example, all websites referred to in the reports were visited. A sample of 30 projects were followed up by interviews (face to face, by telephone or email) with the coordinators; as well as providing useful clarification of design and management issues, these gave information on dissemination, feedback and possible impact. Between us, we were able to read work in its first language and contextualise it from our knowledge of local systems. Information was then collated from the qualitative reports to produce the set of conclusions and recommendations which is at the heart of this study, and thence to draw out the large, strategic messages which preface them. Good practice examples were also identified and these will be mentioned in the report to the Commission. It is important to note that particular conclusions and recommendations do not necessarily reflect large volumes of experience or 'successful' projects only. In our view, important lessons can be learnt from single projects and even from those which did not meet objectives or were stopped.

An accompanying, more detailed report to include the full quantitative analysis will be submitted to the Commission and the data are available on the EAEA website. We believe that the methodology we have developed for the quantitative analysis could valuably be used for an ongoing analysis of GRUNDTVIG, and that our fieldwork questionnaire would provide an efficient and effective sampling tool for follow-up work.

We wish to record our thanks to the members of the team who have participated in the massive task of analysing the material, and to the Commission itself. Commission colleagues have encouraged us to be frank in our comments and criticisms and welcomed ideas for the future direction and implementation of the GRUNDTVIG Action. We are encouraged by this openness, and by the ways in which GRUNDTVIG is being shaped, although we think that there is much to do.

If our analysis is accepted, further work will be needed to create and test the tools, make up the dissemination deficit, and undertake impact analysis. Although GRUNDTVIG is not a highly funded Action, we believe that such work is essential to making the most of an Action which has such an important bearing on Lifelong Learning policies and practice.

What Did the Adult Education Projects of the SOCRATES I Programme Do?

The quantitative analysis of thematic areas, players, target groups, outputs and countries involved provides important data on the scale and range of the intervention by the Adult Education projects.

[2] The analysis should have covered a total of 189 projects in the SOCRATES I Adult Education Action; of these 6 were cancelled; 1 was recorded twice in the database with two different project titles; 7 had not final report available, leaving a total of 175 for examination.

[3] Such judgements had to be made empirically on the basis of the evidence; an element of interpretation was inevitable.

The Project Profile

- ▶ Broadly, representation of countries corresponds to their population size. Amongst project coordinators, France has proportionately low numbers and Sweden, Belgium and Austria have proportionately high numbers. However, France has the expected proportion of partners and Greece an even higher than expected proportion.
- ▶ We identified 21 thematic areas for projects; projects might fall into up to 3 areas. The 175 projects covered the full range – but unevenly. Cultural Learning, Issues of European Integration, Intercultural Learning and Equality of Opportunities scored highest.
- ▶ But there were few projects dealing with Access (although there is overlap with Equality of Opportunities), Basic Skills, Accreditation, Social Regeneration, and Employability. Although this last would be found in the LEONARDO DA VINCI programme, it is significant that it did not feature much even as a secondary aim.
- ▶ Overall, players in the NGO and ‘private non profit’ sectors were the majority. This reflects the status of many adult education providers. Note: in our tables (Appendix 1) the two categories ‘NGO’ and ‘private non profit’ are merged under ‘private non profit’; practice in distinguishing between the two varies from country to country.
- ▶ The proportion of public bodies, which acted as coordinators is higher than their proportion as players overall.
- ▶ The analysis of players shows that this reflects a dominance of large traditional providers – universities, large further and adult education institutions – in initiating projects.
- ▶ The balance of players – NGOs and private non profit against public bodies – varied sharply between areas; further investigation is needed to find out why this should be.
- ▶ There were relatively low numbers of partners from: private sector organisations such as publishers, media companies and consultancies; the social partners; cultural organisations; community groups. Few European level or transnational organisations and associations were involved, and on this point our findings contradict the data gathered in the overall evaluation of the SOCRATES I programme.^[4]
- ▶ Target groups were wide-ranging but thin-spread, with a worryingly high percentage of projects aimed at adult learners in general. Many excluded or disadvantaged groups were under-represented in projects – including third age learners, people with disabilities, those who are unemployed, ethnic minorities, offenders and ex-offenders. Proportionately few projects worked with communities in inner cities or rural areas.
- ▶ A high proportion of projects targetted adult education operators and trainer trainers. However, analysis of the ‘orientation’ of the projects shows that a high proportion were aimed at both learners and providers, showing that many projects oriented towards provider target groups at least identified their ultimate beneficiaries.
- ▶ A high proportion of outputs consisted of tools (handbooks, guides) and learning materials (frequently CD ROM or other ICT based); then came training methods and materials, conferences and seminars. Many of these outputs are not readily available. There were few outputs with a strategic bearing such as stocktakes, needs analyses, or policy recommendations; interestingly these came from a restricted number of countries (mainly Spain, UK and Italy) and were more likely to involve public sector organisations, including universities.



[4] Quote: According to the Technical Assistance Office data base figures, 72 per cent of the co-ordinating institutions were made up of higher education institutions (18%), regional or national non-profit associations (30%) and international non-profit associations (24%). This was the only action in which international non-profit associations were well presented, Evaluation of the Socrates Programme, 13. Adult Education, page 317.

Implications

The information above implies that:

- ▶ Countries' participation reflects traditional strengths and interests in adult learning: what needs to be done to even the balance?
- ▶ Thematic areas chosen reflect the traditional strengths and interests of providers, just as the number of projects targetted at providers seems to reflect inherited priorities. Building capacity is important but coordinators and partners should think more innovatively about the links and pathways they could create, and particularly about how contributing to priorities such as social regeneration, health, the environment, family learning and basic skills, to all of which their strengths are relevant.
- ▶ Providers of adult learning, including the non-formal sector, have responded well to the opportunities of the Adult Education Action of the SOCRATES I programme and played to their strengths, moving beyond traditional curricula.
- ▶ The apparently low proportions of 'non-traditional' project partners and of mixed partnerships show up potential weaknesses in expertise or networking – for example, the lack of publishers and media companies in projects developing learning products – and a failure to engage them in the agenda of this Action. Traditional providers should be capable of giving leadership and coordinating projects, and some have created exciting partnerships, but many need to be more active in involving new and different players as partners.
- ▶ Wider participation by transnational organisations and associations would contribute to broader dissemination and experience transfer.
- ▶ Our detailed profile (see Appendix 1) will help applicants to identify target groups whose needs they might address. In particular, there is much scope for focussed work with excluded groups, as well as transferring effective strategies. Provider oriented projects should match their work to the interests of the learners who are the ultimate beneficiaries.
- ▶ It is questionable whether many of the learning materials and tools are in use and this represents a potential waste of resources. There is little information on any stocktakes or needs analyses carried out to support the main activities of the projects. Reports of conferences and seminars are lacking. This means that many implications for policy and practice have not been distilled or disseminated. All project participants need to recognise that their work, whatever its thematic area and target group, will have policy implications which should be teased out.

Practical Lessons

The cumulative experience of the Adult Education projects is extremely significant as our Conclusions and Recommendations show; equally it is clear from reports and fieldwork interviews that even those for whom the going was difficult found their projects worthwhile and learnt from them. The Adult Education projects of the SOCRATES I programme offer a very positive basis for developing the quality and effectiveness of its successors.

There are practical lessons to be learnt from the study for the relationship between the Commission and current and potential project actors, and for effective project design and management. We are critical of aspects of the management and quality of the Adult Education projects. We believe that the Commission and the National Agencies must develop greater capacity to support projects at all stages of their life-cycle – design, approval, implementation, monitoring, reporting and dissemination – to minimise failure and maximise quality.

Plans for implementing the new GRUNDTVIG Action will assist in this, but it will also need consideration of the Accompanying Measures and how national and transnational bodies with expertise can be used to help. Our Conclusions and Recommendations emphasise the need for dissemination to be taken far more seriously by all parties; Appendix 2 describes some of the issues to be considered. A particularly sharp lesson relates to the very rationale for this study: the Commission needs to have at its disposal means of analysing the reach, impact and policy messages of the Adult Education Action (and successor Actions), if it is to secure value for money and maximise effectiveness. Without this the 'European added value' of much inspiring work would be diminished. Indeed, the study suggests that the Adult Education projects have been very unclear about the nature of the 'European' dimension. If we assume that transnational cooperation per se does not guarantee this, projects need a taxonomy or set of models to use in designing their work, and to justify the Commission's co-funding.



The European Dimension might be achieved through ...

- ▶ experience exchange – enabling mutual reflection and learning
- ▶ experience transfer – to solve problems, create step changes
- ▶ using transnational dialogue to throw fresh light on local, regional and national policy and practice
- ▶ outputs and products which synthesise contributions from different countries
- ▶ outputs and products which can be used at a transnational level
- ▶ enhancing participants' knowledge of the culture, history, languages, society, economy and political life of other countries
- ▶ enabling participant learners from different countries to learn together and develop a sense of European identity
- ▶ action to develop a sense of European citizenship
- ▶ action to integrate services and systems transnationally



strategic messages

European Union Policies for Lifelong Learning

- 1 Policies to promote Lifelong Learning must start with the participants, and focus on unlocking demand. This principle applies to all actual and potential adult learners, but is crucial to engaging with under-represented or marginalised groups. Working from the participants' standpoint is a pre-requisite for changing how learning is organised to reflect 21st century needs. It will create social capital through building individual and community capacity, and motivating all adults to learn for continuing professional and personal development and pleasure, and for participation in civil society.
- 2 Informal and non-formal learning must be valued as the starting-point for many excluded individuals and groups to engage with society, as well as being an essential part of the Lifelong Learning of those who have already succeeded. Informal and non-formal learning lead to a wide range of outcomes. Participating in learning contributes to social, economic and cultural renewal and engagement in civil society, as well enabling individuals to progress in further learning and in employment. All providers and players should develop their capacity to relate to, promote and support informal and non-formal learning, which should be fostered in many different settings.
- 3 Genuine and effective collaboration between providers of formal and non-formal learning, public authorities, social partners and NGOs needs to be built if Lifelong Learning strategies are to work. Measures to integrate systems by linking different players should promote collaboration to create flexible networks which can respond to participants' needs. This will have a multiplier effect by using players' complementary strengths to reach new learners and serve those already involved better; respond to their needs more effectively; create learning pathways and bridges; bring in new providers and players; help to embed learning in the life of communities and make it sustainable.

Implementation of the GRUNDTVIG Action

- 1 Projects must focus on demand and motivation by starting with needs analysis and setting objectives which are participant-led and promote the expression of demand.
- 2 European added value can be demonstrated by projects in various ways. The Commission should expect and guide projects to define their European added value clearly, and to evaluate the gains in their self-assessment. The Commission itself should maximise European added value by improving dissemination strategies and experience transfer, using the Accompanying Measures as well as steering the development of European networks in the GRUNDTVIG Action.
- 3 The flexibility of the GRUNDTVIG Action structure should be fully exploited to encourage micro European cooperation projects as well as using the Learning Partnerships sub-action to build capacity for further transnational work. The Commission and National Agencies should seek out means of drawing new players who are not traditional providers into GRUNDTVIG. The design of transnational cooperation projects should embody the principles described above.
- 4 More effective support services at all stages are urgently needed to enable projects to succeed, and particularly to ensure the successful participation of new players. Such services should be organised by both the Commission and National Agencies, who should build their own capacity and also use local, regional, national and transnational bodies with the necessary expertise to assist them in their work. Accompanying Measures should be used to strengthen the implementation of GRUNDTVIG actions. Support services should include the production of tools to assist project managers, and the promotion of a culture of self-assessment in projects; the Commission should recognise the benefits of dynamic change resulting from self-assessment at key stages in a project, and should make the reporting process between promoters and the Commission more inter-active.
- 5 The Commission should give priority to establishing a comprehensive and accessible directory of past and current Adult Education and GRUNDTVIG (and other) projects, with their outcomes and products; and to initiating dissemination activities (with the National Agencies) for successful, policy-oriented work; and to follow-up studies and impact analysis. Without such measures, transferability of projects cannot be secured.





conclusions and recommendations

I- policy

A. for overarching issues for lifelong learning

Promoting equality of opportunities, access, 2nd chance learning and demand

Policies to promote equality of opportunities are secured through strategies to widen access, encourage second-chance learning, and promote the expression of individual and community demand. Positive experience from Adult Education projects shows that the critical success factors are to start with the learners, and to base programmes on respect for participants' experience, social and cultural practice, and aspirations. Successful projects show outcomes which impact on civil society as well as individual progress. However, experience from the success stories needs to be transferred.

- ▶ Projects based on creating and fostering opportunities for non-formal and self-directed learning have succeeded in offering a first step to engaging in learning, particularly for excluded groups. To work, such opportunities should be rooted in the life of their communities. Analysing and sharing the cultural expectations of learners is key to success.
- ▶ The needs of rural areas have not featured sufficiently in projects to date. The limited experience available shows that projects should link Lifelong Learning to social, cultural and economic development and regeneration.
- ▶ There is little evidence of how work with target groups impacts on the mainstream. Project applicants should be encouraged to devise strategies which lead to integration of their work with mainstream provision so that wider participation is embedded and project achievements sustainable.
- ▶ Projects working with ethnic minorities should involve organisations of the groups concerned in design and delivery of programmes, and use tutors with the same background, to be effective.
- ▶ Projects have successfully shown that programmes to raise basic skills levels should be situated within strategies for social inclusion, and should use teaching and learning approaches which are based on social and cultural participation.
- ▶ Adult learning should be seen as a holistic process to which learner support is integral and not an add-on. Support for learners is an essential element of widening participation. Further work is needed in this area to develop effective methodologies.
- ▶ Alliances between providers and the media to use their complementary skills to raise public awareness and celebrate learning are an important means of promoting individual demand. Projects to devise new methods for this and to evaluate their effectiveness should be encouraged.
- ▶ Experience shows that learners can be productively involved in formulating agendas for policy and quality based on their own needs and experiences. To produce such statements is not only a learning experience in itself, but a basis for negotiation with providers. More projects need to develop and disseminate this principle.

Non-formal and Informal Learning and Culture

Non-formal and informal learning is the gateway to success for many learners and provides the context for starting with the learner and the community. It leads straight to the concept of the 'learning community', and the promotion of a culture of learning. However, while successful projects have demonstrated the contribution which can be made by non-formal and informal learning, there is a lack of attention to creating shared understanding and pathways, and sharing the complementary expertise of practitioners; this reduces the impact of developments.

- ▶ Policies and actions should be promoted which cross the boundaries of non-formal, informal and formal learning and engage different players accordingly, bringing together a range of expertise and experience to motivate and engage learners and offer progression opportunities.
- ▶ Cultural organisations such as libraries, galleries and museums have an important part to play as gateways, as well as providing information services on learning. Libraries in particular provide a key social and civic space for informal and non-formal learning and development of the mission of public libraries as learning institutions should be supported.
- ▶ Action is needed to promote understanding amongst both target groups and providers / players of the variety and purposes of non-formal and informal learning, and to developing links with formal learning. Projects show that volunteers can play an important mediatory role in this.

Citizenship

Learning is a necessary tool for active citizenship. Relatively few projects have tackled this challenge successfully, but those which have demonstrate a win-win situation: community strategy benefits from the contribution of learning and learning becomes more accessible and valued. Citizenship in terms of the learners' participation in adult learning policy and management has been neglected in analysed projects and this needs to be remedied.

- ▶ Involving local people in learning – non-formally, informally and formally – within a partnership to tackle social and environmental issues is a multiplier which produces very wide community impact and engagement with the issues. Policies should take fuller account of this and development actions should actively engage new players and create new partnerships to link learning with environmental, cultural and citizenship agendas.
- ▶ Inter-generational learning, including parent education, makes a crucial contribution to citizenship and should be promoted in this context. The importance of informal and non-formal learning and the role of NGOs in this area should be noted.

European Culture and Identity

see also Basic Skills for All

Surprisingly few projects whose primary objectives lie in promoting a sense of European identity for adults have done so successfully. Lessons of the projects suggest that this works best if it is based on the principle of starting with the learner, and is built into other topics; tools which assume that many learners want to follow free-standing programmes of learning 'about' European integration have not readily found a context.



- ▶ There is scope for research and experiment into how understanding of European identity and integration can be promoted through the design of the curriculum in areas such as language learning. Teasing out the European dimensions of other actions (e.g. to promote the expression of demand) may be more productive than promoting explicitly 'European' learning activities.
- ▶ Sharing learning transnationally to develop understanding of the European present and past works best if it starts from participants' local cultures. Programmes should address shared history, traditions and values, as well as differences. It would be useful to promote transnational workshops, teaching modules and materials which focus on the European cultural and environmental heritage.
- ▶ Familiar cultural and media products, such as local names, bandes dessinées (comic strips), and film, can be used as a tool to address issues such as stereotyping and intercultural understanding, and hence to promote knowledge of Europe and a sense of European citizenship. Work in this field should be encouraged and linked to the debate on European governance, particularly because the latter implies discussion amongst citizens of European values, issues and decisions.

B. for the key messages in the memorandum on lifelong learning

New Basic Skills for All

see also Overarching Issues, and Bringing Learning Closer to Home

A clear message from the SOCRATES experience is that the 'old' basic skills must still be given high priority if we are to tackle social inclusion; this is supported by evidence on levels of literacy across Europe. Without the 'old' basic skills of literacy and numeracy, there will be no access to the 'new' skills defined in the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning. Adult Education Projects offer principles for improving the methodologies and quality of the 'old' basic skills, although numeracy features very little. Further comparative work and experience transfer would be beneficial.

- ▶ Development of basic skills should be based on respect for the learner and learner centred strategies. This means:
 - Building on learners' existing competencies
 - Organising learning as an active, learner-led process
 - Enabling learners to influence their own learning agendas, strategies and materials, especially when they come from cultures which have not allowed for this
 - Building in skills for participating and developing autonomy in learning
 - New methods of assessment and accreditation which are tailored to meet the needs of learners
- ▶ Materials for supported self-study, complemented by tutor support, can be used to underpin these principles; transnational work on constructing and testing learning materials adds value by making them more widely applicable.

More Investment in Human Resources

Project experience shows that investment in human resources, including trainer training, is an integral element in opening up non-formal and informal learning, bringing in new players and developing partnerships. The contribution of volunteers has been highlighted by several projects. Successful projects show that human resource development should be built into the design of actions and projects. Transnational working has been shown to add value by encouraging creative solutions in this area.

- ▶ Actions should be promoted to bring social partners, public authorities together with providers to develop policy and practice, for example for paid educational leave.
- ▶ Training those professionals and volunteers from outside the traditional fields of adult learning, who contribute to informal learning but have acquired their skills experientially, will contribute to widening the Lifelong Learning agenda and encompassing new interests. Training will bring added value and quality to learning activities in non-traditional contexts and help build bridges with formal learning.
- ▶ Innovative action should be promoted to encourage the contribution of volunteers and professionals from non-traditional fields. Examples are: 'link workers' in museums; workers in community radio; reminiscence workers' in care centres for older adults; older adults themselves as an educational resource.
- ▶ Trainer training should be built into design and development of innovative strategies and wherever possible into GRUNDTVIG projects; there is particular value in bringing together practitioners from different fields and disciplines for this.

Innovation in Teaching and Learning

See also Overarching Issues, New Basic Skills, Bringing Learning Closer to Home, Investment in Human Resources

The value of innovative teaching and learning strategies for adults in the analysed projects has been limited both by insufficient transfer of experience and by an emphasis on creating tools without grounding them in genuine needs analysis. However, there are valuable pointers to how methodologies in second-chance and informal learning can be strengthened. Project design needs to build in changing attitudes amongst professionals through familiarisation with new models of teaching and learning.

- ▶ Innovative strategies which have been designed and tested to meet the needs of particular target groups should be examined to see whether they can be transferred to other groups or settings, or used in the mainstream.
- ▶ Further investigation is needed into the range of learning styles adopted by adult learners and how confidence-building, study skills and autonomy in learning can be based on these; providers should adopt a repertoire of strategies which can be tailored to individual needs, rather than assuming that 'one size fits all'.
- ▶ Engaging learners in constructing their own learning materials is a valuable pedagogic tool – although the value-added of transnational work in this area has yet to be adequately tested.
- ▶ Project applicants, providers and the Commission should be more critical about the value of creating transnational and European level tools for Open and Distance Learning; such tools should be developed within a strategy for testing them in delivery settings in which they would genuinely be used.



- ▶ Informal learning activities should be designed to include reflection on learning – otherwise they will not contribute to building learning pathways.
- ▶ Development of professional issues for trainer training is urgently needed and should be placed on the political agenda for Lifelong Learning. Training of tutors should focus on a supportive rather than didactic model of tutoring and recognise the new roles in teaching and learning; innovation in trainer training must accompany innovation in teaching and learning. Practitioners must be given the opportunity for training and updating.

Valuing Learning

Recognition of the skills and competencies acquired through informal and non-formal learning is an important element of promoting inclusion and participation. The very limited project experience shows that focussing on individual pathways is a means of building learners' self-esteem in second-chance opportunities. Indeed, this would benefit all learners.

- ▶ The use of APEL (accreditation of prior / experiential learning) in different learning contexts needs more exploration, to show how it can create pathways between learning providers and how it can be recognised by different providers and other players, including public authorities and services, and employers.
- ▶ Tools for accrediting locally designed programmes to meet the needs of particular groups should be further developed and tested. Instruments need to be flexible while fitting within broad national and transnational frameworks for credit accumulation and transfer. The agenda for development should include the creation of new skills and qualification profiles to match new roles in the knowledge-based economy.

Rethinking Guidance and Counselling

Adult Education projects offer useful support to developing new approaches in guidance and counselling, particularly in redefining roles. An important issue for development is the role of guidance and counselling in relating the expression of demand to supply.

- ▶ The use of 'one stop shops' as a multi-dimensional, multi-agency response to group and individual needs should be further explored and tested.
- ▶ The new role of guidance workers and counsellors as 'learning advisers' (and the skills needed to fulfil this) should be promoted. This role may be a crucial means of support to enable those who are disaffected or excluded to reengage in learning. Learning advisers can also play an important part as advocates and brokers to influence supply.

Bringing Learning Closer to Home (including ICT)

See also Overarching Issues, New Basic Skills, Innovation in Teaching and Learning

The projects demonstrate clear benefits from using the new technologies for access to learning, provided that the methodologies are well-defined and carefully tested. There will also be important lessons to be learnt from other actions, including MINERVA, and the eLearning Initiative, and the Commission should develop an overview of these to guide future work.

- ▶ ICT can be used effectively by people with low levels of formal educational attainment or problems of access (such as geographical isolation, working unsocial hours, mental health problems):
 - to stimulate demand
 - to stimulate interest in other cultures
 - to meet needs not met by traditional providers
 - to promote interaction between formal, informal and non-formal learning
 - to promote reflection and dialogue between learners (e.g. through internet study circles)
 - to develop key skills
 - to maintain learning.
- ▶ For this to be effective communication and support with both tutors and fellow-students is necessary and ICT itself can contribute to this, for example through internet study circles.
- ▶ Learners should be placed at the heart or design and development of ICT, and the role of the tutor of both animator and mentor should be developed accordingly.
- ▶ The new technologies are used most effectively when their use is designed to complement other forms of learning, and the benefits or value-added they give are clearly defined.
- ▶ The Internet can be used as a learning tool to exchange experience and create dialogues between adult learners.
- ▶ ICT resources should be promoted as a means of overcoming tutors' isolation and barriers to access, but experience shows that they should be designed on cooperation with practitioners themselves.
- ▶ Employers should be encouraged to promote ICT learning by enabling workers to use workplace ICT resources in down times.



II- coordination and implementation of the grundtvig action

Definition of the Action to Secure High Quality Projects

Analysis of Adult Education projects shows that many opportunities have been lost through poor project design, inadequate needs analysis or rationale, and inability of partners to coordinate and sustain complex projects, leading to failure to achieve objectives or at worst projects being stopped. The flexibility now available in the GRUNDTVIG Action needs to be used to the full, and both the Commission and the National Agencies need to develop their capacity to take a much more proactive role in supporting the development of high quality applications, and to assess their viability.

- ▶ The Commission should encourage and give preference to the development of focussed projects, rather than complex ones, unless these can demonstrate well-developed partnerships and management skills. Smaller-scale projects may be the first, crucial step to transnational working: the GRUNDTVIG sub-action on Learning Partnerships will assist in this. But micro-projects should also be considered within the sub-action for European Cooperation Projects.
- ▶ Projects to date do not appear to call on clear and coherent models of what constitutes a 'European dimension'. The Commission should produce guidelines on this so that the 'European added value' of activities is clear.

- ▶ Analysis of the projects has revealed some lack of clarity about boundaries between programmes. Cooperation between GRUNDTVIG and LEONARDO DA VINCI, and within SOCRATES between GRUNDTVIG, MINERVA and LINGUA should be strengthened to formulate objectives clearly, clarify borderlines between the programmes and identify gaps. The reason for projects promoting language teaching and learning being approved within GRUNDTVIG should be clarified.
- ▶ Many projects have not been based on a needs analysis (or even incorporated this into project design). Projects should be required to provide a needs analysis or rationale and this should relate to the interests not only of all partners, but of a wider range of players (including other providers) and ultimate beneficiaries in terms of target groups and communities.
- ▶ It should, however, be recognised that projects may validly be based on experiment (with an element of risk) with the strategy of raising esteem for Lifelong Learning and convincing communities of the benefits. Such projects can also stimulate wider community and transnational actions.
- ▶ The creation of shared understanding between partners is a critical success factor. The Commission should promote the use of Learning Partnerships sub-action to achieve this, and seek evidence of capacity for effective partnership working in European Cooperation Projects as well as in the Network Projects.
- ▶ Many applicants would have benefitted from access to comparable projects or networks to help design their project. Applicants should be informed of other similar or complementary projects, via the organisation of information sheets, a project catalogue, thematic seminars and workshops, and websites, and encouraged to share experience accordingly.
- ▶ Projects are strengthened by:
 - Cooperation between different sectors, both to stimulate innovation and to create and transmit policy messages.
 - The involvement of policy-makers who can help to take forward the lessons.
- ▶ Applicants should therefore be encouraged to widen the scope of partnerships for this purpose (or to include this in project design) and National Agencies should organise contact seminars to promote this.
- ▶ Projects set in non-formal, informal and non-traditional contexts should be expected to have a strategy for bringing education and other players together, to give impact to their work.
- ▶ The Commission should take account of the difficulties experienced in sustaining momentum and the level of refusals of 3rd year funding, in deciding multi-annual approvals. Multi-annual projects need to demonstrate how they plan to maintain momentum and manage work over a long period at the start.
- ▶ In view of the serious problems experienced by some projects, evidence should be sought in proposals of partners' ability to realise the technical demands of the project, and how they will access expertise to match their stated objectives. The Commission should consider how support can be provided or brokered for partners in countries with a less strong ICT base.
- ▶ In particular, proposals involving the creation of transnational databases, databanks or services should be able to demonstrate that they have at their disposal the resources to secure technical accuracy and sustainability.
- ▶ Projects involving the creation of materials should demonstrate that this is based on needs analysis; this is conspicuously lacking in many projects. Projects should not be supported unless they have a clear rationale and a methodology for testing materials and putting them into use.

- ▶ Research projects designed to survey and evaluate current work and the ‘state of the art’ bring together researchers and practitioners to design and test new strategies. Such an approach contributes to policy development as well as to exchanging good practice. These should form a higher proportion of cooperation projects (as compared to services and materials projects).
- ▶ Projects designed primarily to network and spread good practice should produce a clear rationale for their added value. Limitations of past networking projects indicate that both thematic and project networks should be expected to demonstrate a sufficiently strong and wide-ranging partnership to give a broad overview and should be able to draw on research support to contextualise, analyse and evaluate material and practice.
- ▶ Projects which can exploit the strengths of existing networks and add value by enabling them to prioritise transnational activities should be encouraged.
- ▶ Dissemination strategies should be planned at project design stage, to include both strategic and cost factors. (See appendix 2)

Management of the Programme, Support for Projects and Monitoring

Both analysis of project reports and fieldwork raised criticisms about the practical management of the programme hitherto and the level of support it offered. Fairly or not, the Commission is perceived as over-bureaucratic and insufficiently in touch with the realities of the field – for example in not realising the impact of late decision-making on time-limited projects. On the other hand it appears that monitoring was insufficient to catch problems at an early enough stage. In consequence, opportunities to strengthen quality and secure value for money in projects are missed. The National Agencies provide a means of strengthening professional support and the Commission should consider how Accompanying Measures could be used. This links to later comments on Dissemination.

- ▶ The Commission should seek ways of balancing attention to legal and financial probity requirements with its role in providing promotion, evaluation, support and dissemination. It urgently needs to be able to improve the quality of its relationships with the field; this will produce higher quality proposals and help sustain projects. As a priority it should review and improve its communications with project applicants and coordinators, recognising the damage caused by late notification of decisions and budget cuts, and lack of timely monitoring. Practical steps to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy (for example in requiring repeated information) and uncertainty could include:
 - Using coordinators of completed projects to test clarity and relevance of pro formas and reporting requirements;
 - Publishing decision-making timetables and setting service standards for response times;
 - A proactive role for the National Agencies in developing quality applications and assisting applicants to develop their initial ideas;
 - Identifying the skills and expertise the Agencies need to fulfil this and providing appropriate training;
 - Valuing flexibility in redesigning a project to take account of self-assessment at interim stages and making it less onerous to make changes in the light of experience;
 - Providing a mechanism for project coordinators to report problems identified through self-assessment, and to seek support in solving them.



- ▶ Monitoring and support by the Commission should be strengthened, using meetings organised by the National Agencies as well as coordinators' meetings in Brussels, and an annual face-to-face dialogue with monitoring officials. The fieldwork questionnaire used in this project could also be used to contribute to monitoring and as a basis for dialogue. Monitoring activities should be accompanied by arrangements to provide mentors and facilitate peer support within clusters of projects; GRUNDTVIG networks could be used to contribute to this.
- ▶ Guidelines and case studies of good practice should be prepared as a tool for coordinators and partners in the following areas:
 - Project coordination and management
 - Fostering and strengthening partnerships and networks
 - Evaluation and dissemination
 - Impact studies
 - Organisation of transnational training courses

Guidance notes should be tested with current or past project managers.

Training courses should be organised at national or European level on key issues where practice is known to be weak (with priority to management and evaluation).

- ▶ Guidance for applicants and coordinators is needed on the appropriateness, design, currency and sustainability of products e.g. websites, CD-ROM, and on how products can be produced in a form which can be effectively disseminated. In particular, guidance is required on the best use of WWW.
- ▶ Requirements for Commission access to and dissemination of products should be defined.
- ▶ Guidance should also address copyright (intellectual property) issues.
- ▶ Monitoring should include checks that websites are functioning.
- ▶ In view of the range of projects which focus on ICT skills and the importance of this as a policy issue, a stocktake should be carried out of projects which focus on ICT skills to identify both overlaps and gaps.

Evaluation, Dissemination, Sustainability and Impact Analysis

Analysis revealed significant weaknesses in evaluation strategies (with a failure by many projects to design these in) and limited dissemination strategies. In dissemination, projects tended to use existing networks rather than considering what would suit the project content (although this limitation is likely to some extent to reflect previous restrictions on funding dissemination). Many projects, particularly those concerned with production of tools such as CD-ROM and websites and with networks, did not show a strategy for updating or sustaining their work; some websites visited were found not to be functioning. Project reports were of very variable quality. There is no evidence of impact analysis being carried out by any project or by the Commission itself, although this is important to long-term evaluation of the programmes and policy development.

- ▶ Advice should be given on models of evaluation, including the use of self-assessment both summatively and at interim stages in a project. Ongoing self-assessment which encourages reflection, identifies the unexpected and enables partners to act is an essential element of success.

- ▶ Good practice in evaluation should be promoted using guidelines and case-studies on:
 - the role of the external evaluator as a critical friend, and to offer perspectives from other sectors or member states;
 - incorporating 'reflective practitioner' approaches;
 - testing of products in the context in which they are intended to be used and obtaining feedback from views the customer providers, before finalisation and dissemination of the product;
 - Involving learners in evaluation.
- ▶ Training for project coordinators and partners should be organised on evaluation both by the Commission and by National Agencies.
- ▶ The Commission should make clear the standards it requires of project reports, in addition to its redesign of the present format to avoid repetition.
- ▶ The Commission should analyse final project reports to establish a cumulative view of project coverage and outputs (and as a tool for considering value for money). The tool developed for this analysis could provide a basis for this.
- ▶ Projects should be advised that publication on websites does not in itself constitute dissemination without a strategy to promote and monitor use.
- ▶ Project coordinators and partners should include dissemination and embedding within their own institutions and networks in their dissemination strategy. They should also work on developing local and regional partnerships and involve local communities in dissemination; by creating a groundswell of support this helps to sustain the project results.
- ▶ The Commission should consider commissioning follow-up and longitudinal studies to examine dissemination, responses to and impact of projects; impact studies are lacking for projects to date. The fieldwork questionnaire developed for this analysis (for use by email or telephone) has been found to be a simple and cost-effective sampling tool.



Dissemination Actions by the Commission and National Agencies

The Commission has not yet capitalised on the many positive experiences of the Adult Education projects and to turn failures or weaknesses in projects to useful account. The quality of the documentation and cataloguing to date would in any case make that difficult. The Commission and National Agencies need as a matter of urgency to ensure that project reports and products are available for use, and to take a proactive role in multiplying the lessons and impact of the projects.

- ▶ The Commission should consider a major dissemination programme for know-how and good practice at national levels, using National Agencies.
- ▶ Successful completed Adult Education projects should be actively encouraged to use GRUNDTVIG sub-actions to bid for dissemination funding. Networks' activities should include a 'transfer dimension'.
- ▶ In addition to stimulating GRUNDTVIG Networks, the Commission and National Agencies should consider:
 - Promoting dissemination initiatives by National Agencies and by the Commission;
 - Project fairs and exhibitions, supported by a well-targetted promotional campaign including social partners, and other potential users as well as providers;
 - Thematic workshops and seminars focussing on pedagogical achievements and links to the topics of the Memorandum;
 - Links with the Network Action of the LEONARDO DA VINCI programme.

As a basis for the promotional strategy, the Commission must have at its disposal a categorisation of the projects and an evaluation of their quality.

- ▶ The Commission should prioritise improving access to and dissemination of project results, including their use for policy development.
- ▶ The Commission should therefore produce an inventory and deposit collection of project reports, outputs and products, with the inventory available through ICT, and regularly updated; this should be based on:
 - a well-developed archiving policy;
 - an analysis of coverage, outputs and quality (see above and also the model used in LINGUA).
- ▶ The collection should include a virtual showcase and sign-posting to encourage dissemination through local and national publication.
- ▶ Links to projects' web pages at the Europa server should be regularly updated.
- ▶ Organisations whose projects have created quality transnational training products should be invited to develop training actions for GRUNDTVIG sub-action 3.
- ▶ Case studies showing innovation and good practice in 'clusters' and content areas should be collected and published.

Project Clusters

'Clusters' of projects with similar themes or topics offer the potential for cross-fertilisation and the transfer of experience. They might form the basis of GRUNDTVIG networks, be used for case-studies, or provide peer support to new projects. These are examples of possible clusters we have found – the categories are not mutually exclusive, and 'training the trainer' is a motif in all of them:

- ▶ promoting demand and motivating adults to learn
- ▶ innovative learning strategies and materials, including open and distance learning
- ▶ intercultural and language learning
- ▶ learning in civil society and for active citizenship
- ▶ learning and culture
- ▶ bridges between informal, non-formal and formal learning
- ▶ new roles for professionals and volunteers in Lifelong Learning

afterword

Very few projects fail completely, but many encounter problems along the way. From our analysis of 175 projects, these are the most common barriers which coordinators and partners need to guard against or overcome.

The Top Ten Barriers to Success

1. The project is complex and over-ambitious.
2. The topic is not suitable for transnational work.
3. Shared professional understanding and commitment is lacking amongst partners.
4. There are cultural and linguistic barriers to working together which the partners fail to overcome.
5. The project is not based on needs analysis – or at least a proper rationale.
6. The workplan is vague and does not allocate tasks sensibly.
7. The project budget is badly constructed. There is insufficient allowance in it for the costs of producing materials and of dissemination.
8. The Commission notifies decisions, including budget cuts, late.
9. There are problems with ICT, including inadequate hardware and lack of technical expertise.
10. Senior managers in the partner institutions do not back the project.



table 1

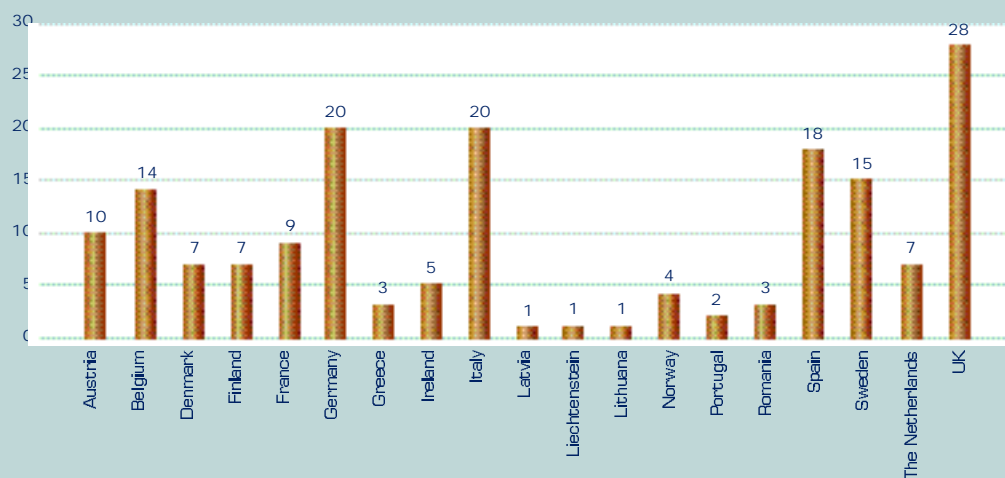
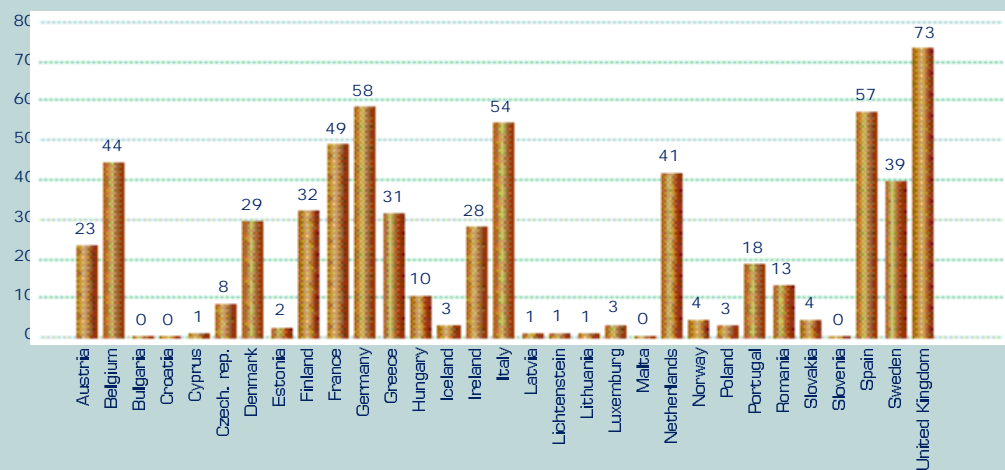


table 2



Appendix 1

Analysis of quantitative data

The data-base: The analysis of the quantitative data is based on 175 projects for which project data were available. A matrix covering participating countries, thematic areas, players, target groups, outputs, and project orientation was developed for this analysis and used to analyse each project. The database developed for this purpose enables cross-comparison between the different categories.

Below we give the headline results from using the matrix and highlight some of the most significant points for further reflection and action.

This is followed by a sample of the tables, which provide data for each category. The full set of quantitative tables can be requested from the EAEA directly^[5] and will be supplied to the Commission.

Participating countries by coordinators and by partners

Methodology: The classification is based on all the countries which were eligible to participate in the Adult Education Action of the SOCRATES I programme.

Headlines: The analysis shows that the largest countries (in population) are the most represented with 28 projects coordinated in the UK, 20 in both Italy and Germany, followed by Spain with 18.

Sweden, Belgium and Austria, which are smaller countries in population are co-ordinating respectively 15, 14 and 10 projects which reflects the importance attributed to adult learning in those countries as well as the high quality of the project applications. The same level of involvement of those countries is confirmed in table 2, partner countries.

France is the "big" country absent in this scenario, and it would be interesting to discover why French adult education organisations were reluctant to take on project coordination. However, France is involved in many projects as a partner (table 2).

Countries such as Greece and Portugal coordinated only a few projects; however, Greek players were present in 31 projects as a partner. One might infer from this that there is no lack of awareness of the Adult Education Action of the SOCRATES I programme but probably a lack of capacity to coordinate a transnational project. If so, much needs to be done to help different players to overcome the administrative and perhaps linguistic barriers to coordinating European co-funded projects.

[5] Address: eaea@eaea.org, or www.eaea.org

Overall thematic area

Methodology: The thematic areas into which the projects were classified were: access, accreditation and qualifications, advice and counselling for learners, advice and counselling for providers, basic skills, cultural learning, employability, environment, equality of opportunities, family education, foreign language learning, health, information, innovative methodologies, intercultural learning, issues of European integration, learning for active citizenship, quality systems, social regeneration, networks, training of trainers.

The definition of the thematic areas was developed from the two orientations specified in the definition of priorities within the Adult Education Action of the Socrates I programme. These orientations were:

- A: Projects addressing key issues for Adult Education in Europe:
- A.1 the promotion and development of individual demand for education among adults
 - A.2 the supply of educational activities for adults
 - A.3 the development of support services for adult learners and adult education providers
 - A.4 the promotion of flexible accreditation and certification systems
- B: Projects designed to promote knowledge and awareness of Europe/European countries among adult learners:
- B.1 Enhancing adults learners' knowledge of cultures, traditions, languages and all aspects of social, political and economic life in other participating countries
 - B.2 Enhancing adult learners' understanding of political, economic and administrative aspects of the European Union itself, and the key questions that it faces in the future, with a view to promoting active citizenship and social participation.

A few projects were classified as "others": this covered such thematic areas as: European tourism, summer courses, developing co-operation and collaboration, universities and Lifelong Learning, informal learning, children's rights, motivation of learners, training of volunteers and international co-operation. Adult education is highly diversified and projects' definition of their thematic areas was not always very precise, and consequently difficult to classify.

For each project the thematic area was defined according to the primary objectives of the project.

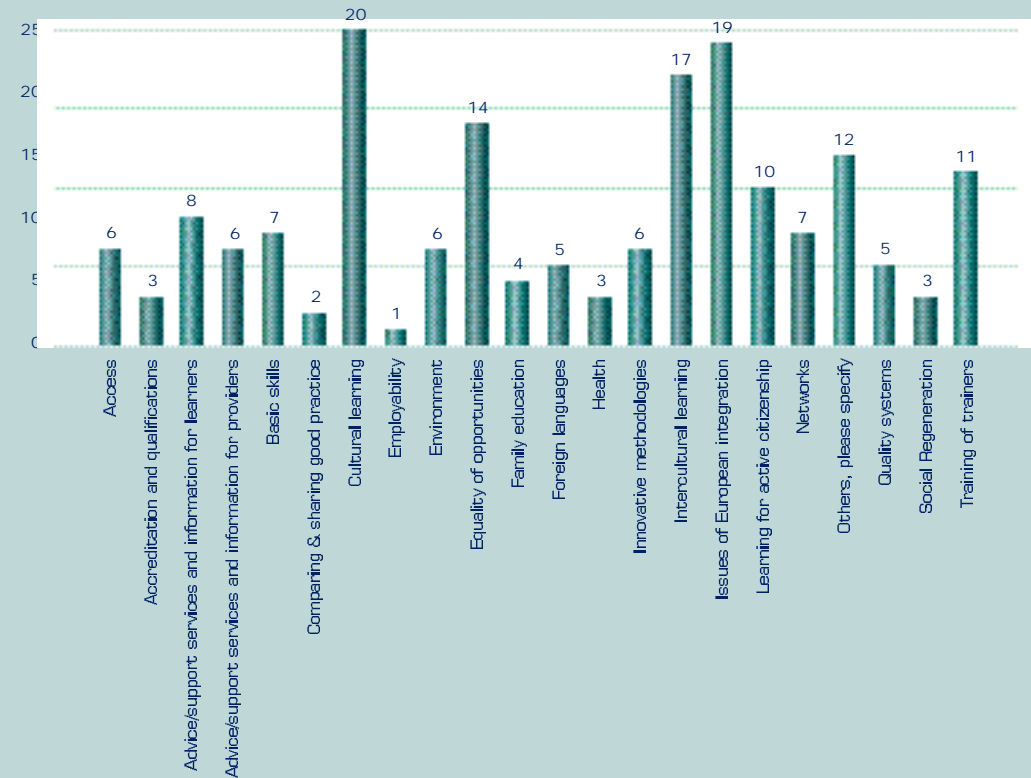
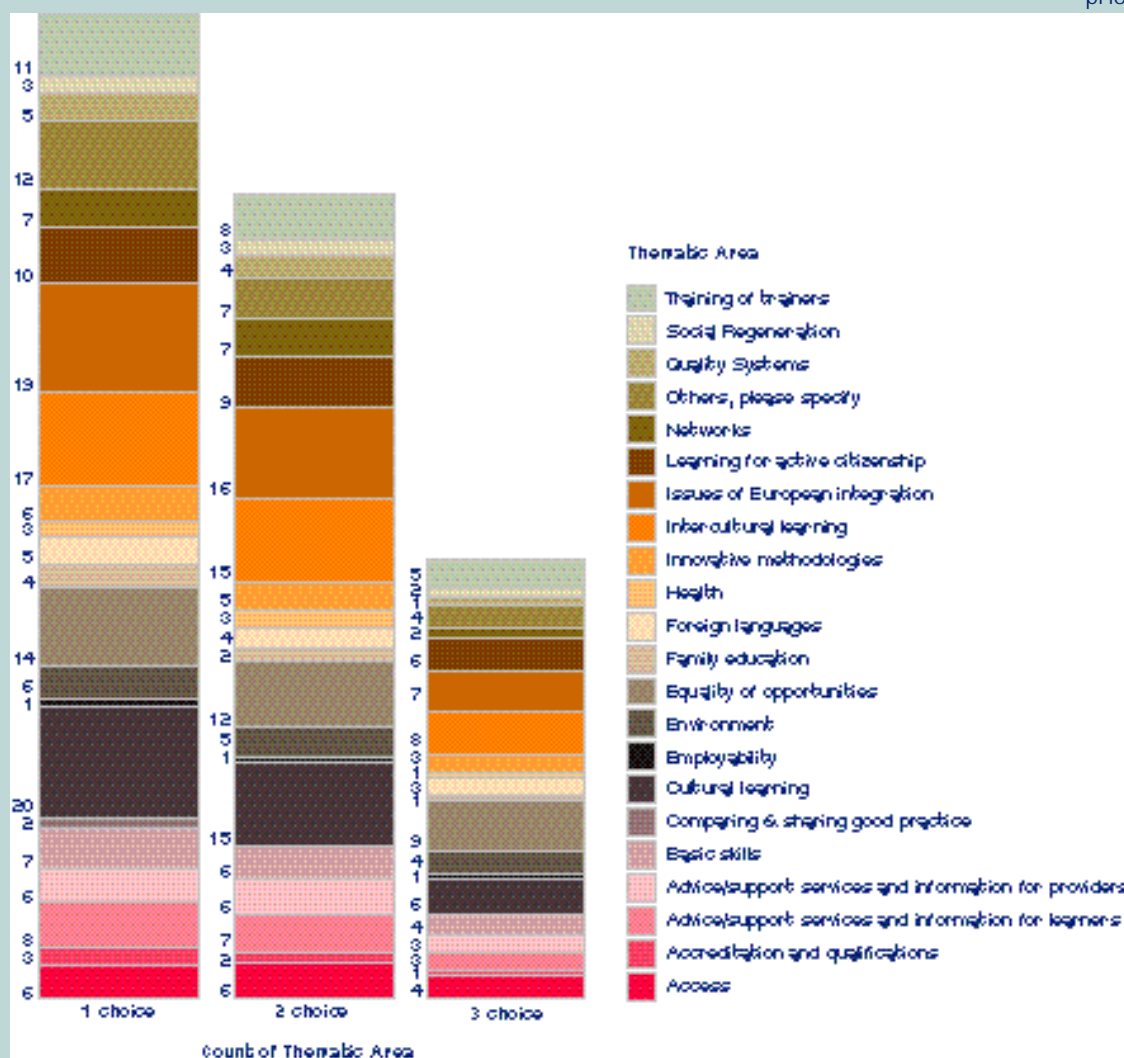


table 4



Projects were attributed to several categories to a maximum of 3 in order of priority, see table 4.

analysis of the headlines below refers, however, only to the first choice, see table 3.

Headlines: The highest level of interest was in “cultural learning”^[6] with 20 projects, followed by “issues of European integration” with 19 projects, “intercultural learning” with 17, “equality of opportunities”^[7] with 14 projects, and 10 projects on “active citizenship”.

“Training of trainers” may feature in two ways: on the one hand as a free-standing thematic area and on the other as one of the activities within a project focusing on a different thematic area. (We will come back to this in more detail later.)

The thematic areas reveal the potential for innovation of such a Community of learners – in this Action attributing a high priority to informal learning and other ways.

Thematic areas such as “health”, “environment”, “family education”, “social regeneration” or “access” and “accreditation” are significantly under-represented, although the two latter were clearly identified as priorities in the call for proposals.

[6] “Cultural learning” is defined as learning which takes place in museums, art galleries, libraries, the cinema etc. where learners find a pathway to education via cultural provision or through their own cultural interests.

[7] “Equality of opportunity” refers to remedying any form of social exclusion as well as to equal opportunities in terms of gender.

Cross-comparison – thematic area and participating country

Methodology: This table enables us to compare the thematic areas chosen with the participating countries.

Headlines: “Cultural learning” was mostly promoted in Italy (coordinator for 7), followed by Germany (3) and Austria (2). None of the Nordic countries provides a co-ordinator in this area: Sweden, Finland and Denmark are, however, present as partners.

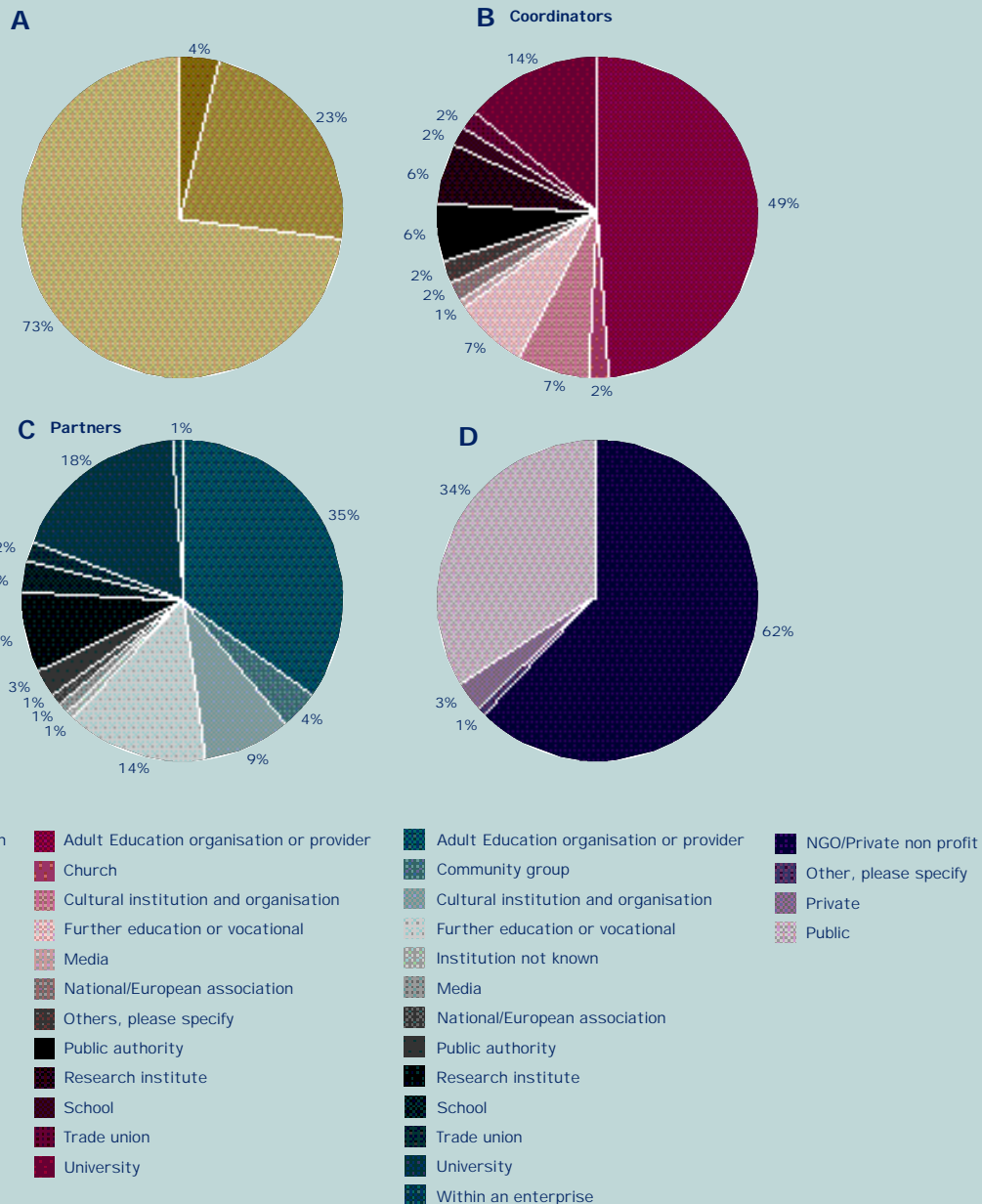
“Equality of opportunities” is a priority for Sweden (coordinator for 5 projects, partner in a further 6). Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Norway and Spain follow, each coordinating a single project. The UK, Netherlands and Ireland are present as partners in at least three projects each. The other countries show little interest in this thematic area.

The UK coordinated projects in “basic skills” and “access”, reflecting national priorities and concerns, but these areas did not attract the attention of other countries.

“Issues of European integration” do not appear as a priority in the Nordic countries. They are, however, of interest in countries such as Spain, Italy, Germany, France, Belgium and UK. Further investigation of this pattern is needed in order to find out how the European dimension and issues related to European identity can be more widely promoted, together with more proactive and balanced collaboration between project partners from the North and the South as well as from the East and West of Europe.



table 6



Players

Methodology: In order to gain a more accurate picture of the players involved in the projects, three categories were used:

The level of operation: local/regional, national and European;

The legal status of the players: private non profit – which also includes non governmental organisations (NGOs) as the definition of the latter varies from one country to another, public, private.

The type of participating institution with the following options: adult education organisation or provider, cultural institution or organisation, community group, further education or vocational training provider, research institute, school, trade union, university, enterprise, national/European association, media, church, public authority.

In each category, the analysis distinguishes between the roles of coordinator and partner.

Headlines: It is not surprising that the private non-profit/NGOs sector is well represented, followed by the public sector.

The participation of private organisations is small, (only 3% as coordinators)

The small number of European or international organisations involved is striking; moreover the findings contradict the data gathered in the overall evaluation of the Socrates I programme^[8].

The higher education sector as adult education provider is well represented in comparison with other sectors, community groups, trade unions, and research institutes^[9], and also with cultural institutions and organisations which are underrepresented. This may be due to the fact that only from 1998 onwards did the call for proposals prioritise cultural institutions and organisations. However, the low number is still surprising especially in the light of the high number of projects which were focussing on “cultural learning” as the main thematic area.

[8] See footnote 2

[9] The participating research institutes normally carry out applied research in the field of adult education rather being ‘pure’ research bodies.

Cross-comparison – thematic area, players and countries

Methodology: These tables enable us to compare the thematic areas chosen with the players and countries involved.

Headlines: For “cultural learning” there is a balance between private non-profit/NGOs and the public sector, which is not surprising. However, other thematic areas, such as “equality of opportunities”, “intercultural learning”, “issues of European integration” and “learning for active citizenship” show a big discrepancy between the participation of the private non profit/NGOs sector and the public sector in favour of the former.

Table 8 shows that universities are well represented as project coordinators in the UK.

table 7

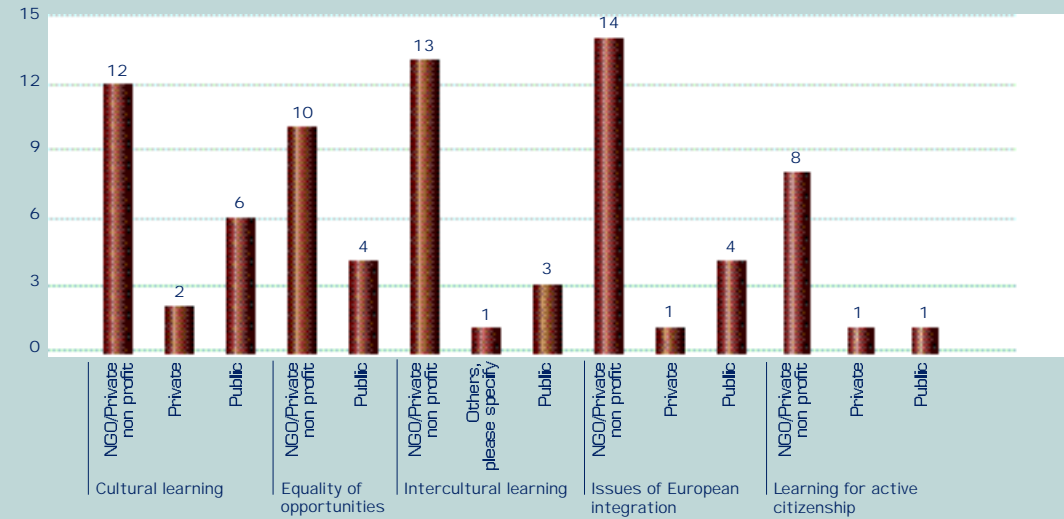


table 8

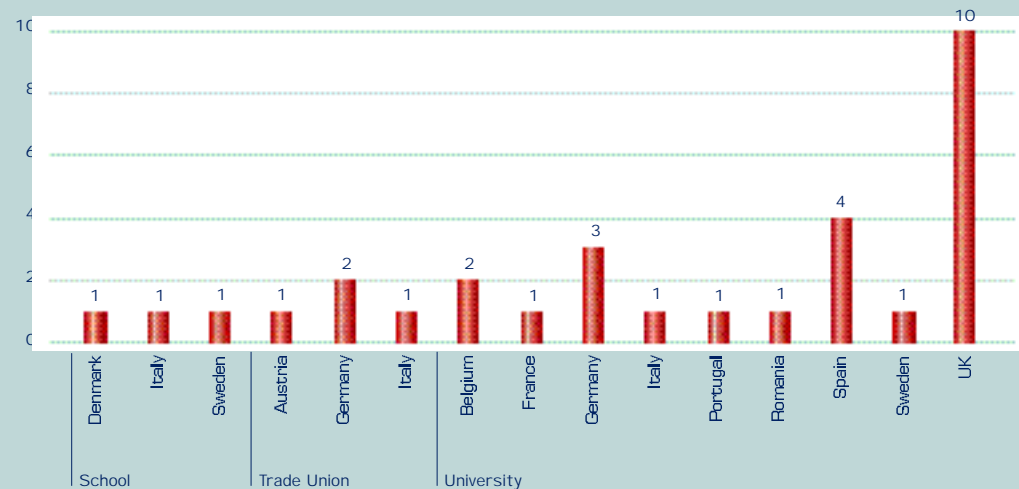
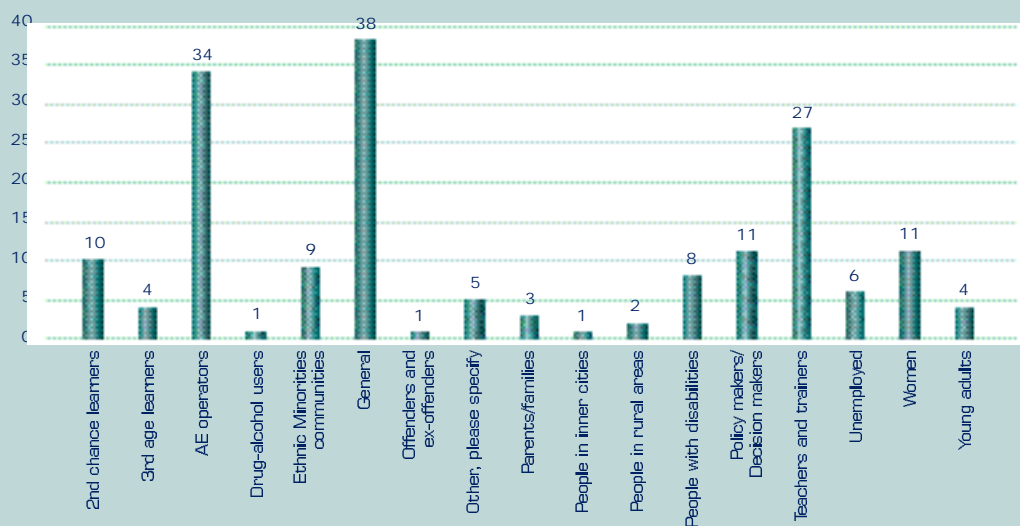


table 9



Target group

Methodology: The following target groups were identified and projects classified accordingly: adult education operators, drug-alcohol users, ethnic minority communities, general, young adults, people in employment, people in inner cities, people in rural areas, people with disabilities, policy-makers / decision-makers, unemployed people, offenders and ex-offenders, 2nd chance learners, 3rd age learners, teachers and trainers.

The category “general” refers to learners who for whatever purpose undertake learning activities in either formal or non-formal learning contexts. In some projects it was difficult to identify a precise target group, but it was a reasonable assumption that learners (rather than providers) were the target.

Projects were attributed to several categories (up to a maximum of 3) in order of priority, but table 9 refers only to the first choice.

The category “others” refers to: health promotion services; volunteers; men.

Headlines: The analysis shows that the three most popular target groups are: general, adult education operators and teachers and trainers.

Projects cover a whole range of target groups including socially excluded or disadvantaged groups such as 2nd chance learners, ethnic minority groups, offenders and ex-offenders, unemployed people, people with disabilities, 3rd age learners and people in inner cities or in rural areas; but these groups are under-represented.

A high number of projects have the “general” learner as the main target group. This reveals a lack of focus which may be linked to the lack of a needs analysis; this was neglected in a substantial number of projects.

Cross-comparison – target group, thematic area, and players

table 10

Methodology: Tables 10, 11 and 12, enable us to compare the target group chosen with the thematic areas chosen, and the target groups chosen with the player institutions.

Headlines: Table 10 shows in a quite obvious way the interrelation in a project between the target group and the thematic focus, for example “2nd chance learners”. The interrelation between adult education operators and the range of thematic areas covered is similarly obvious.

Table 11 shows that “training of trainers” is indeed a free-standing thematic area; but if one compares it to the target group “teachers and trainers”, one can see that by implication there is a focus on trainer training in a variety of thematic areas. This implies that teacher training tends to be integrated into projects whatever their main thematic focus is.

Universities address a variety of target groups – see table 12 – such as adult education operators, 2nd chance and 3rd age learners, unemployed people etc., which suggests the basis for cross-sector cooperation. It is, however, interesting to see that the target group of “teachers and trainers” is underrepresented for universities; this may mean that projects dealing with the initial and continuing training of adult educators are underrepresented.

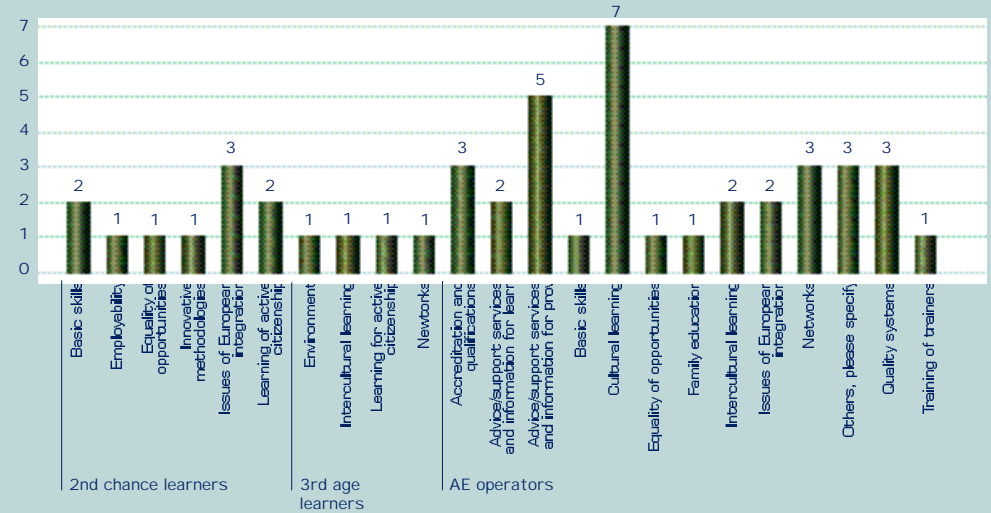


table 11

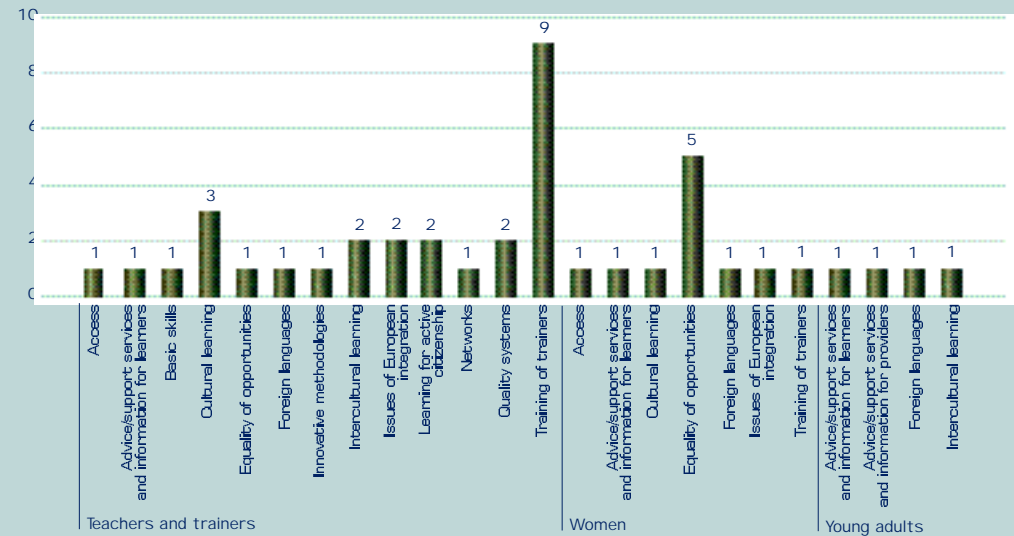


table 12

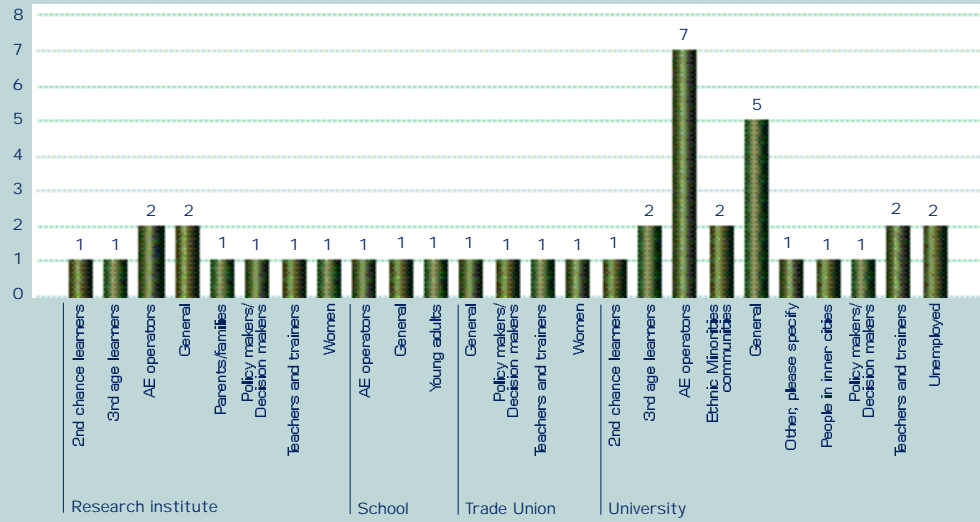
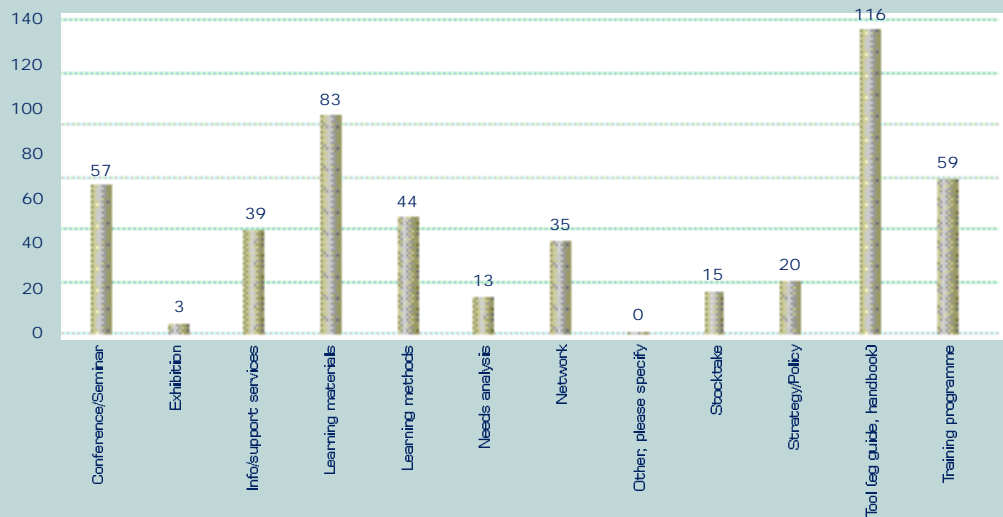


table 13



Output

Methodology: The following categories were used to classify the project outputs: learning methods, learning materials, training programme, tool (e.g. guide, handbook), information/support services, stocktake, needs analysis, strategy/policy, conference/seminar, network.

In order not to under-report the range of possible outputs by a single project there was no limit to the entries into the database for this category.

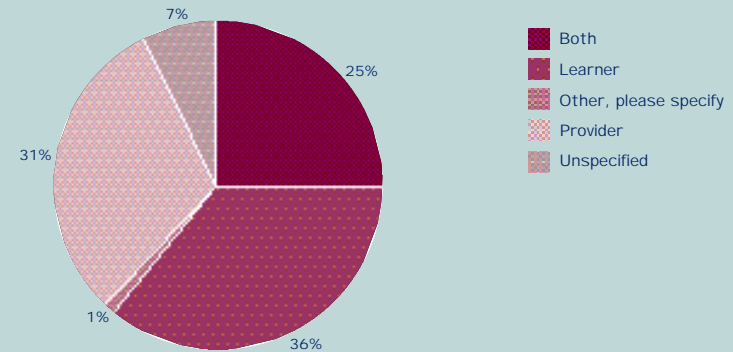
Headlines: Tools such as guides or handbooks are by far the most frequent project result, followed by learning materials and training programmes.

Needs analysis was little reported by projects as an output; as was 'stocktake' even though a number of projects compare systems of adult education. Also low is the number of actual strategies or policies. Much more attention could be paid in future to these underrepresented but nonetheless important output categories.

Project orientation

Methodology: Projects were categorised as being: learner oriented; provider oriented; both or unspecified.

Headlines: A substantial number of projects are oriented towards the learner or to both the learner and the provider. The 7% relating to unspecified should be avoided in future either by a better definition of project objectives or by a more thorough needs analysis as the basis of good project implementation.



Cross-comparison – output and other axes

Methodology: The database allows a cross-comparison “cascade”, that is a comparison between all the different categories of the analysis.

Tables 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19 compare outputs and coordinator countries; outputs and level of operation of players; outputs and status of players; outputs and player institutions; outputs and target groups

Headlines: The very few strategy/policy results involve players mainly from Spain, the UK and Italy, at all levels of operation (regional/local but also national and European) and representing the public sector rather than the private non profit/NGOs sector (universities, research institutes and public authorities compared to adult education organisations or providers); these results are targeted to policy and decision makers, adult education operators, and the general learner.

Strategy/policy - countries table 15

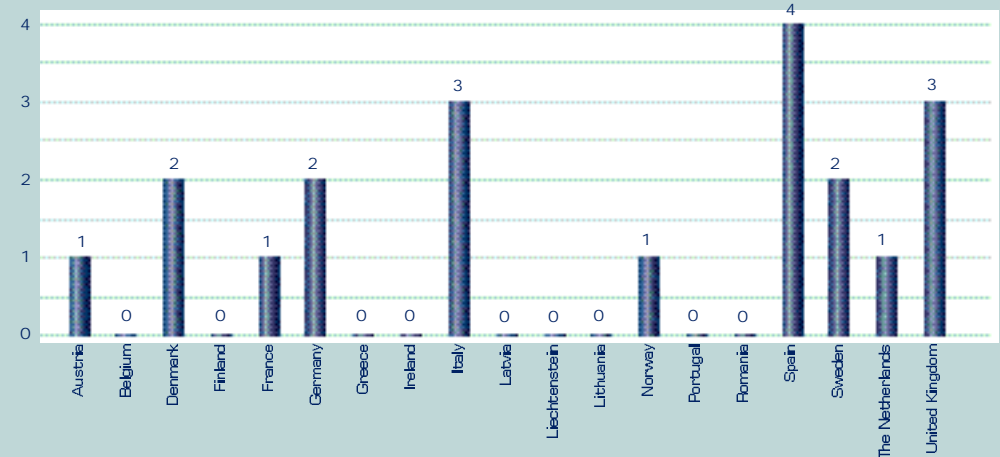


table 16

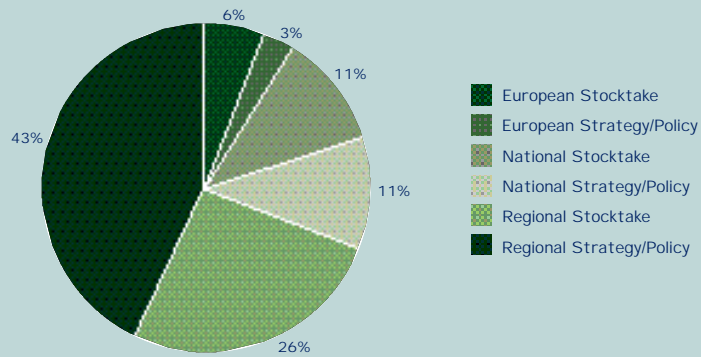


table 18 Strategy/policy - player institutions

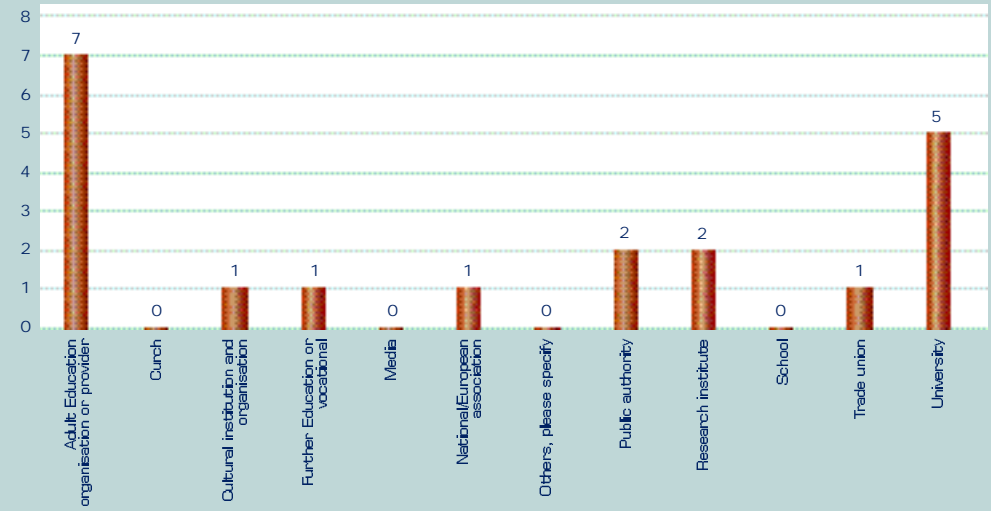


table 17

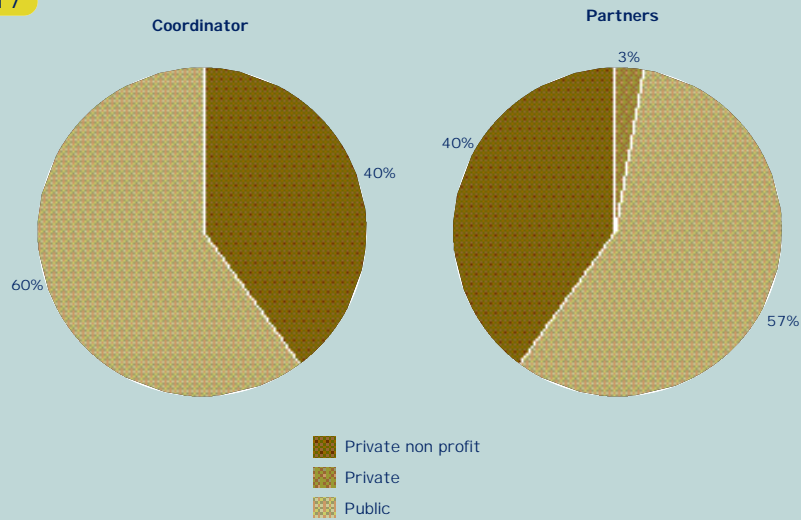
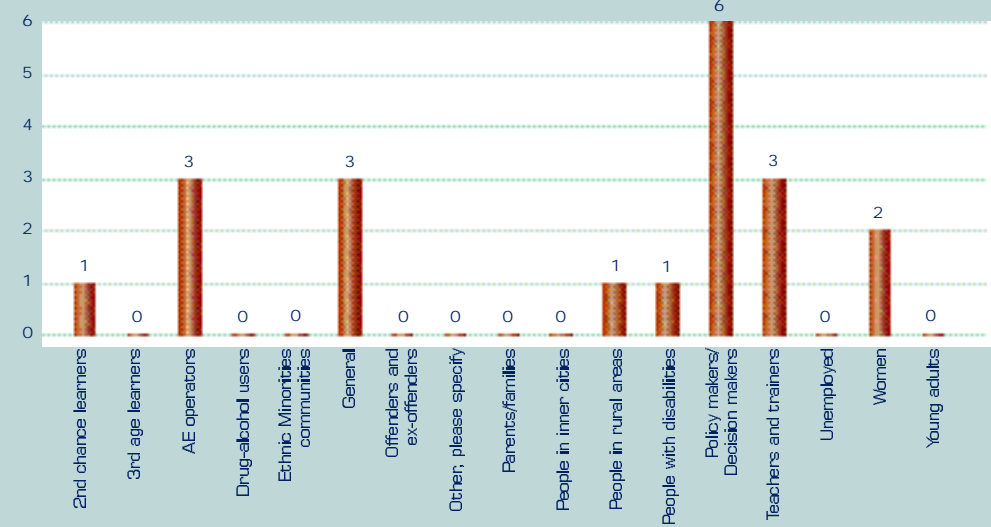


table 19 Strategy/policy - target groups



Appendix 2

Successful dissemination – some issues

What is dissemination?

“Dissemination is an interactive process with the help of which the participants create and distribute information about an innovation to each other, in order to reach mutual understanding.

Successful dissemination of an innovation produces change in people's thinking and actions. Dissemination always includes four recognisable and definable elements: innovation, dissemination, time and the people and communities that form the social system of the dissemination process”.^[10]

In other words it means a shift from merely distributing information to a large audience to an activity which would have impact on individuals and communities of interest, by introducing “change”. To achieve this, projects need a clear vision of their potential significance and impact.

What characterises successful dissemination?

Effective dissemination stimulates and helps both partners and end users to communicate, to enter into dialogue, and to learn from each other. For GRUNDTVIG projects this would take the form of:

- Treating the project itself as a learning experience: motivating all the actors involved in the partnership to play an active role throughout the project and involving them in reflection, self-assessment and evaluation;
- Therefore, changing the mindsets and contributing to the professional development of those who are directly involved in both the process and the final results;
- Treating dissemination as an integral part of project design, and not as a ‘post completion’ activity; identifying the points in the project cycle where dissemination is appropriate;
- Constructing a dissemination programme which was based on the principles of active participation (rather than passive reception), reflection, evaluation and action-planning;
- Defining the end users: stakeholders (those who have a direct concern with the outcomes of the projects) and the communities of interest who will benefit from and be able to use the project's results.

The quality indicators for an effective dissemination strategy flow from this:

Participation

- within the project: means have been designed and implemented to promote a continuous exchange of information amongst the partners and to ensure that all partners contribute to self-assessment;
- in dissemination: end users are defined and means of reaching them, engaging with them and obtaining their views have been designed.



[10] Rogers, E.: Diffusion of Innovations. Third Edition, The Free Press, New York, 1983

Transparency

- the objectives, processes chosen for the implementation of the project, intended outcomes and outputs and success criteria have been defined.

Transferability

- outcomes and outputs are shared and tested within the partnership in order to guarantee the transferability of results;
- means are defined to enable end users to test outcomes and outputs and to feed their experience back to project partners.

How could dissemination by projects be improved?

By improving the quality of applications

- place the question on dissemination at an early point in the application form rather than at the end, to underline the point that dissemination must be designed in from the start;
- ask in the application form for a definition of the end users;
- ask how the quality indicators above will be demonstrated.

By more effective partnership working

- defining dissemination channels and resources within each partner organisation;
- defining the players in the thematic area or specific sector in which the project is set;
- identifying the limitations of partners' existing networks;
- identifying other players, including new ones, at local, regional and national level who need to know or who could benefit.

By better project management

- the project work plan should show how dissemination will take place at each appropriate stage, and when and how the outcomes or final product will be distributed and disseminated;
- the project budget will allow realistically for the costs;
- means of assuring technical quality of products will be found and costed;
- end users will be involved in testing products (including ideas) during the course of the project (rather than after completion) and their views taken account of;
- appropriate dissemination activities will be planned for after the co-financing of the project comes to an end.

By using new technology effectively

- how can a website best be used – for sign-posting (with hyperlinks) or as a repository?
- how will the site be updated and kept live? whose responsibility is this?
- how will potential users learn of its existence?
- will there be a mail group or dialogue facility and how will this be moderated or monitored?
- who will monitor hits and pass on messages?