

YATG-Young Adult Target Group

Emilia ȚIGĂNUȘ
ESSI – București

Abstract

The YATG-Young Adult Target Group project is a 2-year project developed by *Soziale und Pädagogische Massnahmen e.V.* (Germany), in partnership with several European educational institutions. The article focuses on the motivation of different groups of partners in adhering to the project. East European partners, for example, are motivated by issues stemming in broader social and economical problems, such as poverty and unemployment, while southern countries mainly report the problem of dropout. Scandinavian partners complain that there is a gap between the needs of the target participants in educational and vocational programmes and the existing offer. The project aims to encourage the development and implementation of innovative and attractive educational services for young adults.

Duration of the project: 24 months Starting date: October, 2001

Ending date: September, 2003

Promoter: Soziale und Pädagogische Massnahmen e.V., Germany

Partners: Heinrich Böll Stiftung NRW, Germany; Fan-Projekt Bielefeld e.V., Germany; Iniciativas Para La Formacion, Spain; Azienda U.S.L. N.6 Palermo, Italy; Dudok College, Netherlands; Länsi-Pirkanmaan koulutuskuntayhtymä, Aikuiskoulutusyksikkö, Finland; Akademia Europejska na rzecz Euroregionu Karpackiego, Poland; Economic Software Systems International SRL, Romania; LEXIS S.R.L., Romania. In viewing the situation of the individual countries participating in the project, we can see the following interest in the issue:

East Europe: motivation to dissolve tension between general education and work related education.

In Poland and Romania, the situation of adult education is connected to the general situation of the countries: social poverty and unemployment, above all with young adults. Because of the social situation it seems obvious that someone would participate in work related qualifying education rather than in further education. Only a few institutional bodies have a look at the target group of young adults.

South Europe: development of strategies in order to reach the target group/to reduce barriers.

The Italian and Spanish project partners inform on the problem that adult education is focusing on particular aims such as finishing off secondary school certificates. The difficulty lies in steering the target group into different fields which in turn can lead to problems, for example the inadequate imparting of information and resulting in the insecurity of the learners.

Scandinavia: to convert into practice the orientation of the participant.

The Finnish adult education reaches young adults mainly via educational programmes for the unemployed, which is supported by the state, or via vocational training in companies. Most of these education programmes are free for the participants, but the learners do not always have the possibility to structure it in an individual way or to attend on a voluntary basis. Therefore, the situation is that young adults do take part in educational programmes but their needs are not necessarily addressed and hence not satisfied.

Western Europe: a place in the system of life-long learning.

In Germany and the Netherlands we find the situation of a drop in the participation of young adults, which can be explained partly by the declining portion of young adults within the total population and by the increasing attractiveness of self-initiated learning via a home computer.

Adult education is an objective established by the beneficiaries themselves. They need help to update their professional training, to re-train, to find a new profession, to make full use of a second education/training chance, since their initial training/education has failed, due to various causes. Next to this – and this seems to be more important- continuing education offers the chance to develop the own personality, to support life orientation and to learn key qualification which are necessary for both, private and working life. For the moment, the young are but poorly represented in the framework of the programmes concerning the improvement of adult education. Reduced access to continuing education leads to their being professionally and socially disadvantaged.

European programmes focus mainly on young adult vocational training, neglecting the educational part of the problem. However, the European dynamics urges the young to adapt to these changes by an adequate educational training, lest they should be marginalized. Young adults are to represent a significant segment of permanent education, which provides them with necessary social, communication, and politic competences.

The aim of the project:

The project proposes to develop strategies able to determine the target groups undertake education, to find real motivation, considering the specific features, wishes and expectations, and the complexity of each target group. Therefore, the project will be initiated by an analysis of permanent education at European level, which will also try to discover whether the education should be regarded as composed by two distinct aspects: a vocational component and a general educational one.

Starting from these premises, the project comes to define the target group, determine their social estate, needs, experiences and way of life.

The project results will lead to developing, implementing and evaluating several innovative strategies and concepts, and also educational methods, which will then induce:

- ✓ using the most important elements of the educational systems previously analyzed, in view of improving educational programmes for young adults;
- ✓ accustoming the young with educational programmes, by reducing the obstacles and discovering proper motivation;
- ✓ discovering good practices in the partner countries to avert suspicion of irresolute young adults;

The project proposes to bring a solid contribution to establishing discussions and principles concerning the educational politics in practice for the target group. The innovative side of the project resides in direct talking to the young in the target

group that have been neglected till now. The discussions will take place progressively, being the more relevant as they take place individually, in each separate country. Another innovative dimension of the project consists of discussions and collaborations concerning the educational structure and the new forms of co-operation between the institutions in the field. For the countries in the Eastern Europe the novelty is represented by the collaboration with other countries, oriented towards the exchange of didactic and methodological concepts and standards.

The products are:

- Synopsis
- Target group Analysis
- Comparison of models of good practice
- Presentation of model events and its evaluation
- Concept of self evaluation
- Home page(www.economicsoftware.ro/YATG)
- BSCW (Basic Support for Cooperative Work)
- Discussion forum
- Practical guide

At this point the partners debated on the role of monitoring concerning the development of the project, and how monitoring is to be achieved within the project. On YATG, the monitoring will be achieved by Marian Markenhof. Monitoring will be a part of this European project: both in project work and meetings as in the reports to "Brussels". To add a monitor to a European pilot project is highly recommended by the European Commission.

The evaluation will be achieved by a group of students from the University of Applied Sciences, led by proff. dr. Schmidt Kohl. They evaluate the written concepts for the model events and will give us hints if we managed to hit important facts about the target group, which are given in literature.

The *advisory board* is a supporting body in the project. The members come from:

Netherlands: prof. Dr. Max van der Kamp (Department of Adult Education- Research Director Educational Sciences) University of Groningen

Norway: Arbeidernes Opplysningsforbund-Tom Runar Hansen

Finland: Seppo Lahtinen (Manager of Employment Office in Hameenkyro)

Poland: University Rzeszow- Wlodzimierz Bonusiak

Deutschland: Prof.Dr. Volker Schmidt Kohl (University of Applied Sciences, Social Pedagogic)

Ursula Wolfahrt (Federal State Department for School and Further Education) Christian Simmert – Member of Parliament

The distribution of the project results and *experiences* will be done through the following channels:

-A practical guide (download internet page);

-The project home page (www.economicsoftware.ro/YATG) contains short information on project state, project results and discussion forum as well as links to the project partners, their networks and other relevant contacts. The Internet home page as well as the practical guide will be published in English and completed by short information in the national languages.

-Written short information and a summary of the guide, the project partners draw the attention of the expert circles on the project results and the practical guide. This information will be also distributed via the national and international networks.

-The project and Internet home page will be mentioned in some journals owned by the educational associations and/or institutions as well as in annual reports and annual programmes of the project partners, national and international networks informing on education and in specialized journals.