

PROFESSIONALIZATION OF LITERACY AND BASIC EDUCATION – BASIC MODULES FOR TEACHER TRAINING – TRAIN

Professional Development in the Field of Literacy and Basic Education Compendium

Introduction

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Professional Development in the Field of Literacy and Basic Education Compendium

Introduction

The EU GRUNDTVIG project “TRAIN – Professionalization of Literacy and Basic Education – Basic Modules for Teacher Training” began in October 2006. The project has a term of two years and involves partners from Germany, Ireland, Slovenia, France, Cyprus and Switzerland.

In Europe the development of literacy and basic education is very different – and this applies to the professional development of trainers as well. Professionalism within literacy and basic skills is a difficult subject because teachers and trainers have to deal with adults who are marginalised or disadvantaged. In addition to their reading and writing difficulties the students do have learning problems. Therefore teachers and trainers have to improve their knowledge of psychological and social aspects. It is necessary to develop innovative methods of teaching and learning, including interactive technologies. Even if the importance of training literacy and basic education practitioners and professionals is not disputed there are enormous differences in how to deal with it. In some countries you can find job descriptions for the staff, and universities provide training sessions with final examinations and certificates; in Great Britain core curricula and standards have been developed for students and efforts are made by the government to improve teacher training in the field of literacy and basic education. However, in most European countries – as in most of the participating countries - there is a lack of teacher training qualifications.

Within the framework of the TRAIN project; strategies, concepts and examples of good practice are now to be triaged, analysed and disseminated in the partner countries as well as in additional European countries which already have more experience in this field.

The TRAIN partnership developed a compendium with country reports providing state of the art of professional development in thirteen different European countries. Even if there are a lot of differences it is possible to identify the following trends:

- We see an increase in efforts towards professionalization in all countries we have looked at.
- Professionalization is seen as a key towards the improvement and future assurance of quality in the literacy field.

- Professionalization is rarely initiated or required by policy, but by the literacy community itself.
- Literacy teacher's courses vary substantially concerning goals, duration, qualification levels, standards, and accreditation.
- There are rarely any full time permanent positions for literacy teachers across Europe and there are still a lot of volunteers working in the field. Unstable working conditions for practitioners is a prevailing problem as long as there is no sustainable funding to support the high level of demand for literacy courses.

In chapter 1 we present respectively the development of Literacy and Basic Education and amongst other things we will deal with

- national policies, strategies and action plans
- structure and/or system of Literacy and Basic Education
- relevant bodies and providers

In a further chapter we will deal with the subject of professional development and we will go into concepts of teaching Literacy and Basic Education. In the course of which the following aspects will be taken into consideration:

- depiction of national strategies in the field of professionalization (e.g. framework, programmes, structure, provider)
- the evolution of the literacy training programmes and the present overview of literacy teachers training programmes.

We do hope that the overview of developments will contribute to learn from each other, to share experiences and to strengthen the field of Literacy and Basic Education across Europe.

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Project coordinator

On behalf of the TRAIN Project Team