



**SPEECH at the session of the CULT Committee Meeting on November 8th, 2018
at 10:30 am**

BIC – Mobility Brussels – European Commission

Dear Mrs. Kammerevert, dear deputies,

May I introduce myself? My name is Hélène Sajons, I am the Head of the Board of the Volkshochschule Olching in Germany and I represent the German team of the European Project “Boosting Individual Competences” which we coordinate.

Susanna Cristofanello represents the Italian team of the Centro Provinciale per l’Istruzione degli Adulti di Padova

Teresa Carrascal represents the Spanish team of the Federación de Colectivos de Educación de Personas Adultas de Valladolid.

Pierre Carrolaggi represents the French team of GRETA du Velay in Le-Puy-en-Velay.

Our institutions are not very large ones but they have a wide experience in the education of adults.

On behalf of all of us - partners and learners - present here today I would like to express our thanks for giving us the opportunity to submit a short report of our Erasmus strategic partnership project “Boosting Individual Competences” (BIC).

The partnership and D.R.E.S.F.I.

This partnership has brought four experienced adult education centres together which are confronted day by day with similar challenges where integration and inclusion are concerned. From the very start of our common work we decided to analyse the needs of persons finding it difficult to be part of society. We all had already quite a good experience in dealing with persons with low education or illiterates. We all knew that to access an educational path as an adult is much more difficult than starting education as a child. We decided to find answers to the following questions:

- Who are the persons who need help for a successful integration/ inclusion?**
- What are their basic needs?**
- What tools can we supply to facilitate their integration?**

The researches we did, made us reach the following conclusions:

- Persons who need help in their social integration are:**
 - § Citizens from all continents – including citizens in our home country, even in our home city**
 - § Illiterates who either left school prematurely or never went to school at all (e.g. some refugees)**
 - § Persons with a handicap preventing them to attend school regularly**
 - § Persons with restricted cognitive ability– this often leads to demoralisation and early school leaving**
- The basic needs were quite easy to list:**
 - 1. Having a home and family**
 - 2. Having a job**
 - 3. Being able to survive with sufficient resources**
 - 4. Receiving health-care**

- **The tool:**
In our transnational meetings we intensively discussed what tool we wanted to offer to these groups of persons to contribute to their social integration. It was clear enough that we needed an “easy and ready to use” tool. Our common efforts concentrated on the pan-European usability of the resource we were creating. We had given it a name in our application for the partnership project: “Definition of Relevant Educational Steps to Facilitate Inclusion” = also called D.R.E.S.F.I”. We all elaborated and tested different tools. After evaluation of each of them we adopted the draft presented by our French partner including all partners’ suggestions. In the months following our decision we all tested the tool in our institutions. On the basis of the results of each partner amendments were made on the following transnational meetings to reach the final form that we are presenting today.

What is the core message of our D.R.E.S.F.I. Paper?

RESPECT

We feel confident that the success of integration and inclusion principally depends on respect. Respect closely tied to listening. Complaisant listening exempted from prejudices and reprobation.

We created D.R.E.S.F.I. in the spirit of our convictions.

Practical D.R.E.S.F.I.

After a first part concentrating on “Diagnostic, personal and professional assessment “ in which personal information on the person are collected, D.R.E.S.F.I. suggests a range of tools, for example to evaluate the level of language, the skills and to elaborate a portfolio.

Working with migrants and illiterate people makes clear that where spoken language and written words are not understood, there is a need for other complementary tools. It is why we let an amateur cartoonist create a large series of drawings representing jobs and another one representing skills. Experience has shown that we took the right decision. In fact the drawings which can be downloaded from the project website (www.bic-project.eu) and

which are at every one's disposal for free, are very useful in teaching different subjects.

Conclusion

D.R.E.S.F.I. is what it was made for: a tool with "Relevant Educational Steps to Facilitate Inclusion"

The Scarf of Solidarity

Before speaking about our "Scarf of Solidarity" I would like to point out that didactical material, teaching resources and games have also been created over the project years. They are all on the project website and they can be downloaded and used for free.

Our Spanish partner initiated/uttered the idea of a "wandering scarf". During the first transnational meeting in Olching we all decided to knit squares of 20 x 20 cm to reach a length of 2 m/country and a width of 60 cm till the next meeting in Padua. No sooner said than done! But to achieve the task and to avoid costs we all decided to collect wool and needles. We did not expect to be overtaken by the enormous generosity of our citizens! We organised workshops to knit the squares for the scarf and took the opportunity to start a campaign against racism and for tolerance.

At the meeting in Padua we were very excited to see what the squares knitted by our partners looked like. We recognized at once that we had hit the mark as the many colours, the different wool qualities and the creative patterns were exactly the symbols of diversity that we wanted to visualize. We sewed together the first four 2-meter pieces of the scarf to obtain one longer piece of 8 meters. The German team decided to continue the scarf and the campaign against racism and for tolerance. By the middle of 2017 the scarf had a length of 16 meters in several pieces. To add messages on the scarf letters were cut out of fabrics in different colours and sewed on the squares. "No Racism in Europe", "Together for a better world", "Education for all", "Learning together and from each other" are only some of the messages decorating the "scarf of solidarity". In July 2017 the Adult Education Centre of Olching organised a flash mob during the city festival to draw the attention on the campaign. We have a video of this event

**(<https://youtu.be/xNnR2QhnZmQ>). Finally all parts of the scarf were put together. A further video was made with a drone to catch the picture of the whole 18,6 meter scarf (about 280 squares)
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZgF0N5gMN8> and
https://twitter.com/nabibb_de/status/999612375669116928) .**

The “Scarf of Solidarity” is the symbol of the diversity in Europe, it is a symbol of cultural richness and a symbol of the power of solidarity in Europe and in the world.

I would not like to miss the opportunity to say “thank you” to our partners, our teachers, our learners and all people who helped us all along this project ending in December this year. We all have learned a lot from each other, experienced moments of warm companionship, shared solidarity and found new friends.

Dear Mrs. Kammerevert, dear deputies, let me please take the opportunity to draw your attention of your Commission on some facts which influence the versatility of Erasmus projects and the exchanges of good practice in a negative way.

The fact that one institution is responsible for the whole grant gets adult education centres like ours to avoid choosing new unknown partners. We all need dependability and that is only given when all partners are known as reliable. Even so we do not believe that it is sensible to carry projects through always with the same partners. It does not seem to account for a vivid exchange between European education providers.

Another fact that influences the choice of partners is their geographical situation. As distances between places are calculated as straight line distances they seldom correspond to the reality. Such regulation will lead institutions to give preference to partners situated in large cities with good transport connections. If institutions which want to take part to Erasmus projects, are situated far from an airport or are difficult to reach, their chances to find partners will be easily affected. We believe that the grant for transnational meetings should be raised. It is very low and it does not correspond to the reality of travelling costs. Transnational meetings are

absolutely essential for the completion of projects. They are also essential to share good practice, to get to know European school landscape better, to improve cross-communication skills and to discover our common European cultural heritage.

To come to a conclusion we definitively want to continue working on Erasmus projects even if we are rather small institutions. It is often demanding to carry projects through but it is also a challenge which we accept only too willingly!

I thank you for your attention!

We are at your disposal to answer any question.

Questions and answers

Handing over the “Scarf of Solidarity”