

TULIP Project Management Group Meeting

Monday 10 December 2007: 10.30 - 16.30
University of Versailles

MINUTES

Present:

UNISON NW, UK (contractor)	Frank Hont & Lynne Morris
University Liverpool, UK	Alison Hughes (co-ordinator) & Carol Stewart
University of Vaasa, FI	Helena Eteläaho
METALL, FI	Aki Ojakangas
Arbeit und Leben, DE	Bernd Bischoff
University of Versailles, FR	Alain Nicolas / Sophie Le Berre
CGT, FR	Paul Desaignes, Renata Tretiakova,
University of Primorska, SI	Klemen Sirok
Gh. Asachi Technical University of Iasi, RO	Gabriela Atanasiu

Apology from Ina Grieb, Carl Von Ossietzky University Oldenburg, DE

1. Introduction and welcome

Frank Hont, UNISON NW (Contractor), welcomed all to the meeting and outlined the rationale behind the project – to learn together, to share good practice, to learn from each other and to progress adult education opportunities for workers.

2. Partner Introductions and Experience-Expertise

All partners briefly introduced themselves and their organisations, with reference to their expertise/experience in the field of TU – university relations and what they are hoping to learn and achieve from the project. These comments included:

- **DE** - A&L works closely with universities and labour organisations e.g. in running training seminars for workers and will develop this experience in its Case Study etc. Many universities have similar co-operation offices with TUs but there are issues about who pays for these facilities – TU, the state or the university?
- **FI** - METALL leads a TU School in Tampere. For workers TU education is often the only educational opportunity they access and METALL and other TUs are encouraging their workers to access HE-provided education also. Like in the UK, the TU work with universities is often focused on how to change their members' views of poor school experiences and encourage them to progress into adult learning. Vaasa also noted that in FI there is no 'power distance' between employers and workers, which is certainly not the case in all the partner countries, and so this will be an interesting and useful issue to include in the report.
- **FR** – government reform of universities and the emphasis on enterprise within HE has led to TU representation on the Board of Directors of universities. The idea of social partnership leading to sustainable employment, especially through accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL or VAE), and the right of employees to improve their learning is an area that has been the subject of much development. Work based learning (WBL) was also a theme of interest. VAE is seen as vital for those with no certificated professional competences to allow them to develop their learning

opportunities further through recognizing the learning achieved through their work as TU members/officers.

- **UK** – In the recent past universities have had close links with business but not with TUs as a result of historical political developments. Unison NW has 200,000 members many of whom are women with little educational experience and part time jobs and has been working with the University of Liverpool in encouraging them to take the opportunity to enjoy new learning opportunities.
- **SI** - TU activity is expanding but the issue is how to activate the TUs in this field of adult education for workers. This is a time of opportunity for this development.
- **RO** – Some of the questions are ‘Does RO society accept *informal* education?’ ‘How can RO engage the industrial colleges in this vocational education?’ Regional development is another issue for RO in this field. Unlike in FI, the power distance between employers and workers is very high. So the models that are developed by some of the more experienced project partners need to be contextualised for other countries and, therefore, need to be flexible. And the financial implications of the case study models should be documented also.

3. Project outcomes and activities

AJH, Project Co-ordinator, presented the paper outlining the required project outputs, which was accepted by the MG.

It was agreed that at each MG meeting we would review the ongoing activity of the project by asking:

- Is there anything of importance in this field that is missing from the current activities?
- Are there other partners that we would want to include in any future project- activity?
- How can we implement what we are learning in our own organisations?

The University of Versailles offered to host a ‘virtual desk’ in the project, allowing partners to make use of an online bulletin board and chatroom. This offer was gratefully accepted.

4. Financial and administrative details

AJH, Project Co-ordinator, presented the paper outlining the financial and administrative rules and also budgeted amounts for the various activities within the project, which was accepted by the MG. It was stressed that the EC has not yet published the Financial and Administrative Handbook for the life of this project and so details may change slightly.

Queries about individual circumstances should be addressed to the Co-ordinator, AJH

It was noted that there is no money for simultaneous translation within the budget and that the formal language of the project is English. Proposals for discussions in other languages, however, may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

5. Case studies and Descriptive Papers – DE, FI, FR, UK

Although further details will be provided at the MG meeting in UK in February 2008, the 4 countries’ partners briefly outlined some of their ideas as follows. These are only an *initial* view of what each resource may include.

It was reiterated that the Descriptive Papers must reflect the viewpoint of the learners (i.e. TU members) and that some of the learners would be invited to the conference in RO. At the UK partner meeting the other partners will outline topics or issues they would like to see addressed by the 4 countries. See also the comments from RO in item 2.

The Case Studies and Descriptive Papers will be presented in detail at the autumn 2008 partner meeting for group discussion, and the comments and issues raised will be incorporated within revised materials, as appropriate.

- **DE** – activities of the TU-university collaborative offices will be explored e.g. how employers are involved; how do they identify the employees who want to undertake some university-hosted learning; and discussion about how TU and university partners can work together to resolve issues about LLL within their own organisations
- **FI** – the issue for TU members in becoming adult learners is not as much financial as motivational e.g. sustainable employment. The 2 partners aim to develop their ideas and recommendations re some tools to address this, e.g. the separation between vocational and non-vocational learning is not always an accurate reflection of LLL needs.
- **FR** – can reflect on the rarity of TU and university collaboration in LLL and look at future evolution of this model. Specific issues may include VAE and recognition of skills gained from long time activity within the TU movement; the national approach to and critical analysis of VAE and valorisation of competences and skills; financial implications of who funds the training.
- **UK** - building on the current collaboration of a Knowledge Transfer Centre, the 2 partners will develop the model of providing adult learning opportunities and support to TU members. As in FI the separation between vocational and non-vocational learning is not particularly helpful as employees' personal development often informs their professional development and vice versa. The work will also stress the need to address the learners' needs e.g. timing of LLL provision when workers may have a number of part time jobs.

6. Network Evaluation and Future Exploitation

Kari Seppälä, from the University of Turku is our evaluator and will attend the MG and Partner Meeting in UK in February 2008. He has submitted some ideas to AJH for consideration (including a questionnaire for completion by partners at various stages of the project), and aims to make the evaluation as useful to the partners as possible. Accordingly, as requested by KS, AJH asked the partners what they would wish to achieve from the evaluation and their comments included:

- Has the networking been successfully achieved?
- What unintended outcomes have been achieved?
- Are we co-operating across borders?
- The need to maintain the innovative approach
- Is the project enabling universities in some of the countries less experienced in this field to open their doors more to their community?
- Although universities in most partner countries have a strong focus on research/ education the social mission of public services cannot be ignored. Are the outputs of the project serving to further this agenda, e.g. in facilitating social progress?

AJH will feed these ideas back to KS.

7. Any other business

None.