European Conference
**Closing the empowerment gap through citizenship education
How to address educationally disadvantaged groups**

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Report

Workshop 3
Learning Environment - Community and
Urban District Work

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Input:
Gabriele Recknagel, Goldsmith College, University of London (UK)

Project Presentations:
"Library Development Programme" presented by Jacek Krolikowski, Information Society Development Foundation (Poland)
"The complex support for disadvantaged schools in Warsaw – a Pilot programme" presented by Katarzyna Zakroczymska, Warsaw Centre for Socio-Educational Innovation and Training (Poland)

Moderation:
Grzegorz Makowski, Institute of Public Affairs (Poland)

General part

The two workshops "Learning Environment - Community and Urban District Work" have been moderated by Grzegorz Makowski, senior analyst and head of the Civil Society Programme at the Institute of Public Affairs in Poland. Moreover, Gabriele Recknagel, an experienced practitioner in Further Learning and fundraiser for the Third Sector, was invited as a speaker in order to give a theoretical input on the workshop's topic. Finally, Katarzyna Zakroczymska and Jacek Królikowski have presented their projects. Katarzyna Zakroczymska has worked since 1997 for the ins-service teacher training system in Poland; Jacek Królikowski is a training specialist at the Information Society Development Foundation.

Figures- Dates-Moods/Feedback

Six participants attended at each workshop. In the first workshop most of the participants came from Poland (four of six). One came from the Czech Republic and the other from the Ukraine. Most of them were practitioners working either for state agencies (for example, one as a City Policy Programme Coordinator for the City of Warsaw) or for the Third sector (for example as trainer). Regarding the affiliated organizations and the countries involved, the second workshop was more mixed than the first. Just one came from Poland. The others came from Germany, Austria, Czech Republic and Lithuania. Mostly they were affiliated by the Third Sector. One has been a freelancer on "intercultural Citizenship Education".

At both workshops the mood was very relaxed. At the beginning of the first workshop a little bit of uncertainty regarding the workshop's procedure and of its expectations arose. Moreover, the small amount of participants has been a bit uncomfortable for both – for participants and for presenters. It was suggested that the small number of participants might be due to the difficulty to find the workshop's room. Nevertheless, once the first workshop started the mood was calm and enthusiastic. For the second workshop the questions, proposed originally by the NECE-Conference as guidelines, has been abandoned in order to give room for questions that might have arisen during the workshop by the participants themselves. Furthermore, since questions arose and debate occurred in the first workshop spontaneously during the presentations, for the second workshop questions could openly be made during the presentations and not only after.

Content and Findings

As the moderator indicates at the beginning of the workshops the overall target was the transfer of knowledge and the share of experience among the participants. Moreover, a fruitful intersection between theoretical insights and practical issues was to be achieved. The questions of the conference served as guiding lines. However, these were handled very flexible taking the participants' interest more into account. The workshops were structured similarly; first, Gabriele Recknagel gave an input, then the two projects from Poland were presented and, finally, the moderator gave a short resume of the workshops.

Gabi Recknagel presented herself and forwarding the information that she will not give explicitly a theoretical input but an insight on her practical work on Citizenship Education. However, as she does a PhD on this topic recurring to her practical experience of more than fifteen years of work, her presentation was nurtured with theoretical concepts.

She presented the "Take Part Approach" focusing specifically on the "Speaking up" programme that takes place at the "Sure Start Children Centre's". As Gabriele Recknagel commented, the "Take Part Approach" was a two-year pathfinder programme (2009-2011) based at Exeter CVS, which was funded by the Department of Community and Local Government and managed by the Community Development Foundation. It was one of eighteen delivered pathfinder programmes nationwide that has arisen as a strategic response to the prior and broader pilot programme "Active Learning for Active Citizenship", which ran from 2004 until 2006. The "Take Part" programme had the basic aim to build the skills and confidence of local people for taking part as active citizens in their community. Moreover, it had the aim to support the community involvement and civic participation of

disadvantages groups. This was also the specific idea of "Speaking Up", probably the most profiled programme of the "Take Part Exeter Strategy". The specific target group of this programme was the disadvantaged parents of young children, which were mostly less than five years old and whose first language was not English. These parents had in general just few formal educational qualifications. However, they have a lot of knowledge, which has just to be enhanced by "Speaking Up" in order to, strengthen their confidence. The result of this programme was documented in a short film, which was presented to the workshop's audience. Parents said that after the "Speaking Up" Programme they felt much more confident in answering theirs children's questions, for example those arising from the homework. But also they felt more confident in applying for a job. Thus, the key for the success that can be learnt by this programme is the completely informal and local environment with the prime objective to have fun as well. In this way parents do not feel that they have an educational deficit. Moreover, it is important that the parents decide for themselves what actually (facilities, skills, etc.) they specifically need.

Several questions arose in the first as well in the second workshop. One observation was that though the target group of "Speaking Up" was the parents, mostly mothers participated in this programme. However, as Gabriele Recknagel responded to this, it is supposed that mothers have a very important impact on the whole family, so that there might be surely a knowledge transfer within the families. Another question was if the programme was accredited, which has been affirmed by Gabriele Recknagel. It is an extracurricular accreditation focusing on the learning outcomes. Interested were the participants regarding the finance source of this programme as well. Moreover, it was asked what conditions of entering into the "Take Part Programme" were formulated. As Gabriele Recknagel stated it, there were no formal conditions for participating. Any target group actually can be imagined to participate. Another question was how this programme motivates people to take part in the programme. The answer was that actually potential participators were asked what they need, so that they might have an intrinsic motivation to participate. Finally, Gabriele Recknagel stated that the programme is looking for new partners for a specific programme with theatres.

After this input, two projects from Poland were presented. Katharzyna Zakrocymska from the 'Centre for Socio-Educational Innovation and Training' gave insights to her project 'The complex support for disadvantaged schools in Warsaw'. As she commented it, this project is a pilot programme, which is just at the beginning of the process and which outcomes can only be evaluated sufficiently after several years of implementation. Indeed, Katharzyna Zakrocymska told the audience that they just have tested the idea, so that she will present the pilot of the pilot programme. The project is financed by the City of Warsaw with public funds. The project's target groups are the disadvantages schools in Warsaw. One of the indicators for the status of a "disadvantage" school is that higher-class students leave that school, the other indicator is public stigmata.

The reasons why some schools become disadvantage are very unclear. Different than in other countries or cities the disadvantage schools are not located just in segregated, deprived areas but mostly in socially well mixed districts. "Good" and "bad" schools are sometimes located in just the same urban area. For the pilot project eleven schools of very different kind and with varied forms of disadvantages have been selected. Nevertheless, they all have in common a 'difficult environment' of learning. However, the selection of those

schools has not been very easy since school's directors had to be convinced beforehand. No director wanted his school to be marked as 'disadvantaged'. Though there has been some resistance from the directors' side in the end they were glad to participate and to feel that they are taken seriously. After these initial problems, an individual diagnosis of the schools' educational problems took place. Since the schools have very different kind of learning problems an individual approach was forwarded. The Repair Programme cannot change the environment but can change the institutionalized interactions between the different school actors, namely the parents, the students and teachers. It is the first time in Poland that parents are involved as actors in the schools' affairs. For the changing of the institutionalized interactions patterns different instruments and methods are to be combined. The overall aim of this individual approach is to strengthen the civic participation of both, the students and the parents. It is a big problem that neither students nor parents are involved in the institutional development of the schools. Both have to feel responsible for their schools.

After the presentation of these insights questions arose among the participants. One of the questions was to ask what kind of specific instruments this Pilot programme applies. Katarzyna Zakroczymska responds to this that since every school has its problems there is no standardization of instruments. However, one important instrument was the activation of the interactions among teachers. In Poland, as she clarifies this point, teachers do not share the problems with their colleagues or with the director due to the fact that they are afraid to be marked as 'bad' teachers. So the programme proposed some workshops for fosting the communication between teachers with the overall aim to change this pattern of lack interaction. Another question arose regarding the participation of the school's directors. As the presenter stated it, the directors were important since they decided about their participation in the programme. However, once in the programme they were not in charge of the programme. The shortfall of the schools' financial budget has been discussed as well. The programme is supposed to have an influence on the schools' budget since the programmes outcomes deliver sophisticated arguments how schools might improve with a better financial status.

Finally, Jacek Królikowski from the 'Information Society Development Foundation' presented the 'Library Development Programme'. At the beginning of the workshops he asked the participants what comes into their mind when they are thinking about libraries. The participants mentioned spontaneously things as 'books', 'calm' and 'quite places', 'silence', etc. As Jacek Królikowski introduced his project, libraries have the potential to be vivid places of cultural encounters, which strengthen the local communities and the libraries alike. The 'Library Development Programme' is destined to public libraries in rural areas, meaning in small town or villages. In Poland there are 6600 rural libraries. In those areas the library is frequently the only public institution within the town and thereby the only place with free access. But also private entertainment institutions as cinemas are sometimes rare in those areas. However, most of the libraries had no modern computer equipments with internet access and were thereby not very inspiring places for local residents. The Programme, which is funded by the 'Polish-American Freedom Foundation' and The 'Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation', is actually destined to transform these rural libraries in places of cultural encounter by delivering modern ICT equipment and services, librarians trainings and suggesting courses' and workshops' proposals for the local residents. The overall aim is to

encourage civic participation by improving non-formal educational skills for local residents and librarians. Furthermore, both marginalized groups, youngsters and third aged people, are the prime target groups. Graffiti workshops as well as Internet courses in one place strengthen the intergenerational contact. Pleasure more than the feeling of education has to be transmitted.

At the end of presentations questions arose. Jacek Królikowski was asked about the applying procedure for the programme. However, as he commented it, the programme has already been closed for new applications. Then there was a question regarding the formal conditions to enter into the programme, specifically if it was necessary to get the ICT equipments. As the presenter clarified it was not expected to get the ICT equipment from the very beginning but just during the programme. Furthermore, libraries had to find other three libraries and becoming a network in order to be able to apply for the programme. This programme trained more than 3300 people. Finally, there have been suggestions to implement this kind of librarian approach not only in rural areas but in cities as well. One participant commented that the city Berlin (Germany) already has started such a Library development programme for transforming their libraries in better-suited cultural places. Among the workshops' participants they agreed that there is much potential for the libraries in cities as well.

Finally, both workshops have produced inspiring outcomes for further debate and interchange. As far as I can appraise those outcomes, the potential and the restrictions of citizenship education is very dependent on the local context. Therefore, the workshops' perspective on the urban respectively rural environment is crucial, and might be due to contemporaneous tendency of a progressive spatial inequality in the closer future even more important