

# EVALUATION

## **Project: SEP - Setting up partnerships against social exclusion at the workplace**

### **1 Project details**

Agreement No	VS/2000/0755
Programme	Preparatory measures combating and preventing social exclusion
Department	DG EMPL/E/2
Project co-ordinators	Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung E.V.
Project duration	Original timescale December 2000 to June 2002; with a subsequent extension till September 2002.

### **2 Evaluation**

Details of evaluator	Dr Philida Schellekens The Schellekens Consultancy  3 Greenwich South Street London SE10 8NW United Kingdom  philida@schellekens.co.uk
Evaluation completed	22-30 September 2002

#### **2.1 Context of the evaluation**

The project evaluation was carried out on the basis of:

- ◆ Documentation made available by of the UK partner, the Workplace Basic Skills Network which is based in Lancaster
- ◆ Discussions with Sandra Pegum, manager of the UK project, and Matilde Grünhage-Monetti, the manager of the German project and lead partner.
- ◆ Attendance at two transnational events held in Lancaster in June 2001 and in Bonn in September 2002.

## 2.2 *Project aim/outputs expressed at the outset*

- ◆ A **survey format on language, literacy and numeracy provision at the workplace**. The survey format can be used also in non partner countries.
- A publication **with** information on **language, literacy and numeracy provision at the workplace in** the countries **involved in the** project
- A **model for setting up partnerships/stakeholder cooperation** including guidelines, examples of good practice, issues and recommendations
- A **team of multipliers** in each partner country who can support the development of the model also in non-partner countries
- a **national conference in each member country** to present the results
- an **international conference** to present the results to relevant European stakeholders in government, employment and education as well as representatives of targeted organisations and to offer our support for the launching of similar projects in other European countries.
- **Partnerships** established in the countries involved in the project.

## 2.3 *Overview of UK activity*

Feb 2001	Initial project-planning meetings Frankfurt
April 01	Sandra Pegum enters the project Development and testing of a new questionnaire
May 01	The UK questionnaire distributed to over 1,500 providers. A total of 194 providers who responded to the questionnaire are currently providing Workplace Basic Skills provision in the UK., representing 390 organisations with over 6,837 learners. Development of a database for the results of the survey
June 01	Input of data onto access database providers Analysis of the data An interim report was produced
28-29 June	Partner visit to Lancaster attended by Chris Holland & Sandra Pegum WBSN, Matilde Grünhage-Monetti & Monika Tröster (Germany), Fernanda Minuz (Italy), Eoin McClellan Murray DfES, Judith Swift TUC, Philida Schellekens. Partner visit to a provider of workplace basic skills (Magnet )
Nov 01	UK project update produced Dissemination of the SEP project at a National conference held in Newport, Wales
Jan 02	Presentation at a Greater London Conference Final report on survey completed
21 April 02	Partner meeting in Bologna Italy
22 April 02	Dissemination event Istituto Aldini-Valeriani Bologna
April	Formulation of a standard in which to collect case studies Case studies collected
16 Sept 02	Final conference at Gustav Stresemann Institut E.V. UK guests Liz Lawson, Philida Schellekens, Judith Swift, Jo Swindalls, Gay Lobley.

## 3 Project outcomes

### 3.1 Working with colleagues from Italy, Germany and the UK

Overall, the project has been a great success in that it brought together a variety of people with relevant expertise and a keen interest in their disciplines. As is normal with transnational projects when partners from different nationalities and educational practice get together, it took time for the partners to develop a common understanding of the national and pedagogical contexts in which delivery takes place. Having attended two of the SEP events it strikes me that in this case one of the major outcomes was a meeting of minds. It provided a great opportunity for individuals to compare notes on educational policy and practical implementation. During the participative events the transnational partners engaged at a deeper level on a common understanding of good practice while at the same time appreciating differing national perspectives. For example, the debate was enlightening on the merits of the UK model of functional description of competence versus the linguistic, analytical model prevalent in Germany and Italy. Valuable was also the contribution on women's perspective which the Italian partner brought to the table. The German and Italian partners have found the information on UK practice valuable, especially the funding and other support of the UK government for literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision, and have made use of this information to strengthen their own case for provision.

The case studies produced for the SEP project, both in the *UK Interim Report*, the document *Safe Haven?* and during the final conference, all proved a valuable tool to compare models of delivery and to begin to assess effectiveness. The differences in practice between the three countries is surely a worthwhile exercise not just for the immediate participants; but also in the interest of evaluating and promoting good practice internationally.

This aspect has perhaps particular relevance for the UK as it is moving from a devolved to a centrally controlled mechanism of delivery where a wave of national government initiatives are now driving local delivery. This project provided a refreshing opportunity for people working in the UK to reflect on good practice and to take note of aspects which transcend local and national delivery.

### 3.2 Profiling practice in literacy, numeracy and language delivery

The *UK Interim Report*, the paper *Safe Haven?* and the final conference event provided opportunities to study case studies set in the three countries. These were of particular relevance in that they enabled the participants to understand what the similarities and dissimilarities were in the delivery of literacy, numeracy and language learning in the three nations. This made for a most valuable part of the exchange of information.

The reports *Safe Haven?* and the *Interim Report* produced by the staff working at the Workplace Basic Skills Network are also useful in that they provide an overview of national practice in the three participating countries and a blueprint for collecting data on UK workplace provision respectively. The SEP survey report categorises barriers to basic skills training from three perspectives: the employer, employee and training provider. A number of ways of overcoming these issues were also published under the same headings.

The researchers have followed standard practice in the UK by combining the fields of basic skills, and in particular literacy and language for second language speakers. While it is understandable that colleagues at Lancaster analysed the data in a holistic way, nevertheless it would have been illuminating to identify the three fields individually and provide examples of practice by the disciplines of literacy, numeracy and ESOL.

## **4 Organisation and management**

### **4.1 UK management**

The UK part of the project saw the involvement of two managers: Chris Holland contributed to the planning stages and became the initial manager of the SEP project. Chris also produced the document *“A safe Haven? Setting up second language provision in the workplace, with some recommended guidelines towards good practice”* with contributions with colleagues from Germany and Italy.

The second person was Sandra Pegum, who took over responsibility for the management of the project in April 2001 and who produced the report on workplace literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision in the UK.

The change of manager was handled well as the two managers had a period to hand over the responsibility for the project and Chris kept a degree of involvement with it in any case.

### **4.2 Transnational organisation**

The lead partner for this project was the Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung with Matilde Grünhage-Monetti as its manager. It strikes me that the UK, Italian and German partners worked well together and that Matilde’s leadership was effective and dynamic.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

This project has been very useful indeed and has opened up a valuable discussion on how best to deliver literacy, numeracy and language learning in the workplace. When the original aims are set against the performance of the project, it is clear that they have very largely been met, apart from to some degree the dissemination of its outcomes. While there have been dissemination events, which in themselves were valuable, the partners have felt it to be a pity that the time span for this project was too short to disseminate the outcomes of the project further.

If there is a recommendation to be made on future development, it would be to build on the achievements of the group so far. It is clear from discussions with members of the group that priorities would be to investigate methodology and delivery of literacy, numeracy and language learning in the workplace and by identifying common concepts of good practice.

Dr Philida Schellekens  
London  
30 September 2002