

BRIDGING BARRIERS:

COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINERS IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION



4 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES:

- AUSTRIA
- ITALY
- SLOVAKIA
- SWITZERLAND

5 EUROPEAN ORGANISATIONS:

- 3S
- ISOP
- IL MONDO NELLA CITTA'
- E - CODE
- SVEB - FSEA

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KEY INFO AT A GLANCE

Bridging Barriers is a two-year project funded by the European Union Erasmus+ framework bringing together researchers, teachers and course providers from Austria, Italy, Slovakia and Switzerland. The project aims to improve the professionalism of ABE teachers in Europe by developing new approaches to make visible and systematize the specific skills and competences applied in this field and to support the development of a European profile of ABE teachers' competences while also enhancing networking among teachers in the field.

Three Intellectual Outputs will be developed in the project:

- **a competence matrix** on skills used by ABE teachers in delivering adult basic education, applying proven approaches (VQTS) in the field;
- **a curriculum** for ABE teachers targeting their skills in helping students with overcoming learning barriers;
- **a handbook** supporting the implementation of train-the-trainer courses modelled on the developed curriculum.

OUR PARTNER MEETINGS

KICK-OFF MEETING

The kick-off meeting for the project “Bridging Barriers – Competence development of trainers in adult basic education” hosted by 3s as project coordinator, was held on 24 and 25 October 2019. Representatives from 3s and four European organisations involved in the field of adult basic education (Isop – Austria, Il mondo nella città – Italia, E-CODE – Slovakia and SVEB – Switzerland) took part in the meeting. The purpose of the kick-off meeting was to accurately outline the upcoming activities of the project, their time schedules and the responsibilities of each partner. All partners were actively involved in the meeting and contributed to the definition of the activities at hand necessary to establish the three intellectual outputs of the project.

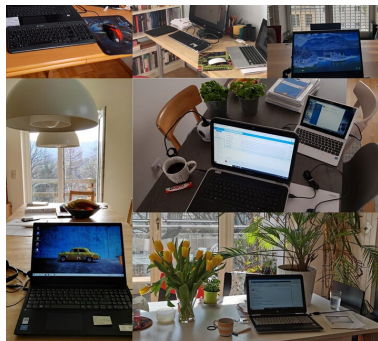


2° VIRTUAL MEETING

Even if the restrictive measures taken to contain the widespread of Corona virus did not allow us to meet in Zvolen, Slovakia, for our Second Partner Meeting, we managed to organize two virtual meetings on 2nd and 3rd April 2020. All partners took part in the meetings, which brought together 10 people involved in this project. The first day we started with an exchange of information on the current situation and a discussion of possible scenarios for future work and implications on the Bridging Barriers project. The following topic addressed was a recap of what we have achieved so far. On the second day we shared experiences made so far with the interviews and some good practices. The virtual meeting ended with an overview on the next steps and a to do list in the upcoming months. It will definitely be another on-line meeting in June.

BRIDGING BARRIERS DURING THE LOCKDOWN

FROM AUSTRIA/1



At 3s the team members have established their own workspace in home office since mid-march. Some of us have already worked from home before, so it is not entirely new, but the length of time spent in home office continuously is quite a change to our usual working mode. Especially for those team members who have small kids at home due to closed schools and kindergartens, where it is difficult to focus on work, which has not really decreased for most of us. But home office might also come with benefits, if you have a garden or balcony you can at least enjoy these sunny warm days of spring while working. Still, we are looking forward to be working at 3s headquarters again, to be able and meet in person with all our colleagues.

FROM AUSTRIA/2

ISOP, as an important institution of Adult Education in Austria, had to submit to the corona measures like all other institutions. In March, it was necessary to cancel classes, postpone course-starts and suspend individual consultations. In my opinion, the conducting of the interviews suffered from Corona to a rather minor degree. Colleagues from Adult Education organizations are usually familiar with digital tools. Within this framework, we could carry on with work. Nevertheless, there are a number of projects in our organization, whose success depends on the physical presence of participants. Only those, who have been already familiar with digital tools in the past, can use them in presence. However, a significant proportion of ISOP's clients do not have the necessary technical equipment to participate in, while digital, however largely conventional learning offers. A printer or text program is often required for successful participation. The lack of personal exchange creates alienation. This we noticed as a major problem, especially in initial situations. As a consequence of this distance, we have lost and still lose participants over time. Those clients, who still participate, experience a sudden increase in their digital skills – fed by necessity and sometimes, less frequent, caused by the sheer joy of learning. The last few weeks demonstrated quite well the “construction sites” in adult education. We face challenges we have never thought about before.

FROM ITALY



The Italian language school of Il Mondo nella Città has been closed for three months now due to restrictive measures taken by the Italian government to contain the widespread of corona virus. At the beginning we explored many educational applications and platforms to carry on online teaching. As a matter of fact, many tools were not suitable for our students since most of them do not have a laptop and have limited data connection on their smartphone. Whatsapp eventually turned out to be the best option as many students already had it installed on their phones and knew how to use it. So that, we are currently sending to our students exercises, activities, videos, audio files created using Power Point, Word, Screencast-O-Matic or Nimbus and we are setting up group video chat on Whatsapp to do lessons together. Online school is clearly a demanding challenge, both for us and our students: it is not easy to motivate students and to involve them, especially illiterates. However, looking at the bright side, we take it as a chance to discover and try new teaching tools. Anyway, let's hope to go back to school soon and to write again on our blackboard!

INTERVIEWS WITH ADULT BASIC EDUCATION (ABE) TEACHERS



In our research, we are particularly interested in how adult educators in adult basic education describe the ways in which they apply their particular competences to support the learning of their participants respectively respond to the participants' various (relevant) needs. Moreover, we are interested how educators have acquired the required competences allowing them to effectively support the learning of adults, even in cases, where learners face severe impediments in making any desirable progress.

Here are some quotes taken from the interviews made so far:

“

A barrier encountered in basic adult teaching is the difficulty in making students understand that they can also learn from their classmates and not only from the teacher

P. from Italy

“

For adults studying is demanding, especially if they have to conciliate study with work and family duties. So it is difficult to maintain the motivation high, and attend lessons and study regularly.

E. from Italy

“

Learning success can be multifaceted. It does not necessarily mean that someone can spell the word "street" correctly, but that people can recognize themselves as resource-oriented and turn to new things

G. from Austria

“

Even as an experienced adult educator, you have to distrust your own hypotheses and refrain from bias.

B. from Austria

“

Confidence-building in groups is very important. A trainer or counsellor needs to build a relationship. This makes it credible for the participants and thus learning content is more easily accepted

Z. from Austria

“

The main issue in this case is about student's autonomy: the person needs to realise that he/she is the subject of the learning process, not an object

C. from Italy

COME AND MEET US!



3S RESEARCH & CONSULTING

3s is a research and consultancy firm specialised in national and European project work in the fields of initial and continuing vocational education and training, higher education and adult education.

WEB SITE: WWW.3S.CO.AT



ISOP - INNOVATIVE SOZIAL PROJEKTE

Since 1987 ISOP has supported migrants and refugees, (long-term) unemployed, and people with basic education needs through counselling, qualification/education and employment projects in social and professional integration.

WEB SITE: WWW.ISOP.AT



ASSOCIAZIONE IL MONDO NELLA CITTÀ'

Il Mondo nella città is a non-profit association managing a reception center for refugees and asylum seekers by providing housing facilities, legal and social support and Italian language courses.

WEB SITE: WWW.ILMONDONELLACITTA.IT



E-CODE

e-code is a non-profit association based in Krupina, Slovakia active in the fields of adult and youth education.

WEB SITE: WWW.E-CODE.SK

SVEB - FSEA

SVEB is the Swiss national umbrella organisation for adult education and operates as a professional association and pressure group. It also manage the national training-of-trainers system and are responsible for eduQua, the national quality label for adult learning providers.

WEB SITE: WWW.ALICE.CH

S V E B
F S E A

NEXT STEPS IN THE BRIDGING BARRIERS PROJECT

- ➔ To develop a draft competence matrix
- ➔ To develop guidelines for expert interviews and country case study
- ➔ A virtual meeting to discuss the state of play
- ➔ To conduct expert interviews and validate the draft competence matrix
- ➔ Draft country case studies

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Bridging Barriers project
or to be updated about
project progress?**

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