

Minutes

Meeting : 8th PLA meeting Promoting Adult Learning in Networks (PRALINE)

Date : 2nd and 3rd October 2023

Location : Zagreb, Croatia

Day 1, Monday, the 2nd October

Welcome Speech

- Speech from Manfred. Tie in today and tomorrow and discuss final conference Netherlands later in the programme.
- Introduction to organisation and programme.

Adult education system in Croatia

Dr Ivana – Head of Department for Adult Education Ministry of Science and Education

- Elementary school – 8 years
- Secondary split into 3 (Grammar schools, vocational schools, art schools) 97% students go into secondary education. Stopped at level 5 – universities take on other levels.
- Croatian education system to led by ministry of science and education.
- Adult education intended for students 14 years and above who do not attend another form of education.
- Adult education more flexible. Catered to the need of labour market.
- 5% of adults get involved in adult education – lowest rate in Europe.
- In 2007 adult education was deemed underdeveloped, inconsistency of quality etc.
- Adult education act was adopted in 2007. Regulated as formal education. Defined what adult education is.
- 2021 new adult education act came into force. Standardised quality and qualification frameworks. Enabled finance, voucher system. Monitoring system introduced. Lifelong learning in foundations of adult education in Croatia.
- Today – ministry have agreed to issue 150 new programs. Quality of assurance piloted in 25 institutions. Currently developing an evaluation system.
- Striving for – recognition for adult education, strengthening the system, evaluation.

Questions

Q: How do you engage adults into education when they may have had poor experiences of education previously?

Answer: Financial support and flexibility is something they react to. Challenge to engage, hard to reach. Doesn't matter if employed or unemployed – can get voucher for financial support. No

rejection, send adult to programme with particular set of skills.

Q: If the policy priorities are linked to economy, would the adults that aren't taking those courses be funded for other courses like art?

A: Yes, in the future. Pressure from employers to implement curricular for language, technology etc. Need to train in new skills.

Q: New law for adult education, how do you regulate it?

Free days for education in employment every year, may be different with each employer.

Q: Are you more focused on general Adult education rather than vocational adult education?

A: Not focused just on one. Other associations that support institutions, connecting with employers. Quality is only focused on formal education – to improve education vouchers. Has to be part of the Croatia, qualification framework.

Q: Do VET institutions have responsibility for monitoring and quality assurance?

A: No different councils and expert groups

Implementation of outreach and support measures to making micro-credentials and vouchers schemes available for adult participants.

Ministry of Labour – Majej Petranović

- Labour market challenges – mismatch between labour force and skill needs of economy. Number of employers may be forced to change their careers.
- Changes/disappearance of jobs due to grow in demand for automatisation, digitalisation and AI. Aging population also a challenge
- Voucher system (April 2022 – June 2026) – 30,000 vouchers for employed and unemployed persons (40% for long-term unemployed, inactive persons and young people)
- Voucher system – to increase participation, raise competence levels, secure labour force.
- Labour market portal – data exchange for relevant institutions. Public can freely access to this portal. Follow people throughout education. Data on employed and unemployed.
- Skills catalogue – digital and green skills.
- Voucher goes directly to education provider – not the user.

Manfred – are the providers in competition with each other? Don't have the system to be able to pay the users directly. Basic providers have the same amount of quality.

- Hard to measure quality?
- 129 providers, 130 educational programmes, 13,900 applications, 3,600 users are participating.
- Future steps – National recovery and resilience plan, voucher focused on green and digital skills. Individual learner accounts, ESF+ aim to get 70,000 users – skills or employed and unemployed.

Questions

Q: Is it employers or is it also vocational schools?

A: Only employers and not vocational schools. May support the quality.

Q: Can support be provided for the applications?

A: Tech support can be provided to support the application on the internet and on phones.

Q: The labour system work for future labour needs?

A: Don't have labour market predictions yet. But its more current. Hope to have it in the future.

VET and CVET under the jurisdiction of the Chamber of Crafts

Lorena Malogorski – Association for education, chamber of trades and crafts

- One of 20 chambers. Largest chamber – promote trades and crafts and represents the interests of tradesmen and craftsmen.
- Included in initial vocational education, issue licenses for crafts and companies for apprenticeship training.
- Provides exams.
- A law of trade and crafts – must be followed.
- Unified model (JMO) under Ministry of Science and Education. JMO combines school-based learning and apprenticeships.
- Company is required to have a licence for apprenticeship, must do exams to be able to teach apprentice, practical and written. 7 years of experience.
- Master craftsman exams – conditional for some crafts. Need to have 2 – 4 years' experience in the profession. If they don't have apprenticeship qualification or secondary education, they must prove they have been in work for 4 years.
- Vocational competences exams – Level 2, 22 vocations from associated trades and crafts. Minimal – elemental school, not necessary to have knowledge and skills.
- Promote through advertising companies.
- 70% is on the job and 30% off the job.

Survey report (PRALINE)

Marguerite Hogg, Policy Lead for Adult Education, Association of Colleges

- Plan to have a count down, use the weeks, to disseminate some of the messages, through different partners.
- Add links and dates onto spreadsheet, each partner to add name on spreadsheet and agree to disseminate each point on the survey.
- Link good practice to the survey, to meet in the next couple of weeks to do this.
- Marguerite to email everyone the survey report and each group (4 groups) and decide which ones should be used.

Information and motivation of unemployed persons about upskilling opportunities

Kristina Mazalin – Senior Expert Adviser at Career Guidance and Education Department with the Central Office for Croatian Employment Service

- Latest registered unemployment survey – 5.7%
- Problem finding workers for certain professions. Tackle problem, importing foreign working.
- Unemployment going down, employment rates going up.
- Provide lifelong learning employment service. Prevention, selection, informing and counselling. Done through online services and tools.
- Semi-annually do an employer's service and ask what demands are and what skilled workers they need, produce labour market policy.
- JOB+ scheme – for vulnerable groups, long term unemployed person. Work and social integration into the labour market. Reforms currently implemented through National Recovery and Resilience Plan in relation to unemployed vulnerable groups.

Questions

Q: If people are unemployed, they must be registered at the unemployment office?

A: No do not have to be registered. Some people do not see the benefit. If not registered will not get unemployment benefits.

Q: Will you evaluate?

A: Contracted an evaluated to look at first year of voucher scheme.

Example of good practice of an adult education institution (promotion and implementation of activities)

Itana Bukovac, Head of Adult Education Department, Public Open University Samobor.

- Provide 18 Adult Education programmes, 6 courses and 3 courses for children.
- City of Samobar funds institution. Apply for grants to run programmes. Cover expenses for the participants.
- Designing new programmes to help participants to achieve their goals and reach competencies. Work with employers to create programmes e.g., heat pumps.

Membership of EUProVET

Scilla Van Cuijlenborg – Vice President at EUProVET

- Final opportunity to join EUProVET
- About strengthening adult education, regional or national associations are involved. Best way to communicate with providers/members.

Survey task

Survey -  [PRALINE – Survey results task Croatia PLA October 23.xlsx](#)

- Everyone was split into 4 groups. Each group to go through each key message from the survey and stated whether they should become recommendations.
- Group key messages into themes.
- Recommendations related to themes and link to key messages. Use specific examples from PLAs to link to recommendations as 'evidence' or 'examples'.

Day 2, Tuesday, the 3rd October

Croatian Strategy for promotion of Adult Learning

Nives Novak, Head for Section for Development and Promotion of Life-Long Learning, The Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education

- Promotion of lifelong learning phase 2
- Motivating citizens to get involved in lifelong learning, developing and growing competencies of staff in institutions.
- Target of 550 educational staff who will participate in professional development.
- Working group created to monitor the implementation of the strategic framework. Publication to be created.
- Collaboration with various stakeholders.
- Lifelong learning week, national education campaign. Raise awareness of learning in education.
- A range of campaign paths, videos, etc.
- 4 cycles of andragogical
- Train teachers in institutions on andragogical learning – voluntary.
- New project is planned 2024-2029

Questions

Q: Is there a particular requirement for how many training sessions teachers need to do?

A: No – voluntary, 13 days 360 hours. A great way to gain skills. How do you encourage all participants to take part?

Q: Can you tell us more about the new project?

A: 2024-2029 project is planned, but not sure when. 2 goals, quality assurance system and promoting lifelong learning. A range of different workshops for everyone during the campaign.

Promotion of adult education on regional level – Role of regional coordinators

Hrvoje Jelen and Danijel Đekić, Regional Coordinators for promotion of adult education, Zagreb Craft College

- Regional means county level.
- Founded in 2006, 3 different organisations form the craft college.
- 20 employees and 150 external experts that support.
- Linking VET with economy and regional development
- Innovation in craft and VET
- Have an advisory role.
- Levels 3 – 5
- Reskilling and upskilling. Preparation for craftsman exams
- Development of educational programmes, digital competences and quality in VET.
- Erasmus accredited.
- Lifelong learning week – campaign to encourage people to participate of lifelong learning.
- Low rate of participation in lifelong learning – 5% in Croatia. Average in EU is 10%
- Regional coordinator – support in designing and implementing activities within the week. Coordinate the lifelong learning week for each region for institutions that participate. 8 coordinators across Croatia.
- Role – provide information to organisations and the public, distribution of promotional material, participate in promotional activity.
- Promoting green skills with adult education with lecturers from Croatian employment service – wanted to share information on how to share these programmes including the voucher scheme.
- Promoting upskilling opportunities to VET students – virtual welding course. See the opportunities for further education after VET.
- Big regional differences, coordinator role important to implement the same messages across the country during lifelong learning weeks.
- Personalisation is important. Catering to the community and their needs, but also to the individuals.

Questions

Q: How are you impacting the community members? Do you have collaboration with training providers? How do you link to the providers that meet the needs of the community?

A: We are linked to chambers of crafts – automatically linked to the employees. Often participate in meetings and give feedback on skills and competencies. Training provider as well based on the voucher system. Community model.

Q: Do you have any successful examples?

A: Upskilling, using micro qualifications. Short courses can get specific skills for specific jobs.

Q: How do you reach the harder to reach groups?

A: Social media and smaller local campaigns.

Working groups

- Everyone got into groups to finish recommendations and to complete PLA reflections.

Project outputs and final conference.

Manfred Polzin, Senior Policy Advisor International Relations at the MBO Raad

Marguerite Hogg, Policy Lead for Adult Education, Association of Colleges

- Everyone to discuss outputs in groups. E.g., website etc. sustaining learning past project end date.
- Discussions on programmes for the conference.

Group 1

Identify the outcomes and outputs.

- Comparative document for all the countries for specific goals? Identify key themes for each PLA and evidence/examples of each and then recommendations for each. Link to speakers.
- Need to define the work?
- Survey to be different output compared to goals linked to PLA/evidence/examples.
- What has been the impact of the project on everyone involved in PRALINE? Has it changed mindset, has it given you evidence to have discussions with the government.
- Networks?

Speakers

- Speakers will come from the cases.
- Students to speak about their own experience. Success stories – incorporated into the videos?

Good practices

- Comparative document will help identify good practices.

Future projects

- Adult learners as just learners, more personas. Holistic approach. Expectations of the learners. Providers assume what learners need and want; how do learners get involved in designing their education. PRALINE 2.0
- Where do they learn? Learning environment. What is the learning ecosystem?

Group 2

Outcomes and outputs:

- PLAS – good practices shared.
- Survey report
- Recommendations
- Website

- Increase membership of EUproVET
- Online meetings at country level.
- Podcasts
- Newsletter
- Praline dissemination at national events

Final conference suggestions:

- Plenary speakers
 1. Recommendations from survey – reflections (academia)
 2. European Commission – are our findings relevant
 3. Plus, one other
- Panel discussion (Praline rep, employer rep, research rep, policy maker rep, adult learner rep) - questions drafted ahead of time. Themes – digital inclusion etc.
- Duration of conference 1 day.
- Omnia – Finland – supporting immigrants.
- Estonia – digitalisation
- Spain – local authority connection 'Prospecto'
- Ireland – digital library and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages).
- La Rochelle – Coaches not teachers.
- Should we include something about the VET institutions' role in supporting business innovation?
- Use the evaluation forms to identify the best 'good practices'.
- Check whether good practices need external speakers to be counted as 'third' person.

Future project ideas:

Any new project should include new EU partners to have a more complete overview of EUproVET.

- AI
- Sustainability – green skills, net zero. Encourage people to embrace a different way of working and living. Link with information, advice, and guidance. Need some early adopters.
- Ageing population – older workers. How do you make employment attractive for older workers.
- Holistic approach to delivery, recognising that learners are individuals and should be central to their learning pathways choices. This should start at primary school level and continue throughout. Learning environments should be flexible and adaptable to individual needs. This could act as a preventative measure.
- Micro credentials and linking it to the green transition.

Group 3

Outcomes and outputs from the project

- Increase participation in EUproVET – achieved.
- Recommendations to be provided about successful strategies to engage the most vulnerable groups (8 - 10 max strong messages)
 - We should publish this as a document.
- Findings of the survey is an output.
- Good practices shared and disseminated.
 - Support systems of national VET organisations
 - Will be on the website.
 - Weak points is dissemination and showing how we are doing this – challenge
- Organise an online meeting with members at a national level by mid-December – record when each of these meetings happen in each country.
- The presenters at each of the PLAs should be invited at the national online conferences.
 - At each PLA there were policy makers onboard – give and take.
- Podcast is an output.
- Newsletter is an output.
- Who will be the key institutions and actors to which we will send recommendations and why they will be valuable – direct contact with policy makers and providers (e.g. regional coordinators in Croatia)
- Members of PRALINE team bringing PRALINE to other conferences and networks (spin off meetings e.g. Croatia in France and in Ireland)
 - Make a list of these – concrete proof.
 - Estonia PLA – Triin is now working at the ministry having participated in all the PLAs, same in Portugal – secretary of state is now in the ministry – now in position to influence policy

Final conference

- Important to have someone from academic side and policy development as keynote speakers - two keynote speakers.
- Show our recommendations and have 2 panel discussions (PRALINE, specialist in an area [someone involved in e.g. inclusion], someone that can implement, we also need employers and a learner (adult education learner). Do a video reel. Draft questions ahead of time. One PRALINE partner to be visible at the panel discussions e.g. on:
 - Digital education
 - Inclusions
 - flexibility
- Someone at the end to give a closing reflection (Manfred)
 - E.g. excellent example from Estonia in area of digital learning – making a link to recommendations and PLAs
 - Standing at the gate of the church
- Interventions from someone with status on a video, I think this was an important project because.....(30 seconds)

Potential future projects

- What is the key challenge in order to improve the participation in adult education?
- Priorities KA3 – women in green tech, supporting apprentices for mobility, joining forces to re-skill workers, micro-credentials (eco-systems, green), pathways, national regional support to VET alliances.
 - Micro credentials or equivalent (Croatia)
 - Link micro credentials to the green transition
- Micro credentials for a more inclusive labour market, micro credentials
- Elevate the KA2 (micro credential) to a KA3 policy project.