

Rotterdam, Netherlands

30 November & 1 December 2023

The final PLA took place in Zadkine VET College in Rotterdam in the Netherlands. It took the form of a one day conference to summarise the findings and learnings captured over the lifespan of the Praline project. The conference was open to more participants than the key project partners. The subsequent day was a chance for the core project partnership to evaluate the conference and wrap up the project, allocating key final tasks to partners.

In terms of evaluating the two days in the Netherlands, participants found the conference sessions mainly to be somewhat or very useful. The initial keynote address by Professor Wieger Bakker from the University of Utrecht, was especially well received as an external perspective on the project findings and recommendations.

The presentation of the project's survey results provided a useful overview of adult education challenges from the viewpoint of VET/adult learning providers, especially how the Covid pandemic impacted on adult learning.

Conference session inputs from Ireland's adult education/VET funding agency SOLAS provided a recap on one of the good practices from the PLA in Ireland, which had made an impression on the project partners at the time of the initial visit. Additionally, the inclusion of a panel discussion with participation from students, employers, policy makers and providers provided a good reflection on the impact of some of the good practices on key stakeholders.

We asked project partners how their knowledge of adult education systems across Europe had developed during the course of the project. Partners were effusive in their feedback saying that each PLA had helped them to develop their knowledge through the valuable sharing of experience practitioners. Many said that it was an important learning point that not only did they learn about the differences in the different adult education systems but that they also were able to see similarities in challenges and barriers to participation. There was agreement that this 'bigger picture' view of other countries' experiences gave the opportunity and insight in order for partner countries to make better decisions and influence policy developments within their own VET and adult education systems.

In terms of personal highlights from participating in the project, partners cited the personal contacts made and the good practices that they now seen that can be used as examples of different ways of working when discussing policy with civil servants in the different countries. There were also positive reactions to the fact that the project has resulted in new EUproVET members, especially since one of the key objectives was about widening networks regarding adult education. Others, in particular, singled out the PLAs in Estonia and Ireland as being particularly inspiring.