

Guidance in the Workplace

Transfer of Innovation to Develop

Guidance to those in Employment

Evaluation Report 3 – A Transfer of Innovation from Sweden and France

February 2009



Education and Culture

Project Partners

Sweden:

**CFL (Centre for Flexible Learning)
municipality of Söderhamn**

www.cfl.soderhamn.se



Italy:

Aster Scienza Tecnologia Impresa

www.aster.it



Romania:

Fundatia Centrul Educational Soros

www.sec.ro



Slovenia:

Slovenian Institute for Adult Education

www.acs.si



PIA. Velenje

www.pia.si



France:

**Centre Interinstitutionnel de Bilan
de Competences Artois Ternois**

www.cibcarras.org



www.guidanceintheworkplace.eu

Introduction

The Guidance in the Workplace project is a transfer of innovation project which aims to transfer learning about different ways of offering advice and guidance to those in employment. This means advice and guidance which can be integrated into the workplace. This can be done by guidance workers liaising with employers, trade union representatives, training managers and human resource managers. One key angle of the project is to develop training for counsellors providing advice. The project runs from the 1st of November 2007 until the 31st of October 2009. For more information on the partners participating please see www.guidanceintheworkplace.eu.

These are the three main assumptions which have been taken into account before the start of the project:

- That guidance can make a major contribution to the development of lifelong learning for those within employment by encouraging those in employment to take up learning opportunities
- That guidance is not always easily accessible to those in employment as for example those who are unemployed
- For advice and guidance to make a contribution to the development of lifelong learning within employment, it is essential that advice and guidance is not provided in isolation

The Guidance in the Workplace project aims to create new knowledge among the participating partners and other participants. The outcomes of a prior Leonardo project, Guidance Merger, will be used, as well as new input from the participating countries (www.guidancemerger.org). The experience from Guidance Merger was that it is very difficult for guidance counsellors alone to gain access to employer's premises without assistance from other organisations. It was clearly seen that workplace counselling needs a long term relationship with the employer. It is important to "open doors" to get in to the premises and this was done liaising with other organisations, already performing work in the companies. How this was done, and which organisation the co-operation was initiated with differed in the partner countries. Their traditions and historical background vary and suitable partners to co-operate with must be seen in the light of each country's history or tradition. The majority of the partner countries in Guidance Merger teamed up with organisations in the field of workforce development, including in some cases trade unions, which had an ongoing, established co-operation with the employers. In this way the service could be effective, simple and accessible for the firms.

The Report

The aim of this report is to give reports on the training at second partner meeting in Söderhamn, Sweden and the third partners meeting in Arras, France. Both meetings included detailed case studies and a visit to employers premises so that partners could understand fully the innovative practices in both countries. The Swedish example was identified as good practice in the first Guidance Merger project and the example in France contributed to the learning as to how guidance counsellors can work within the accreditation and validation of prior learning.

Two interviews, one with a vocational teacher and another with a guidance counsellor at CFL, Söderhamn complete the material used in the report.

Transfer of Innovation from Söderhamn, Sweden

The Söderhamn meeting was a combined partner meeting and training. All partner countries were represented; the promoter, co-ordinator and evaluator of the transnational project were there. Two of the partner countries, Slovenia and Romania brought persons from their networks. Five CFL staff attended the meeting. The meeting consisted of a discussion on the research questions and the results so far in each of the national projects. There was a study visit to a company involved in the Guidance merger project, where CFL has provided guidance and counselling as well as courses. The summary from the study visit is the first piece of material from the meeting. The second piece of material is a summary of two interviews with two of the CFL staff that attended the Söderhamn meeting and accompanied the other participants to the study visit.

Study Visit at Vallvik

Vallvik belongs to the Rottneros Group which has its head office in Upplands Väsby, close to Stockholm. The company president, HR-department representative of the Vallvik pulp mill, CFL-staff and a regional trade union representative attended the meeting together with partners and participants from Slovenia, France, Romania and Sweden.

Vallvik has gone from manual work to highly automated work in the last 20 years. Hence, a reduction of employees from 440 to 181 (production 94, maintenance 76, the rest laboratory and administration). Some new staff has been recruited, so there was a need to outpace more than shown in the figures. To be employed at Vallvik 12 years of formal education, preferably with a technical profile, is needed. There is a need to educate and train new and old staff mainly because of technology development.

It is hard to plan education and training for a small company. That is why the CEO expressed that he was happy to work with CFL. CFL helps planning and organizing training and education for operators, maintenance and administrative staff. The CEO says:

“Training is one of the key questions in being successful as a company.” (CEO, Vallvik).

CFL has assisted the pulp mill company to structure education and training for employees. The company has also offered training for unemployed people. The unemployed have then attended classes at CFL once a week, and received training at the pulp mill the other four days of the week. There is a general feeling at the mill that the formal education/learning at CFL helps the participants in understanding specific training taking place in the mill. There were no guarantees for the individual to be recruited after the training, but some have found new jobs at the mill (and other mills). At first the management of the mill was a bit reluctant to take in too many unemployed people, something they now regret. Looking back, it is now clear that the need for more workers was greater than they had expected. The pulp mill also takes in trainees from an upper secondary technical school. This is also done in co-operation with CFL.

For the already employed staff at the pulp mill, courses were developed in conjunction with CFL. In planning courses the prior experience and level of learning of the staff was taken into account. An onsite co-ordinator is very important, the CEO says. Two CFL staff has more or less regularly visited the mill. One is a vocational teacher and one is a guidance counsellor. They work with the company’s HR manager and report to the CEO. The planning of staff training is prepared jointly. Thus, CFL helps the company to structure the training.

“They [the CFL-staff] can give support and keep the practical and theoretical training together.” (CEO, Vallvik)

“Especially small companies need someone to put it together.” (CEO, Vallvik)

To carefully plan the future is another key for success for a company, the CEO says. The role of the guidance counsellor and the vocational teacher is then somewhat different from the conventional role. As one counsellor put it – *“it is not about sitting at your desk all day, it’s about going out talking to employers. It’s a different job”*. The counsellor makes study plans and the vocational teacher plans the pedagogical part of the courses.

The initial contact with Vallvik was via a European Social Fund project in work place learning. The co-operation was fruitful and it has now developed into a long-term co-operation between the two. Both parties consider themselves as winners. The mill receives help in making plans and structuring courses and training for their staff and CFL has, as they put it, “a reliable partner” who provides vocational training for upper secondary students and, if needed, for unemployed people.

“It is a give and take situation, but we have been too far away from the workplaces before and it has not been easy to open doors.” (CFL staff)

“One crucial thing is that I have the full co-operation with the CEO ... If they don’t like what is going on, nothing happen.” (CFL staff)

After a walk around the premises and a presentation from the CEO at Vallvik and a HR-manager, the discussion was free. Below are some glimpses of the conversation, on the most part as answers to questions asked:

- The level of training and formal education has no (or little) connection with level of salary at the mill.
- The employer decides when the training or studying takes place during working hours – flexibility was a key word mentioned.
- The law in Sweden states that an employed person is always entitled to a leave of absence for studies (no limit in years).
- The communication with the employees about the training and studying was verbal and through the company intranet. It was done jointly by CFL and the mill HR-department
- It took a long time to find the right people to train – it was slow in the beginning and the employees were reluctant and maybe a bit suspicious. It took three year before it was broadly accepted.
- Trade unions are informed and support the work. Trade unions are very strong within the pulp industry.
- The company has to be developed and profitable before you can invest in training.
- Training and study in the workplace is not regulated by law in Sweden. It is regulated in collective agreements, nationally or locally, between employers and trade unions.
- When it comes to training staff at Vallvik, the agreement is mainly made between the trade union representatives and the company and not so much on an individual basis.

The Role of a Guidance Counsellor and a Vocational Teacher at CFL in Söderhamn, Sweden

This is a summary from two interviews made a week after the study visit. The guidance counsellor and the vocational teacher were both present at the Söderhamn meeting.

Traditionally the role of a guidance counsellor in adult learning centres in Sweden has been to give information to students and other adults, individually or in groups. This is also the case at CFL in Söderhamn. Most of the guidance counsellor’s work still is about giving information, often individually in scheduled and unscheduled meetings. However, the role of guidance counselling is shifting towards one with more active contact with employers. The guidance counsellor, often together with a vocational teacher, makes contact with employers more often than they used to at CFL. The initial contacts are made personally

and they are often unannounced. The staff of CFL has found that the first contact made by informal, unannounced meetings with employers is more fruitful than trying to make the first contact by email or telephone.

Also the role of some vocational teachers is changing at CFL. Vocational teachers are now helping companies to plan for the future. They offer and give help, especially to larger companies' HR departments when competence mapping of and study plans for employees are made. Once the first contact is made and a successful co-operation has helped established a relationship, it is easy for a company representative to pick up the phone and ask for help in different matters.

Contacts with an employer can be made for a number of reasons. The most common reason for the counsellors and vocational teachers at CFL to make new contacts with employers is to find trainee positions for students. In smaller companies this might not result in immediate co-operation, but the company's owner or top management will know where to turn when they for example need assistance with courses for all employees or individuals, in planning staff, in evaluating competences or in assisting employees who have been made redundant. In large companies training and courses can be offered on the company premises, this is of course not possible in smaller firms. The support given to smaller companies therefore differs to that given to larger companies. In larger companies groups of employees can be trained or educated and plans can be made covering overall competence of the company. In smaller businesses and firms the support given is more based on the individual employee.

Guidance counsellors and vocational teachers at CFL feel that they support the companies in the region. The guidance counsellor's and the vocational teacher's roles are different but yet intertwined. Guidance counsellors help both employers and employees to see options. The vocational teacher adapts courses to fit employer and employee and can validate the knowledge of the employee, something the guidance counsellor also takes part in. The employer can make contact with either a guidance counsellor or a vocational teacher at CFL. Who he or she will contact often depends on former contacts.

"My opinion is that we are a support for the management in the companies in the region. They feel they can call us to ask about different types of courses". (Vocational Teacher, CFL)

"My role has been to sit down and talk about contents of upper secondary courses both for trainees and staff members who have participated in different programs. It is then the vocational teachers who validate students and plan the different courses". (Guidance Counsellor, CFL)

Contacts with employers can sometimes be hard to balance with the historically traditional role of guidance counsellors.

"It can be hard, at first, the mapping of competence in a company. We [guidance counsellors] are trained to think of the individual person first". (Guidance counsellor, CFL)

To be able to actively make contacts with employers, support from CFL as an organisation is needed for the guidance counsellors and the vocational teachers. The structures of the organisation CFL, or the way the learning centre works, need to support the outside work of the counsellors and teachers. Enough time to work in this manner is crucial. This is something counsellors and teachers at CFL constantly battle with. Both counsellors and teachers are fairly free to plan and manage their time. Management understands why counsellors and teachers are not always on the premises although this might not always be the case with all the colleagues.

Transfer of Innovation from Arras, France

The Arras meeting was a combined partner meeting and training. All partner countries were represented; the promoter, co-ordinator and evaluator of the transnational project were there. Two of the partner countries, Slovenia and Romania brought persons from their networks.. There was a study visit to a company which has links with CIBC ARRAS. The following information provided for partners a structure of the work in France

APEL: ACCREDITATION of PRIOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

What is it :

- It permits to obtain a diploma certificate or a qualification (completely or partially) validating professional experience.
- The candidate must have at least a 3 years experience in the same domain than the diploma he plans to obtain.
- Advices Point Stops « PRC » guide and inform the candidate

Who can use it :

- Employees (permanent contracts, fixed-term contract, temps)
- Self-employed, skilled workmen, farmers...
- Civil servants – job seekers
- Volunteers

Progress :

In 6 Steps :

- APEL Information,
- Choice of the right diploma to validate
- File the request,
- Prepare oneself to the exam,
- Evaluation by a board of examiners,
- Diploma's issue.

In average, it's one year from the request to the examiners evaluation.

Financing:

- Companies, within the framework of their training plan
- The State,
- The Nord Pas de Calais Region,
- OPCA (recognized joint collecting organizations) and FONGECIF : within the framework of APEL time-off
- In some cases, the candidate may have to finance oneself his APEL.

SKILLS AUDIT :

What is it:

- Skills audit aims to permit to analyze their personal and professional competences as their abilities and motivations in order to define a vocational project and, when it's useful, a training project.
- It takes place in some recognized organizations (CIBC for instance)

- On employer's initiative or on employee's request, by mutual agreement.
- Duration of 24 hours at the most

Who can use it :

- Employees
- Temporary Workers
- Unemployed

Progress :

- In 3 steps :
 - preliminary phase
 - investigation phase
 - conclusion phase
- Data is confidential

Financing :

Within the framework of the company's training plan

- Company's training budget
- Budget managed by OPCA

Within the framework of the Skills Audit time off

- FONGECIF

About unemployed people

- Employment agency, Region Council or Department Council.

« Le CIF » Individual Training Time off :

What is it :

- The right to be absent from one's job (1 year at the most) to attend to a training course of one's choosing.
- This training time off permits to :
 - Attain an higher qualification or degree level;
 - Changing of activity or occupation ;
 - Access more generally to the culture, to the social life or to some volunteers association responsibilities.
- This time off is on the employee's initiative, subject to employer's agreement
- The employee earns a percentage of his salary (from 80 to 100 %) during his training time off. The employer pays the salary to the employee and makes himself paid back by FONGECIF.

Who can use it:

- Every employee who can justify 24 months of seniority, 12 of them in the company in which one he files his request.
- Employees with fixed term contracts subject to some length of service conditions.

Progress :

- Completely or partially during the working time.

Financing :

- Mainly FONGECIF organizations (Management Fund of CIF), present in all France Regions.
- Concerning some kind of professional sectors, CIF is financed by OPCA (recognized joint collecting organization).

« Le DIF » Individual Training Right:

What is it:

- DIF permits to benefit of some professional training courses out of work time (sometimes during).
- These training courses are financed, and the employee keeps on earning his salary.
- Each employee acquire a capital of 20 hours by year (during 6 years at the most, so 120 hours maximum) to train himself.
- DIF is based on employee and employer agreement.

Who can use it :

- Employees with permanent contracts, who work for the company since at least 1 year.
- Part-time workers, but the duration of the DIF time off is calculated on a pro rata basis.
- Employees with fixed term contracts who have worked at least 4 months during the last 12 months.
- Temps, subject to some seniority conditions.

Progress :

- DIF often goes out of working time, on the evening, during the week-end or during the days-off. In that case, employer pay to the employee a training allocation equal to 50% of his net hourly wage for each DIF hour as well as his salary.
- Some companies allow the training courses took completely or partially during the working time. In that case, the employee earns his usual salary (there is no training allocation).

Financing :

- The training costs, as the training allocation, are payable by the employer, who can charge them to the training plan.
- The employer can file a covering training costs request for the DIF to the OPCA (recognized joint collecting organization) which one he is affiliated.

