



Learning Outcome of Amateur Culture

Final Report

Public Part

Project information

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Executive Summary

Target audience

This report addresses active in the European amateur culture sector both managers, board members, teachers, instructors, facilitators and other professional and voluntary staff as well as researchers, opinion formers and policy-makers in the field of voluntary culture and liberal adult education.

Project objectives and target users

The overall aim has been to apply a humanistic learning methodology on amateur culture to make the learning outcome more attractive and transparent for the participants.

The project had four main objectives. The first objective was to complete a survey of learning qualities and outcome in amateur culture. The second objective was to develop two types of interrelated online tools for learning validation, one type for the learners' valuation of the personal learning outcome, and another for the learning providers' valuation of the organisational learning. The third objective was to complete two pilot week courses, respectively a Grundtvig IST course and a Grundtvig workshop, The fourth objective was to publish a Survey Report, an Anthology on Best Practise, and a Course Compendium on European week courses for active in amateur culture. .

The partnership circle

The project consortium represents significant umbrella organisations of amateur culture in each participating country. This implies a huge network and surface of contact, and thereby a potential strong impact of the project results on the European sector of amateur culture. Furthermore the coordinator organisation has particular competences of project development and research in the field of liberal education and voluntary culture.

Approaches used

The approach to document and validate the learning outcome is based on a humanistic learning methodology that seeks to incorporate the learning dimension of personal formation as well as the expressive and aesthetic qualities of the learning processes. This Bildung perspective improves the validation of the learning outcome in art based activities, and makes the documentation more relevant for the active in amateur culture.

Results achieved

The main results achieved are 1) a online double tool for validation of personal as well as organisational learning outcome, and this interrelated double tool consists of a series of Danish, Dutch, Slovenian and English editions; 2) a pilot course programme for Grundtvig IST-courses and workshops with focus on learning outcome in amateur culture; 3) three main English publications: a Survey Report on learning qualities and outcome; an Anthology on Best Practise with focus on the main aims of lifelong learning; and a Course Compendium on European week courses for active in amateur culture; and a comprehensive valorisation including three national conferences on the issue.

Plans for the future

The outcome of the project, the double tools as well as the learning perspectives and validation methods will be promoted by the partners in national network and at the AMATEO meetings and other international meetings. The partnership is planning to offer a Grundtvig IST-course in 2012 and they will apply for a Grundtvig workshop in 2012. Furthermore some of the partners are preparing an application Feb 2012 for a Grundtvig Learning Partnership on art based learning for elder people; and a Nordplus Adult mapping project on art based learning outcome.

Details of the project website

The address of the project website is <http://www.interfolk.dk/loac> -It presents the project and its result and a range of project documents can be read and downloaded as pdf-files.

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1. Project Objectives

The overall aim has been to promote a humanistic learning perspective on amateur art and voluntary culture that can make the learning quality and outcome more attractive and transparent for the actual and potential participants.

The project included four main objectives and corresponding outcomes. The first objective has been to complete a survey of learning qualities and outcome in amateur culture, including results of questionnaires and interviews with leaders, teachers and participants in the associations of the partnership circle. The methodology of the survey has been formed by a humanistic learning theory, and the overall goal was to achieve new knowledge and reflexion of learning qualities, which could qualify the methodology and praxis of validation of learning outcome. The survey should also prepare guidelines for the questionnaires in the online validation tools, and the guidelines for the Compendium on Best Practice of learning activities.

The second objective was to develop an online double tool for learning validation, one type for the learners' valuation of the personal learning outcome, and another for the learning providers' valuation of the organisational learning. This documentation can be of personal value for the learners, and it can improve the work of the learning providers with monitoring, quality assurance and management of the learning activities in their organisation. These tools will validate the activities as learning activities and thereby bring new focus on amateur culture as an important area of learning. The validation data from the use of the two tools will be saved at a common database, and the data can be used for research on several levels, from the classroom to the whole organisation, and from a group of local associations to a national and a transnational European level. The network of national associations that uses the common transnational database can easily and by relative small costs be expanded with new associations from other European countries after the conclusion of the project.

The third objective was to complete two pilot week courses, respectively a Grundtvig in-service training course targeting teachers, tutors, facilitators and other pedagogical staff, and a Grundtvig workshop targeting board members and other active in amateur culture. An integrated part of the courses has been to exchange experiences of best practise in different learning areas, including an introduction to the methodology and practical use of the personal and organisational valuation tool. The aim is after the conclusion of the project to initiate a transnational course programme for active in Europe's amateur art and voluntary cultural associations as part of the Grundtvig in-service training programme and the Grundtvig Workshop programme.

The fourth main objective has been to publish three English project publications. The first is the Survey Report on validation of learning qualities and outcome in voluntary cultural amateur activities including results of questionnaires and interviews in the partnerships associations. The second is the Anthology of Best Practise with focus 1) on the main aims of active citizenship, cultural cohesion, personal fulfilment and employ-ability, 2) on a broader view on learning as composed of the three interrelated dimensions: competence, knowledge and personal formation, 3) on social inclusion of people of all ages, including those with special needs and disadvantaged groups, 4) and on improving possibilities of transnational European activities as part of the ordinary activities of the cultural associations. The third is the Compendium on European week courses regarding learning dimensions of amateur culture and validation of the learning outcome, including annexes on announcements, management and economy.

2. Project Approach

The idea of the project is to promote a validation of amateur culture from the perspective of lifelong learning with the purpose to improve the learning quality and outcome of the voluntary cultural activities, and thereby to make them more attractive and transparent for the actual and potential participants.

The approach carried out

The approach used in the survey, the validation tools, the anthology of best practise and the pilot courses is referring to a humanistic learning theory that

- defines learning as an interrelated unity of the three dimensions: Competence, knowledge and personal formation (Bildung), and these dimensions are constituted by several main learning elements, and each element is described by a series of keywords;
- and value the learning outcome in relation to four main *spheres of life* as 1) an autonomous modern man in the personal sphere); 2) a responsible fellow human being in the private and civil sphere of close relationships; 3) an active citizen in the civil and public sphere in civil society and the public affairs; and 4) an employee in the work time (and as a student in a vocational qualifying education).

Added value

This view on the learning content and learning perspective are quite innovative in our point of view. Most actual valuation tools for non-formal and informal learning share a very narrow optic on the content and perspective of learning that reduces learning to transversal competences or to a combination of soft qualifications (transversal competences) and hard qualifications (knowledge and skills), but none of the tools we know of have a methodology that incorporate “personal formation” or “Bildung” as an important dimension of learning. The personality is more or less a blind spot in these instrumental oriented learning methodologies. Likewise the validation perspective on the learning outcome is typically reduced to the use in work life or the formal education, and the benefits for the personal, civil and public live spheres is also a blind spot.

This lack of “Bildung Theory” could be seen as a general problem for most learning validation, but it is especially a problem, when we try to validate the learning in voluntary and art based activities. Without Bildung you don’t find the nerve in the activities, and it will be difficult to convince the learners that the valuation tools have any relevance for them.

Monitoring and evaluation

The tasks of coordination, monitoring, quality assurance and evaluation are closed connected in a well organised project. The first 18 work packages in this project correspond to the 18 main step of the task plan, and each work package consists of a group of part tasks, and the completion of each work package constitutes a main mile stone. The break down structure of the tasks and budget lines of each work packages gives the decisive basis for the management, coordination and cooperation among the partners.

The work programme of this project consists of five main phases and the first four has been initiated (and ended) by partner meetings that have functioned as bridges between the project phases, where we have evaluated the concluded phase and made a detailed and possible adjusted task plan for the next phase. The monitoring of the progress of the part-tasks in each work package consists of two checks, partly a contact to the responsible partner/person

a week before the starting date of the part task to confirm that the partner are ready for the task, partly a check a week before deadline on the progress and quality of the planned result.

We have conducted a Mixed Method Evaluation combining a Process Evaluation and an Outcome Evaluation. We have used the Process Evaluation to monitor the activities to make sure the project is being implemented and completed according to the task plan. Process Evaluation has been an important session of each of the three last partner meetings that conclude the previous main project phase, and they have been supplemented by questionnaires.

We have used the Outcome Evaluation to assess the extent to which the project has achieved its intended effects and other effects it could have had on the project's participants or the environment. The survey in the first phase gave important feedback on the needs of the planned deliverables and for our refinement and priorities of the guidelines of the design of the learning frame for the online validation tools as well as for the guidelines for the outline of the Compendium of Best Practise. The pilot courses gave opportunity to test the results and discourse of our learning methods and tools and they gave very important feedback on the potential impact of the project outcomes. The participants filled out questionnaires at the end of the courses and we had follow-up interviews with participants after the courses on the outcome. The preparation and completion of the three national conferences during the final phase of valorisation gave important feedback on the sustainable impact of the project outcomes as can be seen in the mini-reports from the conferences including the video movie from the Slovenian conference.

Valorisation

The results of the project had in the fifth and last phase been disseminated to the main target groups including

- the broad network of art based member associations of the partners' umbrella associations,
- the related associations of liberal adult education and voluntary associations in the civic society,
- the decision-makers and opinion-formers of the sectors of voluntary culture activities and liberal adult education, and researchers in the area.

The dissemination activities include

- 1) Production of information material in national language on the publications, tools and the conferences,
- 2) Send out invitation to the conferences and information of the publications and tools, with links to the web sites, where the reports can be down loaded and the learning tools can be seen and used.
- 3) The completion of three national one-day conferences presenting the results and perspectives.
- 4) Multiplication activities to the broad network of art based member associations of the partners' umbrella associations; by direct mail, newsletters, articles and announcements in member magazines.
- 5) Mainstreaming to the press and decision-makers and opinion-formers of the sectors of voluntary culture and liberal adult education; newsletters, articles to newspapers, magazines and academic journals.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

Results and objectives

The first phase of the project includes a survey of learning qualities and outcome in voluntary cultural activities including results of questionnaires and interviews with leaders, teachers and participants in the associations of the partnership circle. The methodology of the survey has been formed by a humanistic learning theory, and the overall objective is to achieve new knowledge and reflexion of learning needs and outcome, and to qualify the guidelines for the online questionnaires in the two types of validation tools as well as the outline of the Compendium on Best practice of learning activities related to EUs main learning aims.

The second phase of the project includes the development of the two interrelated tools for validation of personal and organisational learning and the preparing of the Compendium on best practise of learning in voluntary cultural activities.

The two types of tools can validate the same learning process from two different angles. The learners (students, participants, active) can validate their personal learning profile and outcome; the learning providers (leaders, teachers, facilitators, board members and other staff) can compare their learning objectives and priorities with the learners' actual outcome. This documentation can be of personal value for the learners and it can improve the learning providers work with monitoring, quality assurance and management of the learning activities in their organisation. These tools will validate the activities as learning activities and thereby bring new focus on amateur culture as an important area of learning.

The Anthology of Best Practice of cultural learning activities in the organisations of the partnership circle focussed on the relation of the cultural activities to the overarching aims of lifelong learning: active citizenship, cultural cohesion, personal fulfilment and employability; and the learning outcome is validated by a view on learning as consisting of three interrelated dimensions - competence, knowledge and personal formation (Bildung); Furthermore, the Anthology put focus on the ability of amateur cultures to promote social inclusion of people of all ages, incl. those with special needs and disadvantaged groups;

The third phase of the project includes the preparing and completion of two pilot week courses respectively a Grundtvig in-training course and a Grundtvig workshop in the spring 2011. The two courses will focus on validation of qualities and outcome of the art based learning in amateur culture associations. The content of the courses included the use the pilot tools for personal and organisational learning, the draft report on learning qualities and the Anthology of best practise. An integrated part of the courses was in dialogue with the participants to develop know how on the learning needs and priorities of possible target groups from the art based voluntary associations. The aim is after the conclusion of the project that the consortium can offer such week courses as part of the Grundtvig in-service training programme and the Grundtvig Workshop programme.

The fourth phase included the launching of the English, Danish, Dutch and Slovenian editions of the double online tools, and the publishing of the three main publications of the project: 1) the Survey Report of learning outcome of amateur culture, English edition, 160 pages.2) the Compendium on Best Practise for learning activities in amateur culture. English edition, 79 pages; and 3) the Course Compendium of Grundtvig week courses, English edition, 71 pages plus annexes.

More information

The projects website has further information of the project, and a wide range of project documents can as pdf-files be read and downloaded. The address of the website is <http://www.interfolk.dk/loac>

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4. Partnerships

The project consortium is made up by the following organisations:

Kulturelle Samråd i Danmark (Applicant) - See www.kulturellesamraad.dk

is the National association of the local cultural councils, which are umbrella organizations for local associations within the area of culture and leisure-time activities. Cultural councils exist in approximately 90 of Denmark's 98 municipalities. The main purpose of "Joint Cultural Councils in Denmark" is to inspire and develop the cultural area, and to influence, initiate, debate, exemplify etcetera in order to create the best possible conditions for all cultural learning activities. "Joint Cultural Councils in Denmark" are on a national basis working closely with the rest of the cultural voluntary associations.

Interfolk, Institute for Civil Society (Coordinator) - See www.interfolk.dk

Interfolk is an Institute for liberal education and voluntary associations. The objectives are to promote popular enlightenment and active citizenship in the context of liberal adult education, voluntary associations and cultural activities in the civic society. The activities may include research, surveys and development projects, seminars and debate, and other cultural activities in Danish, Nordic, European and broader international context.

Javni sklad RS za kulturne dejavnosti (Partner) - See www.jskd.si

JSKD is a national institution covering all branches of amateur culture and art: vocal and instrumental music, theatre and puppet, folklore, film and video, literature, fine arts, dance. JSKD main tasks are: Organization and offering of cultural events; Preparation of seminars, workshops, lectures, summer camps; Counselling, supporting, informing; Publication of periodicals and other publications; Joint financing of cultural programs. JSKD headquarters in Ljubljana and fifty-nine branch offices all over Slovenia with about 100 employees (organizers, experts, technicians) stimulate the development of Slovenian amateur art. JSKD organizes international, national and regional programmes of education, presentations and reviews of non-professional culture and art. JSKD is a member of European umbrella networks ECuCo and Amateo and international organisations of music, theatre, puppet theatre and folklore such as Europa Cantat, IFCM, CISM, AITA/IATA, CIOFF etc.

Kunstfactor, Sectorinstituut Amateurkunst (Partner) - See www.kunstfactor.nl

Kunstfactor is the national Dutch institute for the development and promotion of amateur arts. As such the centre has expertise in the fields of voluntary arts development, management and education as well as in that of arts education per se. Kunstfactor is responsible for various training and learning curricula, used inside and outside of educational centres, as well as for training modules for volunteers who are active in the field of the amateur arts. Kunstfactor is constantly looking for ways in which cultural and artistic competences can be acquired and acknowledged. It is one of the founders and partners of the Standards and Accreditation Centre for Amateur Arts and Arts Education in the Netherlands.

Added value

The strength of the Consortium lies in its being made up of both research organisations and umbrella organisations operating at regional, national and international level, and therefore being able to carry out the activities envisaged.

The European added value derives from the project having many institutional links and such a wide scope in surveys and development tasks regarding the European tendencies in the field of amateur culture and art based learning as well as the state of art in relation to

validation of non-formal and informal learning in liberal adult education and voluntary associations in a civil society context.

Experiences of cooperation

The partners in the project have by exchange of experiences and cooperative task fulfilment gained new knowledge and widened perspectives on the subject addressed and experienced a significant increase of contacts and networking opportunities.

Especially in the start of the project we experienced some language difficulties with finding a common understanding of the applied pedagogical terminology for the learning methodology and frame of questionnaires. The challenge had relation both to differences in the cultural-pedagogical traditions and the need to clarify a common English vocabulary.

Benefits of contact outside the consortium

The two pilot week courses on learning outcome in amateur culture involved participants from other associations and institutions than the consortium from the field of amateur culture and art based learning. It gave new networks and opportunities for exploitation for the partnership.

In the final valorisation phase, especially the national conferences brought also contacts and especially a new dialogue on the issue with other main organisations in the area and some important multipliers. The learning agenda of the LOAC project gained new strongholds for the informal and non-formal learning activities in the sector of amateur culture, especially in the participating countries, and it has also implied new contacts and dialogue in the transnational network that the partners participate in such as Amateo.

5. Plans for the Future

Exploitation of results after the project

The consortium represents significant umbrella organisations of amateur culture in each participating country. This implies a huge network and surface of contact, and a potential strong impact of the project results on the activities of the voluntary cultural area.

From the point of view of dissemination, project partners will continue to use their own network and professional affiliations to make known and attract more users for the project outputs. Significant in this purpose are going to be presentation of project results in the framework of events organised by project partners or by their member organisations.

Sustainability of outcome

The long term objectives are that the results of the project will be incorporated in the future activities of the participating organisations and in some degree will be transferred to other European organisations from the field of amateur culture.

The new integrated online tools for validation of personal and organisational learning in voluntary cultural activities can after the conclusion of the project be used by organisations related to the project consortium, and the tools can easily and by relative small costs be provided to other European organisations working in the field of voluntary culture and art based learning.

The partnership has at the end of the project discussed and planned on a regular basis to provide in-service training on validation of learning in amateur culture, both in a national and European context, especially by providing courses as part of the Grundtvig in-service training programme and the Grundtvig Workshop programme.

The partnership is also preparing applications for new transnational European projects to strengthen the European network and to further develop the results of the project

6. Contribution to EU policies

In relations to the broader objectives of the LLL-Programme this project addresses especially the following points,

- a) to develop the quality of lifelong learning (in amateur culture);
- b) to support the realisation of an transnational area for learning;
- e) to promote creativity;
- h) to develop innovative ICT-based tools for valuation of learning outcome;
- k) to encourage the exchange of best practise on transnational courses.

In relation to the specific objectives of the Grundtvig Action this project aims,

1. to value the voluntary cultural activities and amateur culture from the perspective of lifelong learning

In relation to the operational objectives of the Grundtvig Action this project aims

1. to promote mobility by offering Grundtvig IST-courses and Grundtvig Workshops on a regularly basis by the partnership targeting both pedagogical staff, board members and other active;
2. to provide new knowledge by using the database of the valuation tools for transnational research on learning outcome in amateur culture:
3. to improve the monitoring, quality assurance and management of the lifelong learning in the European sector of amateur culture.

In relation to the priorities of the Grundtvig multilateral projects this project aims

- 1, to improve the validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes;
- 2, to oblige the learning needs of teacher, trainers and other staff;
3. to motivate individual learners by offering transparency and documentation of the learning outcome.

