

EQUAL: LEARNING SAUNA
Engagement and Motivation Thematic Group

Interim report

The lead partner for this theme is the UK.

The members of the group are:

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Rashid Chowdhury	Sweden
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Janet Young	UK
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Ian Thompson	UK

Contact details are given in Annex 1 attached to this report.

The UK members represent each of the 4 Black Country authorities involved in the Learning Kitchen and they meet regularly.

Aims & Objectives

The Group identified the following:

1. To investigate, report and evaluate methodologies for engaging and motivating adults to participate in learning opportunities. To focus on individuals who are disadvantaged or marginalised within societies, particularly people with changing identities and from diverse cultures
2. To share experiences and best practice between the projects of our international partnership
3. To encourage and support joint working between projects from our international partnership, where there are common themes

What do we need to produce?

A description of how individual projects engage and motivate their participants

1. An analysis of the methods of Engagement and Motivation used within our partnership countries, to identify areas for further joint working
2. Guidelines to help others to engage and motivate new learners, highlighting examples from the Learning Sauna

Workplan

1. Prepare form, standardising information needed from each project and circulate to members of Engagement and Motivation International Group (EMIG)
2. Completed forms for each project to be posted on the Web site and full set to be circulated to EMIG leader for each country
3. Analysis of project forms to identify range of Engagement and Motivation methodology within Learning Sauna. Identification of common themes and interests.
4. Discussion and evaluation of analysis
5. Identify scope for testing results of analysis or developing new ways of working.
6. Disseminate findings

Achievements and Outcomes to date

When the Group started working, we immediately realised that we did not have summary information about each of the projects in the Learning Sauna or that in some cases, even know the title. We therefore drew up a questionnaire and asked each project officer to complete it. The questionnaire was designed specifically to obtain information about engagement and motivation. However, the information for each project proved useful to everyone in the Learning Sauna. Each project has also been given a reference number. There are 14 UK projects, 3 in Sweden and 1 Portuguese. A project reference list and summary forms for each project are shown in Annex 2 attached to this report.

With project information, we then started to analyse on the following basis:

- Question; “Why are there barriers to the labour market”
Answer; “because people are marginalised in various ways”
Question; “ in what ways are people marginalised”
Answer; from the projects we identified 8 main factors:
- immigrant origin
 - physical disability
 - learning difficulties
 - structural/institutional discrimination
 - teenage parentage (mothers)
 - disaffection (youth)
 - low or no qualifications/confidence/opportunities
 - unemployment

Each project was then placed under those headings to which it applied. The priority of each heading was also indicated. See Annex 3 attached to this report.

We then took one heading that had projects listed from each international partner under it:

i.e. low or no qualifications/confidence/opportunities
and for each project identified, analysed the:

- a. incentives
- b. approaches
- c. recruitment and engagement methods

The results are shown in Annex 4 attached to this report.

Certain preliminary findings have been made:

- Portugal is relatively less advanced in the use of ICT
- There is therefore a greater curiosity about ICT in Portugal compared to the Black Country in the UK
- In Sweden the general status of education is higher than in certain sectors in the Black Country in the UK
- In Sweden there is a more institutional culture generally (they like paying taxes!), where it is easier to track individuals in society.
- For many people in the Black Country, the use of ICT does not have the same “Wow” factor as it might in Portugal and in places there is an antipathy towards learning or re-learning.
- Black Country projects therefore have to develop “gimmicks” to attract people into learning
- Gimmicks may be successful in the short term but may be difficult to mainstream

Case Studies

The work of the group to date has started to look at case studies. This has to be built upon to make progress with the Workplan.

Evaluation and Recommendations

In the questionnaire, each project was asked how they would carry out evaluation. The responses have yet to be collated and analysed. One feature that has certainly emerged locally in Dudley, is the need for action research to capture significant developments and the reasons behind them.