

European synthesis report

1. SOME LESSONS LEARNED

The Di&Di project was very helpful to find indications, strategies, opportunities and threats which could be used by any European actor willing to develop and implement a similar kind of training. Going beyond specificities emerged in each Country, we could find some general guidelines and areas for improvement which require more attention.

In general, being “discrimination” a quite complex and ambiguous concept and sometimes hardly recognisable in a working environment, dealing with this issue was a challenge itself.

The involvement of associations, migrant communities and strategic institutions turned out to be a valuable strategy to reach key beneficiaries and to produce an effective analysis of their needs. Also, linking Di&Di experimentation to other existing paths and courses was helpful for recruitment process and project’s sustainability.

For what concerned the training path, the modular approach of the model was a strength point because it allowed to meet target groups’ needs and to modulate the arguments, timeframe and strategies depending on the specific target, while maintaining a common concept. Furthermore, the definition of specific and common thematic modules, allowed each partner to focus on and share the main issues and, at the same time, to insert each path in a European frame.

Participants were able to increase their knowledge about discrimination on the labour market and they acquired new understandings and skills to overcome it. This result was reached thanks to the reflective and interactive methods and the experience exchange with other participants. The active bottom up approach and the use of didactical tools let students to arise abstract and multidimensional concepts from their personal and concrete experience (case studies, problem based learning, brainstorming, scaffolding strategies, etc...). Furthermore, the proposed “active prospective” allowed participants to develop two aspects, a pure learning process on one side, and a “can do” attitude (I know, I know how to act, I can act) on the other side. In general, the empowerment process succeeded.

Putting together in the same learning process two heterogenic target groups (low qualified women and highly qualified youngsters) using their differences as a starting point for prospective exchange and discussions was a big challenge of the project. Although this approach was considered a good strategy to foster an exchange of views and cooperation between participants, this complexity brought out some difficulties to find a common approach which could satisfy their different expectation and learning attitudes considering the different levels of language proficiency. Each partner dealt with this particular challenge using a personalized path based on participants’ skills and knowledge, characterized in some cases by a low level of education, through personal interviews or, in some cases, with the support of mediators and tutors.

Another critic factor for the organisation and implementation of the experimentation was the choice of the time schedule. Due to different habits of the two target groups (low qualified women were available

during the working days' mornings while qualified youngsters preferred the week-end) it was essential to choose a time schedule which could satisfy the needs of all participants. Concerning the time schedule another crucial aspect emerged: if the foreseen period for the experimentation (3 full days) was sufficient to explore a complex issues such as discrimination, participants expressed the will to have more time to focus deeper on this theme.

For what concerns the Mentoring course, putting together professionals coming from different fields turned out to be a productive and stimulating choice generating a very good information and experience exchange.

Also, in this case, the participative pedagogical approach guaranteed an active involvement of mentors, giving at the same time a theoretical framework which allowed to generate new prospective and a deeper comprehension of phenomena. Furthermore, letting participants think together to find some practical strategies for future action turned out to be another element of success.

The involvement of private sector's representatives (i.e. companies, interim agencies, etc...) and professionals was quite a challenging task due to two main reasons: one the one hand they can usually dedicate little time to dealing with this kind of topic, on the other hand they usually have a poor opinion of such endeavours. In order to overcome these difficulties it would be necessary to use networks of professionals and institutional connections. Furthermore, finding the cross-section of the target group's and the project's interests focusing more on diversity and less on discrimination could help to involve people not pre-interested in the specific topic.

Like we saw speaking about the Training course, time schedule was a key factor for Mentoring course too: as we said, professionals lack of time and it would be better to concentrate the course during a long week-end.

The heterogeneous composition of groups put the basis to create future networks of professionals working in different fields. Furthermore, once attended the course, participants may become valuable testimonies of new strategies and new processes' explorers.

For what concerns both courses, some foreseen learning outcomes (changing perspectives through cooperation and exchange, being aware of discrimination practices related to origin, race or ethnicity, acquiring useful competencies related to a migratory background, implementing innovative strategies and tools to handle discrimination on the labour market) are characterised by a long time prospective and it is possible to measure only partially their impact during the project implementation. Taking into account this long period perspective, it would be necessary to foresee the organization of a follow-up giving participants the chance to attend a course with a larger program considering also the opportunity for an update on the teaching materials.

Finally, during the experimentation emerged the important role that ICT and social networks play for the sustainability of the project. Indeed, based on the work and reflections done during classes, the training group could exchange experience and information using tools such as mailing lists, Facebook and thematic weblogs.