



BAREFOOT - Building an Adult Resourced Environment for Online Outreach Training, Leonardo da Vinci - Transfer of Innovation

UK/11/LLP-LdV/TOI-415

BAREFOOT trainer- WP 2 Research part

A comparative analysis of trainer's background in six participating institutions

SUMMARY



I. Introduction

The BAREFOOT, Building an Adult Resourced Environment for Online Outreach Training (BAREFOOT) project is aimed at building upon the results related to a previous European project that of Generating Online Adult Learning (GOAL) a Grundtvig project which focused on vocational education. BAREFOOT's prime objective, is to offer an opportunity to the trainers involved in the field of vocational education for further training within the area of the ICT methodology. The objective of the project is as follows:-

“create an EU Partnership to transfer an innovative blended approach in e-training; create quality standards to underwrite development, delivery & evaluation of blended VET training; build online communities, supported by multimedia training toolkit, accredit a new ‘Train the Trainer’ course; work closely to quality standards in training, its innovative templates & toolkits; transfer & translate in 5 European languages; disseminate widely by diverse means utilizing planned dissemination/valorisation strategies. The partnership will be a cross cultural/sectoral consortium providing transnational relevance to the course development, delivery and target groups. Partners will focus on national/EU VET priorities¹.”

Project Objectives

Research areas:

1. providing a solid basis for the objectives expressed in the project aims by presenting and analyzing the education systems of the 6 countries involved in the project, their vocational education system, the level of education as well as the pedagogical and methodological background of the trainers and for the purpose of gaining insight into the needs, ICT competencies and choices available to the target-audience..
2. The accreditation criteria and processes within the different countries related to the teacher training programs.
3. Presenting a short description of the trainers' background, their ICT skills and methodological knowledge.

II. Methodology

The research is based on focus group interviews in participating institutions. For each of the institutions, the focus group consisted of the following personnel: person in charge for vocational education, person responsible for the program accreditation, HR executive or person in charge of teacher training concerning trainers and employees/staff involved in vocational education. The number of people in each focus group was different for each country and institution (min. 2 max. 5) since in case of smaller establishment's one person fulfilled multiple roles. In addition to that, participating institutions also reviewed official documents such as foundation deeds, program descriptions, vocational education documents, institutional statistics and accreditation documents.

¹ Application form: Summary

III Focus Groups Interview Structure:

1. Characteristics of vocational education programs in partner institutions:
 - What are the main fields of education in partner institutions? How is vocational education represented by them? A short description of the participants in vocational education: what is their age? Do they study full time or part time? What is their main motivation for the studies?

2. Trainers:
 - Qualification of trainers. Do they possess a teacher's degree or other qualifications?
 - Does the country have legislation requiring a compulsory participation in any kinds of further training, methodology or professional update/enhancement courses of trainers/teachers? Are there any relevant statistics regarding the number of trainers to take part in any professional enhancement courses each year?
 - In the professional trainings/teacher training programmes, is there any focus on ICT methodology? Are they interested to take part on further training programs in this field?

3. ICT technical and methodological background of the trainers:
 - IT equipment of the teacher at home and/or in training institutions,
 - ICT skills, knowledge and competences.

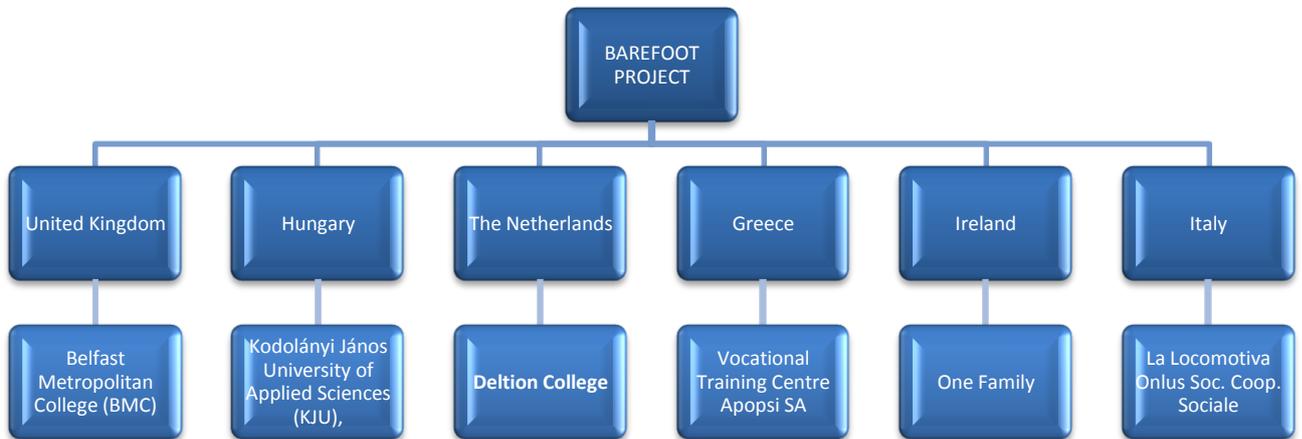
4. Accreditation of the teacher training programme:
 - which authority is in charge,
 - what are the conditions?

5. It will be very important to find an accrediting organization that could provide a framework of standards where the BAREFOOT Technology in Training Delivery program could fit, but would still be acceptable within the framework of the educational system of the other countries - Compatibility with the European Quality Framework (EQF²).

² RECOMMENDATIONS EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (2008/C 111/01) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=oj:c:2008:111:0001:0007:en:pdf>

III. Situations analysis: The partners connection to the VET field, trainers, ICT skills and background

Diagram 1



The diagram (1) shows the hierarchy of the partners involved in the BAREFOOT project, they are training institutions and educational institutions from 6 different countries, their common denominator being the fact that **vocational education** is a part of their overall profile. The level of training and the training profiles however are very different from each other. Considering **table 1** it is clear that within the institutions, vocational education differs significantly in prevalence: for some it represents the main focus of their overall profile, while in other cases, it is merely a complementary activity

Table 1 *Participating institutions and their educational background*

Country	Institution name	Type	Main training profile	Main training profile according to EQF ³ classification	Type and kind of vocational education	Complementary training profile according to EQF classification
United Kingdom, Northern Ireland	Belfast Metropolitan College (Belfast Met)	Institution for further and higher education	Vocational education from secondary school level to Masters level qualifications in Business studies	Level 2 - 4	Adult education: courses in all main vocational areas except agriculture	Level 5 - 8
Hungary	Kodolányi János University of Applied Sciences (KJU),	Institution for higher education	Higher education: BA, MA degree programmes	Level 6-7	Integrated into the main training profile: vocational education for BA students, adult education: vocational education for adults	Level 4-5
The Netherlands	Deltion College	Institution for senior secondary vocational education	Senior secondary vocational education, courses at pre-university education, adult education courses	Level 3-4	Main education profile: adult education (course-based): vocational education for adults	Level 4-5
Greece	Vocational Training Centre Apopsi SA	Vocational Training Centre for adults	Providing certified training courses to adults	Level 3-4	Adult education: vocational education for adults	Will be finally decided during the end of 2012
Ireland	One Family	NGO- and learning and development Centre	Programmes for parents : those parenting alone and those sharing parenting	-	Parenting Family Supports Professional Development programmes, Access to Education Programmes, Welfare To Work Programmes, Personal Development	-
Italy	La Locomotiva Onlus Soc. Coop. Sociale	Voluntary NGO organization involved in adult education. Counselling centre	Courses for adults	Level 3	Training for third sector managers, volunteers and operators, for many different subjects	-

³ RECOMMENDATIONS EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (2008/C 111/01) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=oj:c:2008:111:0001:0007:en:pdf>

IV. Accreditation of teacher training programme in the partner countries

The rules and regulations of the partner countries applicable to the institutional and program accreditation are very different. One such difference is represented by whether the accreditation is state (centrally) or regionally regulated. The degree of rigidity concerning the applicable regulations as well as the institutional autonomy regarding the operational standards for starting training programs varies greatly. Training institutions in Holland are characterized by having a great deal of autonomy in budgeting, starting new programs and an accreditation process just follows it after. Hungary is faced by a very strict central regulation and an extremely complex accreditation process that extends to every single facet.

Table 3. *Regulations of the partner countries applicable to the accreditation process*

Partner institution	Level of regulatory authority in charge for accreditation	Authority in charge for accreditation	Programs designed at own initiatives are automatically accredited?
Northern Ireland Belfast Metropolitan College (Belfast Met)	at governmental level	Ofqual is the regulator of qualifications examinations and assessments in England Wales and Northern Ireland Universities may design and accredit their own qualifications regulated by the Quality Assurance Agency ⁴	No
Hungary Kodolányi János University of Applied Sciences (KJU),	at governmental level	Differs depending on the level of the particular education, organizations appointed by the ministry	No
The Netherlands Deltion College	at governmental level	The ministry of Education accredits the school for higher education, courses of these schools are accredited by the NVAO ⁵	No
Greece Vocational Training Centre Apopsi SA	at governmental level	EKEPIS (National Accreditation Centre for Continuing Vocational Training) ⁶	No, they need to be approved by the relevant organisation.
Ireland One Family	Accredited FETAC ⁷ Centre	FETAC	Programmes designed and then matched against nationally developed units
Italy La Locomotiva Onlus Soc. Coop. Sociale	At regional level	Regione Campania (Regional Government) ⁸	No

⁴ <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/northernireland/Pages/default.aspx>

⁵ <http://nvaio.com/>

⁶ <http://www.ekepis.gr/main/Aboutus/tabid/124/Default.aspx>

⁷ <http://www.fetac.ie/fetac/>

⁸ <http://www.lavoro.gov.it/Lavoro/Eurolavoro/SezioneOperatori/Formazione/Accreditamento/default.htm>

In Northern Ireland the Department of Employment and Learning is responsible for the central administration of education and related services . Its primary duties are to promote education to young people of NI and to ensure the effective execution of its policy in relation to the provision of the education service. They are responsible for ensuring that the college operates within legal requirements including qualifications of staff delivering on courses within the college, structure and delivery of training, the necessary human and physical resources are available for training.

Office of qualifications and Examinations Regulations (Ofqual) regulate vocational qualifications, examinations and assessments in Northern Ireland. (QCF level E1-3 = 1- 4 EQF) Higher Education regulation is the responsibility of the Quality Assurance Agency (QCF 4- 8 = EQF 5-8)

Awarding Organisations are licensed to offer credit-based qualifications. Specific qualifications are accredited by Awarding Organisations these bodies stipulate the curriculum content and are responsible for ensuring that processes for providing quality delivery and assessment are in place in colleges or universities.

The Hungarian system relies on two types of accreditation, at each level there is an institutional as well as a program accreditation. The institutional accreditation supposes that the particular institution meets the necessary requirements for operating within the legal conditions applicable whereas the program accreditation describes the quality and operational standards such as:

- structure of the training (system of modules),
- entry requirements,
- transfer of previous knowledge,
- description of competencies to be developed further,
- infrastructure and human resources of the training,
- requirements for successful completion (exit requirements),
- And the definition of the formal qualification to be awarded after graduation.

From the accreditation perspective, the Hungarian higher education system has two kinds of programs:

- central, designed by the ministry or affiliated organization which are considered to be automatically accredited since training programs by the central authority describe and regulate every necessary element (ex: state-recognized vocational education programs belong to this category)
- programs accredited by training facilities and institutions in which case the institution in question has to provide a detailed description of the program according to the conditions mentioned while the process itself falls within the scope of a special committee appointed by the government. In case the program obtains the accreditation, it is consequently registered into the central registry. Adult education and teacher further training falls within this category.

The institutional and program accreditation together are meant to guarantee that the institution in question provides high quality education as required by the laws and regulations applicable and that the programs offered meet the necessary standards of quality. Regarding programs focusing on teacher further training, accreditation is especially important since most teachers meet their further

training obligations by attending accredited programs because that is a prerequisite for them in order to be able to finance their studies from central grants.

The Dutch system also relies on two types of accreditation, at each level there is an institutional as well as a program accreditation. The institutional accreditation supposes that the particular institution meets the necessary requirements for operating within the legal conditions applicable whereas the program accreditation describes the quality and operational standards. Programs shorter than 1 year fulltime (60 EC) study time can't be accredited. Recognition of such a program can be done by for example a professional association and has no legal status.

In case of Greece the accreditation procedure of the vocational programs is similar: it is the central body called EKEPIS that is responsible for program accreditation and the connected quality assurance. Similarly, in Ireland the central body is called FETAC while in case of Italy the accreditation of VET programs is decentralized: it is coordinated by regional bodies.

Consequently, it can be stated that in each of the 6 countries there is an accreditation body that determines the regulations and quality requirements of the training programs at different levels; however, there is no standardized accreditation system that has already been introduced and accepted in case of all these countries.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

Based upon the documents and the focus group interviews, the research revealed that the primary educational field of the participating partners are at different levels of the EQF, furthermore they have different structures and target audiences, but finds show each one has an active interest in vocational education, albeit at different types. There are institutions that focus mainly on vocational education (e.g. Deltion College), there are some that offer this option parallel to their main field of focus (e.g. Belfast Met and KJU) and there those that tailor their curriculum to the needs of the group and offer a flexible program while the program itself remains outside their main educational field (e.g. Apopsi, Laloco, One Family).

Due to the obvious differences in size and educational profile, the number of full time and part-time teachers involved in these programs and the delivery of training also show great differences and further to that, some also recruit volunteers. These findings revealed that vocational education programs that are to be developed within the framework of the BAREFOOT project have to suit the needs of users with very different backgrounds – those who do not have a formal pedagogical training and those who in addition to having received such qualifications have extensive teaching experience. Therefore, the contents of the training modules have to be flexible enough to ensure further development based on user needs and background knowledge.

Concerning the the three higher and public education institutions (Belfast Met, KJU and DELTION), it is obvious that both the infrastructure equipment and the methodological training of the staff actually exceed the conditions expected and are thus highly suitable to accommodate the technical and methodological requirements that would ensure a successful implementation of the BAREFOOT training program not to mention the added benefits that the academic staff could draw from such training. This also holds true for the Greek partner, since the educational background of the teachers employed at the adult training centres and the infrastructure conditions are more than suitable.

Regarding Laloco and One Family, both institutions are relatively small in size and education is not the main area of their activity but an important component, (education and training accounts for 40% of the One family Budget). In this instance, as mentioned before, emphasis should be put on integrating basic elements of pedagogy into the program in order to lay the basis for a conscious methodological use of the skills and competencies that would be developed throughout the training.

It is also important to note that not all those participating (not delivering) in the BAREFOOT training program possess an adequate ICT knowledge and experience concerning its use for training purposes. Hence, successful completion of the training program will require participants to have an acceptable level of IT skills .

A review of the technological infrastructure of the partner institutions revealed that all participants meet the requirements necessary for a successful completion of the program.

In those particular cases where the participants do not have extensive teaching experience, the blended e-education type would be preferable to other variants because it offers ample opportunity for personal exchange of experiences with both the other participants and the trainer alike. Furthermore, due to the many different teaching styles it is also important that the BAREFOOT training program contain tailored situational exercises so that the participants can apply their acquired knowledge and competencies in their own familiar teaching environment and consequently share and reflect upon the experience. The e-portfolio that represents one of the main objectives of the project would be the best suited method for this purpose.

Concerning the accreditation process of the BAREFOOT project it is obvious that due to the differences in the educational system as well as the accreditation process of the participating countries, universal standards as well as a complete and automatic accreditation of the program cannot be expected. The framework of the project does not allow for adaptations in order to suit the accreditation requirements of each country and the costs associated with the lengthy process far exceed the established budget. An important consideration, however, taking into account the recommendations of the original GOAL⁹ project, is that the developers find an accrediting organization that could provide a framework of standards where the BAREFOOT Technology in Training Delivery program could fit, but would still be acceptable within the framework of the educational system of the other countries and also compatible with the EQF. Given that within the framework of the project BELFAST MET has developed a close cooperation with the OCN NI¹⁰ (Open College Network Northern Ireland), which is a registered charity and a national UK Awarding Organisation, we advise that the framework of regulations, concerning the program developed within this project, should be based on the recommendations provided by OCN NI.

⁹ <http://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/goal/index.asp>

¹⁰ <http://www.ocnni.org.uk/>