

EPODS: Initiative for the Continuous Professional Development of educators in Second Chance Education. Posted 01/03/2017 <https://ec.europa.eu/epale/nl/node/32744>



The premise of EPODS is that teachers and trainers in Second Chance Education (SCE) are responsible for their own professional development, and that an online approach can be successful. This development is suitable for a cross-border collaboration. The Erasmus+ project kicked off with these sentiments in autumn 2016.

Professional Development under teachers is often stimulated by the top of the organisation. Furthermore, there is a wide variety of approaches and styles of professionalization across Europe. This according to Chris Janssen, director of Euricon, the project manager of the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership 'onlinE PrOfessional Development in Second chance education' (EPODS). In EPODS we experience that these both occur 'bottom up', originating from the teachers and trainers.

Bottom-up

Such a bottom-up approach is in any case the foundation of the European project in which his organisation is involved. Together with Betawerk (www.betawerk.nl) they searched for partners in Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Italy and England and the group has been busy since autumn 2016 with the development of a 'European Development Service' for teachers and trainers in adult education: An (online) package with which educators can check and evaluate their own skills. After an assessment (step 1) educators can get right to work with online modules aimed to strengthen particular skills (step 2). Janssen: "If all works as intended, we will also add a section in which the newly acquired skills can be validated (step 3)." The project builds upon the results of the DISCO-project (www.secondchanceeducation.eu/materials).

"A comparable system already exists, which the Open University of the Netherlands has adopted. But now we want to make it suitable for educators working in second chance education in the Netherlands and other

European countries. Soon we will conclude research into the precise needs of the educators in all partner countries.”

–How is it to collaborate on such a topic with the variety of countries?

Janssen: “In every country, the CPD of educators is arranged differently. In Germany ‘Weiterbildung’ (or continuous education) is arranged via the 16 constituent states, each of whom has their own vision and financing. There, educators are not used to receiving feedback from students. In the Netherlands professionalization is most often arranged and organised via the organisation. Educators here often actively react to feedback from the class.”

Janssen also reflects on other factors: “In England educators are taking their own development very seriously. It’s normal there. In other countries there is sometimes not even a budget for CPD. This project will, thus, be a challenge – as are all European projects.”

–Then why should an organisation participate in such an intricate project?

“I often hear people say that European projects are financially not attractive. That is, I think, also correct. But that’s the wrong approach: the enrichment comes from the fact that you as organisation, or in this case as an educator, gain experience which you otherwise would never have gained. Intercultural skills, language skills and project-based working for example. Priceless.”

–The project is aimed at ‘second chance education’. To which target group does this refer?

Janssen laughs. “Good question. Sometimes the target groups our teachers and trainers work with are almost ‘VET’ (vocational level), in England they talk about NEETs (‘not in education, employment or training’), in Germany the focus is on reeling young people back in from the social system. Briefly, we focus mostly on the target group that works with young people who have had some kind of set-back, who with an extra push can return to education or enter the labour market.”

Want to know more?

You can check out the website of Second Chance Education (www.secondchanceeducation.eu) in cooperation with E2C Europe. The platform is aimed at quality improvements within second chance education. It aspires to be a European online knowledge centre with digital evaluation instruments, good practice examples and trainings. You can also follow us on Social Media: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [DISCUSS](#).

