DIALOGUE is a project coordinated by EUCEN (European University Continuing Education Network) and is financed by the European Commission under the program Grundtvig. The initiative aims at creating a network involving LLL providers and researchers with relevant society stakeholders. This network addresses the particular aspect of the communication process between academic research and professional practice in the field of adult learning and continuing education. It is an area that needs serious and abridging research to improve the quality of the process. Therefore the consortium created within this project feels that the link university-society is weak in many institutions for a variety of historical, cultural national and institutional reasons. The current processes of communication in both directions are underdeveloped and therefore there is little potential through this exchange for the enhancement and further development of effective University Lifelong Learning (ULLL). A stronger relationship between the research, the policy and the practice could contribute in solving this problem. This network will seek to identify the kinds of research which are undertaken on adult education in European universities and how the research is used by different stakeholders including policy makers, practitioners and others in the field of adult education.

The aims of the project are to provide a European space for dialogue between academic researches, professional practitioners and policy makers, to improve the transfer of educational research into the field of professional practice in ULLL through the thematic involvement of practitioners in research and to improve policy and practice in the field of ULLL. The aims are achieved through:

1. Development of the dialogue between research and practice around access and progression, quality assurance and enhancement, learning and guidance and new media;
2. Reviewing, developing and evaluating models of good practice in the transfer of research results to professional practice exploring ways if involving practitioners in research;
3. Identifying and exploring the barriers and constraints at national and institutional level to transfer the knowledge;
4. Exploring and evaluating the role of national and international networks in the transfer of research to professional practice;
5. Developing appropriate recommendations targeting networks, policy-makers and decision-makers, researching bodies and institutional actors at all levels.

The network has four thematic groups: Access & Progression, Learning and Guidance, Quality and New Media. The consortium has sixteen partners from which fourteen belong to two of the thematic groups. Each member of each thematic group is producing a case study about the theme. Each partner is writing a national report about the good practices, national policies and activities in LLL. The project has a website where the public information is available. The partners are using the Mixxt platform to interact and discuss issues related with the thematic group or with the project.

The partners are motivated to engage in the research since it is envisaged that, at the end of the project, there will be tools that can help:

1. To engage more people in LLL;
2. To find new ways of lifelong learning including flexible learning;
3. To create linkages and transitions between sectors of education and society;
4. To acquire new skills and qualifications;
5. To improve quality of learning including links between life and work.

The main motivation of the project is the need to build bridges between ULLL and society. These connections will allow people to share ideas and to fulfill the gap that frequently exists between academic environment and society practices. Therefore the role of the network created in the project is to clarify its role and to calculate the impact in the society. It is
expected that the community, composed by members of scientific, practice and professional sectors, will allow the interaction that will improve effective dialogue.

The current work undertaken by the network consists in representing graphically the case studies to illustrate weak and strong ties between the different stakeholders. This step will be followed by a SWOT analysis of the case studies taking into account the aims of the project. This analysis will provide a set of recommendations that will be disseminated among the main interested parties like government agencies, universities, industry, professional organizations, training bodies and service providers.

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