



Dialogue – Facilitating Creative Communication

Final Report

Public Part

Project information

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Executive Summary

The Dia-FCC project aimed at initiating change processes by inspiring and promoting the capability of dialogical communication and behaviour – based on David Bohm and others. The target audience we address with this report is any interested person or organisation, especially in the field of Training and Education.

Dialogue in this sense aims at generation of greater shared understanding in common exploration. The goal of dialogue is to find common ground in appreciating people's diversity. The overall main purpose of the project is to spread more of the *dialogue methodology* and *dialogical behaviours*, skills to facilitate the creation of a new culture of communication, which leads to *common creative thinking*, new insights and creative solutions.

Within the project participants from 8 partner countries with different cultural background were trained as Dialogue Process Facilitators. The participants needed to be interested in broadening their scale of activities to help people and teams with pathways to improve their knowledge and competencies to design and to support change processes. Within the project they got the opportunity to step into a field of common and mutual learning in a multicultural group, to develop facilitator skills and experiences.

The partner countries were: Germany (coordination), Austria, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Estonia, Czech Republic and Iceland. All the organisations in the project are active in the field of gender-sensitivity and are well experienced in trainings / coachings and further education.

Each partner country sent two trainees, to be educated as a Dialogue Facilitator. For the assortment of the Trainees we used a questionnaire, where the persons should present themselves with their occupation, experiences in training, their target groups and their motivation to attend the Trainings of Trainers. By using this methodology we found 16 trainees with various professional and private backgrounds.

The results of the project are Certification of dialogue Facilitators, an interactive website, a final European conference in Sofia and Dialogue Facilitator trainings at the Centre for Research on Women and Gender/University of Leipzig.

At the end of the project the certified alumni formed an European network of Dialogue Facilitators (EuNET DPF).

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1. Project Objectives

The project provided Trainings for Trainers to become dialogue process facilitators. The primary target group of the project were the trainees. They participated in the trainings in order to improve their knowledge and competences as multipliers of this creative method. At the same time they opened for themselves pathways to develop their personal profile and can find personal fulfilment on both levels. Their target groups were in the same situation looking for these opportunities and took these challenges.

Lifelong Learning can be made attractive for a lot of target groups in different countries by experiencing common and respectful behaviour, common thinking, the flow of sense without any prejudice of “right” or “wrong”. The Discipline of Dialogue enables the access to these levels.

The project contributed to the development and quality of Lifelong Learning by offering high-performance trainings lead by highly qualified dialogue process facilitators.

Within the project duration 4 Trainings of Trainers took place. Two of them in Saxony / Germany and two in Lower Austria / Austria. The training duration for each training was three full working days and two days for travelling.

16 trainees from 8 countries, from whom everybody is connected to the working field of training and education of individuals or organisations, benefited by developing their competencies in innovative approaches to dialogical communication and behaviour. To discover new thoughts or becoming aware of own thoughts and also discovering new perspectives can be inspiring for decision making, in leadership, professional and private life.

The target groups of the partner organisations were impacted by the project due to the activities of the partners and participants in their home countries.

The partners and participants are spreading the insights, they gained from our project – especially the trainees - by implementing the dialogical approach in their working field and by disseminating in various ways.

For example the Romanian trainees have established a round table with active and retired police officers, where they have regular exchanges about how to create a common knowledge and understanding of Dialogue. This was a suitable preparation for the workshops of the trainees, which were carried out between the 3rd and 4th Training of Trainers.

Becoming certified Dialogue Process Facilitators widened the approaches of the trainees within their working field. Beside this dialogical thinking and behaviour has also an impact on handling challenging situations in private life more consciously.

2. Project Approach

Within the project several methodologies to approach different target groups were implemented.

For assorting the Trainees from our 8 countries a questionnaire was developed by the coordinating organisation (University of Leipzig) in close cooperation with the Trainer DUO. By using the questionnaire we were able to find trainees with experiences in training and learning-situations. Additionally we asked for the motivation of attending the Trainings of Trainers.

The trainings of trainers demonstrated an eminent methodology, developed by the Trainer DUO.

The trainees were introduced to the theoretical subject of dialogue, based on research and the work of Martin Buber, David Bohm, William Isaacs, Freeman Dhority, Daniel Goleman, Martina and Johannes Hartkemeyer et alia.

They received research-based background about the necessity of gender mainstreaming approaches, knowledge and experience in gender sensitive communication and behaviour. In training situations the trainees experienced the power of dialogue procedures and learned about the implementation of core features of dialogue processes.

Developing a training programme for a multinational group of trainees with different cultural backgrounds, which is considering these facts and responds to it by specific contents, especially gender-sensitivity was one of the innovative characters of the Dia-FCC project.

Furthermore the trainings needed to be designed in a way, which enables the trainees to put the gained insights, learned contents and exercises into praxis with their target groups. To ensure the implementation of the gained experiences, the project provided monthly online-meetings for trainees, moderated by the trainers. The whole purpose of the meetings was to have an exchange about the status quo in the partner countries, to clarify questions and to deepen the contents.

The trainers accomplished a highly innovative development of educational material and curriculum design for the Dia-FCC project.

Worth mentioning are also the reflection rounds in the peer group as well as the feedback of trainers. Those were important key facts in the individual learning process as well as in the group learning process.

In the 4 trainings sessions the trainees were trained to improve their skills for reflection and self-evaluation to transfer these to their working field and target groups.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

The following main aims and results achieved the Dia-FCC project during the reporting period:

a) Results and instruments to assure the quality standards

Corporate Design – The Corporate Design of the project was developed until the 1st Meeting of the Steering Committee (2nd month). The corporate design was developed by our Czech partner and characterizes all devices of project intern and extern communications as well as the products themselves. It is the label for the European Network of Dialog Facilitators, which is going to be formed by the end of the projects duration, and its activities. The Corporate Design demonstrates the basis for the visibility and sustainability of our project work and the same time for exploitation.

Questionnaire for choosing Trainees - in the 1st Meeting of the Steering Committee the partners came to the common decision, that it would be supportive to make a choice for trainees via a questionnaire. In adult educational non-formal settings the project wanted to bring together trainees of different ages and learning backgrounds, who are all interested in improving their knowledge and competencies to bring innovation and creativity in their own work and their organisations. Therefore a questionnaire was developed, where the Trainees described themselves with their occupation, experience in training / coaching etc, and their motivation to take part at the trainings of trainers. Beside this it is absolutely necessary, that the trainees are able to use English as working language.

Evaluation instruments:

- Work plan Quality Assurance
- Work plan Dissemination
- Work plan Exploitation
- External Evaluation

b) Training of Dialogue Facilitators

All Trainings of Trainers took place from April 2010 – April 2012.

In April 2010 the first training took place in Leipzig, Germany.

The training started with an official opening by the coordinator of the project, the manager and the trainer DUO. After clarifying the organisational frame of the meeting the trainees got to know each other, supported by a method developed by the trainer DUO. The main focus in the first training of trainers was to introduce Dialogue theoretically and practically. The motto of the first training session was “A human being is a continuously learning individual who can really grow only by interacting with other human beings”, which should refer to the important impact of the learning processes in general, both for a facilitator as for a participant in a dialogue-round.

Therefore the framework and the rules were introduced and the used methodology (especially reflection, feedback, DUO work and Gender sensitivity).

In November 2010 the 2nd training of trainers took place in Pressbaum / Austria.

The Motto of this training was: “Do not present the final idea! Make sure other people can trace it back”. Therefore we delved into “Personal Mastery”, the 1st of the five disciplines of a learning organisation, based on Peter Senge.

Even more core features were picked out as a central theme, such as “listening deeply”, “observing the observer” and different kinds of dialogues (e.g. generative dialogue).

The “highlight” in this training of trainers was video exercises, in which the trainees had the chance to try out their level of authenticity and openness in front of a group, whereas the audience did an exercise on empathy at the same time. The reflection on this exercise showed, that the participants were moved deeply and were able to connect to their compassion.

In September 2011 the 3rd training of trainers took place (again) in Pressbaum / Austria.

Following the motto “I am learning, you are learning, he/she is learning – WE are learning” the training focused very much on explicit and implicit learning experiences, both regarding the dialogical competencies and the designing, implementing and reflecting the workshops. It was very important to distinguish between the roles of a moderator, a coach, supervisor and a dialogue-facilitator.

This distinction is especially important because within dialogue-rounds a facilitator easily can be “forced” to use some supervising-/coaching approaches, if for example a group steps into (emotionally driven) conflicts. Because the 3rd training session was the last one before the implementation of the dialogue workshops of the trainees in each country, theory and exercises were done to ensure a successful implementation.

In May 2012 the 4th training of trainers took place in Meißen / Germany.

The motto was “From right to wrong – from ‘I know to I am learning’”. This motto – again referring to one of the most important concepts in dialogue, the “never ending learning approach” – was chosen because the trainees had done their workshops between the 3rd and the 4th Training of Trainers, and they should reflect deeply their first independent and self-responsible dialogue-facilitator role. One can easily step into the trap of “being the expert”, which is totally contradictory to dialogue-facilitation.

Therefore the main purpose of the last training session was extended reflection of both the dialogue-process and the facilitation, with all its chances and traps.

The 4th and last Training session was highlighted by the official awarding of the certificates as Dialogue Process Facilitators by the Director of the Centre for Research on Women and Gender, University of Leipzig.

c) Dissemination results - assortment

Project Leaflet – the German team of the project (2 partner organisations) developed a flyer on the project with a short description and a list of all partners. The flyer can be downloaded on the website of the coordinating organisation CWGR (Center for Women and Gender Research). (<http://www.uni-leipzig.de/~frages/index.php?id=83>).

Regular round table of Romanian partner– the Romanian trainees, supported by their partner organisation CPIP – Center for Promoting Lifelong Learning - created a special flyer (attachment No. 018) according to their target group, the policemen in Timisoara. They described the project briefly, adapted it to the target group and used this approach to establish a round table with active and retired policemen. The aim of this roundtable is to present the methodology of dialogue and by this finding appropriate participants for the Dialogue Workshops the trainees have to facilitate and organize themselves, supported by their partner organisation.

Workshops in partner countries – All partner organisations implemented workshops in their countries, which were facilitated by their trainees. Participants of the workshops were the target groups of each partner organisation. The partner organisation invited the participants to these workshops, gave an overview about the DiaFCC project and expressed the organisations capability to offer innovative and creative methods of communication, for enrichment of change processes, personality and transformation. The trainees experienced the implementation of their learning results from the Trainings of Trainers. All workshops were documented and presented in the 4th Training of Trainers. Under dissemination aspects these workshops addresses various target groups and also the commitment of the partner organisation for the project and making the activities within visible. The reports of the workshops are uploaded to our website www.dialogue-facilitators.eu.

Website of the project and links – The website - under dissemination aspects – spreads the corporate design of the project clearly. It addresses different target groups and delivers information about the project, the partners, the project results and of course the European Network of Dialogue Facilitators, which was founded in April 2012. The website is linked to all partner websites , the website of “Dialogue-TCC” – Grundtvig Learningpartnership) and to the German website “dialogprojekt.de”.

Corporate Design – The corporate design characterizes all devices of project intern and extern communications as well as the products. It is also the label of the European Network of Dialogue Facilitators and its activities. By this it is one of the basics for visibility and sustainability of project work.

Network Building – Promoting the sustainability of project results we built an European pool of Dialogue n April 2012 the European Network of dialogue process

facilitators. Networking of persons and organisations is a precondition and one of the conditional elements for success. Therefore – stimulated by the partner organisations – the trainees and the Steering Committee Members started network building in the 1st- training session. The intention of all partners was the existence of an European Network of Dialogue Facilitators, which was founded in April 2012. The network intends to build an European pool of dialogue process facilitators to ensure successful and sustainable ongoing work on dialogue.

Book about Dialogue of Trainer AT – the Austrian trainer from our trainer DUO published a book about the psychology of dialogue (Benesch, Michael (2011): *Psychologie des Dialogs*. Vienna: Facultas publishers), which was elaborated during the project lifetime.

With the intention to disseminate the DiaFCC project for a larger audience, four articles of trainees from the project were included. These articles were written by trainees from Germany, Czech republic and Austria. Referring to the DiaFCC project, in his book the author shows the trainees insights to dialogue they got during the project, and he symbolizes the dialogical approach of “stance of a learner”, meaning trainees should be seen as equal partners with their own experiences and attitudes according to dialogue. A brief overview of the project was given in the book additionally.

4. Partnerships

The European dimension is given in the multi-cultural & intercultural composition of organisations and trainees from the partner countries all over Europe, Eastern and Western, Northern and Southern Countries, EU-Members and EEC-representatives. The project consortium as well as the group of trainees - each is an intercultural learning group. The benefits and challenges are a field of learning for all participants. The European added value consists in the intention and unique possibility to exploit sustainable results for building a European Network of Dialogue Facilitators, which can serve to improve the spreading of dialogue message all over Europe.

Some of the partners have long time experience in European project management; some are very new in this field of cooperation. This leads us naturally to a process of common and mutual learning.

Some partners know each other from former Learning Partnerships, where basic ideas of the Dia-FCC project were settled down. This fact helps a lot to manage the work packages and to establish a team spirit and a efficient cooperation.

The German coordinating institute CWGR – Centre for Women’s and Gender Research – is the only Centre of this kind in Saxony. It is an exclusively third-party funded institution with multidisciplinary research about and experience in implementing Gender Mainstreaming in various fields and on different levels.

The Austrian partner is working in the field of research, training and organisational psychology specialised in facilitating dialogue processes. That’s why the Austrian partner is one of Trainers, together with Dr. Heidemarie Wünsche-Piétzka, who is the other trainer and the developer of die Dia-FCC project and a freelancing expert to our project.

She implements the DUO work in the project and is highly experienced as a systemic organisational developer and trainer for adult learning. The Austrian DUO-trainer also is highly experienced in systemic organizational development and – as a working-psychologist – has been facilitated many change-management processes in public and private institutions as well as in adult learning.

The Center for Women’s studies and Policies (CWSP), the Bulgarian partner, is highly experienced in consolidating and strengthening women’s NGOs and to support the women’s movement in Bulgaria.

Their mission is – inter alia – to initiate gender equality in different sectors as an integral part of the democratization process in Bulgarian society.

The Romanian partner CPIP – Centre for promoting lifelong learning is a nongovernmental and nonprofit institution, active in the educational and social field. The institution aims to promote the culture of lifelong learning throughout the active involvement of all community members in developing a coherent strategy for implementing the concept and practice of “learning throughout life”.

Yenimahalle Directorate of National Education in Ankara, is a governmental organization in charge of planning and coordination of all kinds of educational and training activities in from pre-school to the end of secondary school, vocational high

schools, technical schools beside parents' education and training in Yenimahalle District in Ankara. The vision is to be a qualified, prominent institution that has reached the level to compete equivalent institutions in Turkey and in modern countries with ensuring authentic contribution to the development of Turkish National Education System by providing effective usage of knowledge, skill, value and technology required for Knowledge Era.

The Estonian partner, the Women's Training Center (WTC), is a non-profit organisation and has since nearly two decades been at the forefront of project development introducing into the Estonian context, such as new topics and methods and areas of learning and teaching, among them gender equality and gender mainstreaming. The WTC has cooperation partners across Europe and has a lot of project experience working internationally.

ASPEKT, the partner organisation from the Czech Republic, is a non-governmental non-profit organisation created in 2008. The aim of ASPEKT is the improvement of human potential by further education to help people enhancing their skills and qualifications useful in the labour markets. Main targets of ASPEKT are consultancy, training and cooperation.

Iceland is represented by EVOLVIA, a small enterprise specialised in leading training programmes in international level to promote conscious leadership. The main activity of EVOLVIA is offering international certifying programmes in coaching methodology. The mission statement of EVOLVIA is devoted to leadership with a coaching approach, to raise awareness of the connection between individual growth and the outcome.

Strategy transnational, one of the two German partners, is an association of experts in research, education, training, organisational development and consulting. The main activities of strategy transnational are research-based project development and project implementation focussed on subjects to design sustainable future for people and societies. Innovative methods of implementation and co-operation and transfer of these targets into education and learning arrangements for different target groups in various countries are offered. A special engagement is developed to promote NGOs and East and West cooperation for learning.

5. Plans for the Future

There are several outcomes, which go beyond the project's lifetime, such as the European Network of Dialogue Process Facilitators. To ensure the visibility of this Network, the website is the main product, which needs special attention, especially because the Dia-FCC project is evaluated as pilot project.

The website was established in the second half of the projects lifetime. Reason for this was the complex website development, where needed to be considered not only the project website with internal sections and forums, but also the appearance of the European Network of Dialogue Facilitators.

The certified Dialogue Process Facilitators are offering this skill in their countries to their special target group and spread the methodology over Europe. The educational material has a high impact on it.

According to this a handbook in form of an E-Book was developed and translated in all languages represented in the project. This E-Book is available on the website (internal area). It gives an overview of the contents delivered in the project, refers to a number of the most important insights and skills, and provides all the exercises of the four Trainings of Trainers. It supports the trainees to keep the essential outcomes in mind and to develop further their individual dialogical ideas for designing workshops or facilitating dialogue-rounds.

Furthermore the University of Leipzig, represented by the Centre for Research on Women and Gender – offers an European further educational course to train “Dialogue Process Facilitators” in German language, in cooperation with an institution with long term experience in Dialogue Facilitating and Training and highly qualified trainers. The curriculum of the course resorts to the results and experiences of this project. Taking into account the situation that higher educational institutions neither in Germany nor in Europe offer such an opportunity the first course itself will become a pilot. An educational course in English language is still foreseen.

6. Contribution to EU policies

The Dia-FCC project puts lifelong learning to reality. In the project work packages on different levels, which were implemented, initiate a new culture of learning in the sense of a creative kind of communication and common and mutual learning.

Thereby the project contributed to the development of quality of lifelong learning.

The participants of the project gained more power and strength on supporting the European area for Lifelong Learning, by experiencing and facilitating learning offers which are new on European level. The project connected trainees of different ages, different sex and learning backgrounds, interested in improving their knowledge and competencies to bring innovation and creativity in their personal lives, their own work and their organisations are brought together in an adult educational, non formal setting.

The Dia-FCC project was designed to reinforce the contribution of LLL to intercultural dialogue, gender equality and personal fulfilment. The methodology of dialogue, practiced in a gender sensitive way leads to personal fulfilment. We intended to strengthen the gender perspective in all core features for dialogue, which were trained. This attention for "gendered" core features generates changed attitudes, values and practices. It is a contribution to develop gender democracy!

The validation of non-formal and informal learning was improved by enhancing the attention and acceptance for these learning offers and its promotion by established adult educational organisations. To train multipliers of dialogue facilitation methodology meant for most of them to offer their gained knowledge and skills to target groups which are in the field of non-formal learning.

The horizontal policies of the Lifelong learning Programme were addressed in several ways.

As the Dia-FCC project was devoted to gender mainstreaming implementation, it was lead and carried out by all partners in a gender sensitive way. Furthermore the trainees were trained and educated to work on the basis of gender democratic behaviour, which was also supported by working as a gender DUO.

Taking into account that DiaFCC is a pilot project it promoted not only a disseminating of the dialogue idea and vision but also led to a new culture in the various organisations.

Implemented and offered by dedicated trainers and organisations it has spread these messages to a broader public, like disadvantaged groups, leadership and top-management persons, workers in the social field, decision makers and politicians on different level.