

# Grundtvig Thematic Workshop



La Marlagne, Namur  
Belgium  
From 12 to 16 April 2010

## "Literacy, let's speak about it!"

**Synthetic and illustrated report**

## Preamble

Lire et Ecrire has initiated a Grundtvig project called Eur-Alpha which will end in 2012.

This network gathers several associations from various European countries which has joined forces in order to promote and develop quality of adult literacy actions.

The objective will be carried on by working mainly according two axes: the training of trainers and the participation of learners.

The first activity meant for learners was the thematic workshop of which we present an illustrated synthesis below.

The workshop which took place in Namur in April 2010 was called 'Literacy, let's speak about it!'; it gathered learners coming from 8 European countries.

A detailed version (also in French and Spanish) is available on request at Lire et Ecrire.

## Introduction

From April 12 to 16, 27 learners gathered together coming from 8 European countries: Germany, Belgium (French Community), Spain (Catalonia), France, Great Britain (Scotland and Northern Ireland), Ireland, the Netherlands and Portugal.

In order to facilitate the work and communication, we were divided into two groups which worked the same objectives but in a different way. One group of learners worked with the Reflect Action methodology (process which aims at the participation of all, literate and illiterate, to democratic life, to speak and stand. Each is enabled to communicate and to analyze the power relationships). The other group worked through a writing and graphic arts workshop.

Participants	Sabine Ehresmann, Uwe Boldt et Elfriede Haller from Germany ; Guy Dehalleux, Roland Canivez, Ammar Ben H. Inoubli, Yves Huysmans, Fabienne Vandermiege, Erkan Kurucay, Alice Dimla, Cynthia Aliu, Jean-Claude Mantaux, Alexandre Thomas from Belgium ; Adelaida Morte, Maria Antonia Mendez et Natalia Fernandez from Spain (Catalonia) ; Monique Genty, Bernadette Detret, Maurice Chevallier, Dominique Henrichot from France ; Elizabeth Hargreaves, David Hendry, Allan Campbell, Kenneth Harrow from Scotland; Michelle Belshaw from Northern Ireland ; Bridie Daly from Ireland ; Johanna (Hannie) De Heus, Inne Hinne-Pieterse et Peter Bartels from the Netherlands ; Francisco Coelho et Jose Marques Lourenco de Oliveira from Portugal
Workshops facilitators	Reflect Action : Anne Loontjens, Frédérique Lemaitre, Nicola Foroni Writing and graphic arts: Odette et Michel Neumayer
Organizers	Catherine Stercq, Nadia Baragiola, Cécile Bulens and Jacques Bosman from Lire et Ecrire Communauté Française

## Organization of work

Monday	In the morning both groups work together on the theme "to know oneself, to overcome our fears". In the afternoon the theme was the group building. Each workshop did it in its own way.
Tuesday	Both groups worked each in its own way on training and education.
Wednesday	Both groups prepared separately the visit of the European Parliament which took place in the afternoon, followed by a walk in Brussels and a dinner in an Ethiopian restaurant.
Thursday	Both groups worked on the themes of network, meeting and 'union.
Friday	Each group prepared the presentation of its workshop and answered to the individual evaluation. Both groups gathered to see and hear what the others had done. Then evaluation panoramas were made and a last common evaluation "I take in my suitcase".

### 1. To know oneself, to overcome our fears

The first morning was devoted to know each other and to allow participants to overcome our shyness and the language barrier.

Each of the participants wrote his first name and drew a symbol representing him on a coloured card. They put their cards all around a map of Europe with lines linking them to the country where they come from. Each introduced himself and some strong ideas were written on big sheets of paper.



Then two facilitators told the story of the Little Red Ridding Hood in Italian, language that none of the participants spoke. Then in language groups the participants tried to tell the story by using labels representing the story and each group presented in his language a part of the story like he thought he understood it. Finally the participants had an exchange to ask themselves "what do I understand even when I think I don't understand anything?"

### 2. To build the group

The participants were divided into 2 workshops to work on group construction.

In the Reflect Action workshop, the participants first built individually a flower with 4 petals of different colours. On the yellow petal, each wrote his expectations; on the green petal, something about him; on the red petal, the group principles and on the blue petal, his part of Europe. In the middle of the flower he put his self-portrait and he represented on a map a symbol of his country.



Then we gathered the petals per colour and in the middle of each flower we wrote a synthesis of ideas.

In summary



#### Our expectations:

- To learn from each other.
- To bring back home experiences to implement.
- To communicate with each other.
- Collective work.
- To share ideas and opinions.
- To communicate our points of view to politicians.
- Toward a common goal.
- To gain self-confidence and strength.
- To learn how works adult education in other countries.
- Development.

#### A part of me

Everybody:

- Wants to improve,
- Is happy to be here and to share ideas and opinions with the others.
- It is a starting point to begin an action.
- No one should be excluded from education.
- People have a lot of power and commitment.
- All the family is involved in learning.
- Pressure on the government: to increase the quality of adult education with good practices



#### Group's principles

- Respect
- Everyone knows (no one is stupid).
- Joy and laughter.
- Everyone tries to learn.
- Democracy.
- To be honest one with the others
- Friendship.
- To be free.
- To share, exchange, learn.
- Egalitarian dialogue.
- Decisions among ourselves.
- Desires based on arguments.





### My part of Europe

- More time to learn what we want.
- Governments should give more support and listen more.
- Learning adapted to everyone.
- Publicity around literacy, to speak more about it.
- We must take into consideration learners' opinions.
- To be together on the way to learning.
- Opportunity for a second chance.
- More from bosses to settle working groups.
- To learn from learners.
- More financing from Europe for adult education.
- Inquiries to know literacy needs of countries.
- Different training material for people.

**In the writing and graphic arts workshop,** the participants first represented in role play a situation in which we think it is important to talk about illiteracy, whether it was done or not.

Then the facilitators presented their working proposition: «It is important to start from your audacities and your years of experience which are often told by the others, the trainers, the politicians, the social workers but not by us. You should start from your desire to go communicate and from peace culture. Through writing and graphic arts workshops, we will know about each other, think together, and speak about our strategies to others ».



They proposed to represent the advance of the work on a medium « chaos-world » that the group will build up every day. The world is not made in one piece if not a chaos where we can find everything. Creativity will be the key word to fill in the group's world-chaos.

Each drew a card he will offer to someone else. For this the participants had pastels. They could use 3 colours and the instruction was that they could not draw something concrete. On the other side of the card, each wrote "it is me today with the colours of my mood".



The participants exchanged their cards explaining what they had drawn and written, they were put on the medium and a discussion went on what each discovered on the group today and on the way of working.

### 3. To read? To write? Training?

The objective was to see what enables each to learn, to exchange on our relation reading and writing.

In the writing and graphic arts workshop, each wrote on a post-it what he like about training, what allows him to learn.

I'm happy to learn to read and write another language than my Turkish language.  
For me a good training is to find resistance to evolve and to find energy to go on evolving.  
I follow the training to discover several things: to write properly and understand computing. If I have this, the rest follows.  
I enjoy training, to be able to speak properly in front of people. I enjoy writing without the need of anyone.

Then there was a gouache workshop « the four colours, to find a place while respecting the others ».



Each participant had to choose a letter he liked. He had to draw it several times in different sizes and shapes. Then he chose the shape and size he liked the most. Then by groups of 3 or 4 persons, the participants made a poster. First each drew his letter several times in order to fill in the poster. Then they received the instruction not to leave any blank space on the poster. In order to do that, they had to go over the other ones' letters which lead them to communicate with the other to have his consent.

After there was a discussion on the theme of the meeting by making two columns which will allow us to see what each felt during this activity.

For some the meeting is:	For others the meeting is:
Easy	Difficult
Immediate	is time consuming
To negotiate	to reject, NO!
Pleasant	Unpleasant
To decide	



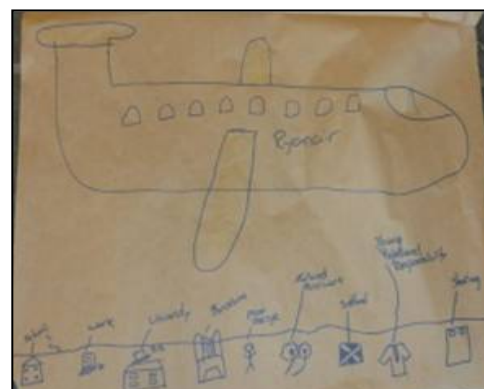
The facilitators presented cards with drawings. Each had to choose the drawing which for him represented the best what does reading and writing mean. Then he had to reproduce this drawing.

Then the facilitator gave words and the participants completed with words that came to their mind in relation with the words to read and to write. On the drawing each reproduced it was written on the different parts of the drawing words that were associated with this theme. On top of the drawing was written the objectives to be reached.

Each participant explained to the group why he had chosen this drawing, why he had written these words and why at this place.

**Le groupe REFLECT Action** a échangé sur les parcours de formation: les problèmes, la décision de reprendre la formation.

Après quelques techniques d'animation qui permettaient l'échange et l'évocation, chacun a dessiné son parcours de formation et l'a ensuite présenté aux autres.



## Conclusions

In our training path, each of us could overcome difficulties to find the way to his dream, his project. The support from the family, friends is important. Sometimes we are the victims of discrimination and this situation has negative effects on our training path, on our school career. We all have the right to a second chance.

#### 4. Our voice at the European Parliament

The objective was to meet Members of the European Parliament and to make our voice heard at the European Parliament.

Each group prepared the visit.

In the **Reflect action workshop**, the participants first remembered, thanks to facilitation techniques, what was said, written and drawn until now. They each had to choose one word they put in common with the others to make a song of protest. Then these claims were gathered and filled out and some persons were chosen to present them to the Members of Parliament.



In the **writing and graphic arts workshop**, after having learned the myth on the word Europe origins, the participants evoked what the words « visit » and « European Parliament » meant for them. They then prepared the questions they will ask to the Members of Parliament.

The participants could meet 4 Members of the Parliament:

**Doris Pack** is German. She is member of the PPE, of the CDU in Germany. She sits in the European Parliament since July 1989. She is President of the Committee Culture and Education. She is member of the delegation for the relations with Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo and member of the Committee for women rights and gender equality.

**Marc Tarabella** is Belgian. He is member of the group Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats. He is member of the Committee for Agriculture and rural development, of the Committee for women rights and gender equality and of the delegation for the relations with South East Asia countries. He was Minister of training for the Walloon Region and Minister of Continuing Education and Youth at the French Community.

**Malika Benarab Attou** is French and Algerian. She is particularly aware of the illiteracy problem as there was some in her family. She is member of the Green group, member of the Committee Culture and Education and of the delegation for the relations with the Maghreb countries.

**Isabelle Durant** is Belgian, member of the Green group. She is Vice President of the European Parliament and member of the European Parliament Bureau, of the Budget Committee and the delegation for the relations with Iran.

The President of the Commission first presented the Parliament and the other institutions and then the Members of Parliament followed one another and exchanged opinions with the participants.

Both learners groups had prepared questions and claims.



Here is a summary of what they said :

- All countries have to promote and develop access to education for adults. Human rights and in particular those in link with adult education must be a priority for each country. Political measures must be taken: skilled labour, reduction of least skilled workers exploitation, promotion of migrants' integration, adaptation of measures according to needs, consideration for the learners' voice, and development of specific strategies in favour of a specific public. Education is the way by which each can join a project and access a quality life. Nobody should miss such an opportunity.



- A lot of participants didn't have the chance to go to school or to get a diploma. To follow an adult training is therefore a second chance. Each government has to develop a help in learning programs of basic skills and allow each to have access to a quality job. It is not about asking for charity but claiming for an access to a quality life long training.

- It is important that politicians and our representatives in the European Parliament are aware of the extent of illiteracy and training and education must be a priority at the European level. Networks must be created; we must have common objectives and take into account welcoming of migrants.
- Adult training and education must be democratic. They must take into account the learners' needs; they must be able to voice their opinion. That is why we are working on creating a Charter at the European level.

And their questions:

- In your opinion what should be done to have a successful literacy in Europe?
- Which ICT material could we have at our disposal?
- To hire trainers for Lire et Ecrire learners, therefore which training plan in Europe? Which financing?
- What do we have to do to introduce our Charter (Euralpha) to the Parliament? What are the procedures? What are the deadlines? Which office? Which layout? How do you help a European network to set up?
- The rights of undocumented immigrants to be treated and trained like everyone. The issue of visas to be obtained quicker in order to extent points of view and the network.

- To have the same rights of education in all European countries.
- What do you do in primary education concerning learning of read-write in order not to have anymore children who do not know?

After the Parliament there was a walk in Brussels and a dinner in an Ethiopian restaurant.



The next day both groups evaluated their visit.

**The Reflect Action group** did it on the basis of questions worked on in group.

The main conclusions are

### Conclusions

- More time to be better prepared.
- To better know the details of the program.
- To have a microphone in order for everybody to hear and to better organize the language groups for the translations.
- To tell the media.
- To ask questions to the right persons, to go to the right place.
- To go on working at different levels: local, national, and European.
- To put a question to each Member of Parliament in his country.
- To create a move from the beginning.

**In the writing and graphic arts workshop**, the participants exchanged their opinions on the day in Brussels: what memories, what strong words, what feelings?

### Conclusions: To meet each other? What for?

- *To solve problems together.*
- *To exchange, give and receive and better understand.*
- *To share traditions, cultures, knowledge.*
- *To be friends.*
- *To learn to work together and learn to maintain peace.*
- *For our children.*
- *To open ourselves to the others,*
- *To respect the others' values,*
- *To be united against mischance, injustice.*
- *To trust*
- *Discussion*

## 5. The network

The objective was to think about the learners' network: what already exists, the organisation, problems, and concrete ideas.

In the Reflect Action workshop, the learners drew their perception of the network at home and they discussed on the basis of questions:

1. What is the network going to bring us?
2. What content for the network?
3. How do we want to be organized?
4. What difficulties are we going to meet?
5. What concrete ideas to star?

Here is the conclusion of their work

### Conclusions on the network

#### What is the network going to bring us?

- 💡 More information,
- 💡 The chance to meet other learners who come from other countries, a better knowledge of different realities,
- 💡 Propositions of possible actions,
- 💡 Different ideas,
- 💡 A better work together,
- 💡 To touch more people,
- 💡 Examples of good practices from learners,
- 💡 Examples of works from learners,
- 💡 Deep reflections on educational processes,
- 💡 A good Charter,
- 💡 To transform in reality a democratic adult education where the voice of participants and learners are listened.

#### What content for the network?

- 📖 Answers to learners' needs,
- 📖 Evaluations of member organisations,
- 📖 On literacy in general,
- 📖 Access to services,
- 📖 To ask support to governments such as money, material...
- 📖 To support our projects,
- 📖 To make our voices listened,
- 📖 To build the « Charter »,
- 📖 Questionnaires, surveys, inquiries,
- 📖 Pictures and videos,
- 📖 Reflections,

### Which difficulties are we going to meet?

- Q➤ At the level of computer knowledge
- Q➤ At the level of translation
- Q➤ The distance to organize meetings
- Q➤ The fact to travel alone.

### How do we want to be organized?

- That the network has a website with information from all those shaping it.
- To promote analysis and reflection.
- To think about strategies to facilitate access to the content for learners.
- To organize varied « spaces » to group together contents provided by the learners.
- To develop a space for exchange of opinions, ideas, problems and possible solutions.
- That learners send information through the coordinator.
- A constant updating.
- Members of the Committee of each country.

### Which concrete ideas to start?

- An appropriate website,
- Inquiries on the website themes at different levels,
- A work in small groups,
- To have evaluation tools,
- To work on the same themes in the different countries,
- That the teachers, volunteers and learners work together for a quality adult education,
- A meeting at least once a year of all learners by video conference.

**Then** Jacques Bosman and Nadia Baragiola who are responsible for the Grundtvig project at Lire et Ecrire explained to us how the project started.



## 6. Singular points of view

The objective was to understand in what our way to look is different.



In the writing and graphic arts workshop, the work was based on a still life. The instruction was to draw one of the painting's elements like we wanted to, to paint it with watercolour by mixing the colours. We could not be too concrete. Then we gave our card to our neighbour who wrote what he saw in our drawing.

A sharing of points of view happened.

### Our discoveries

- *The colours set and their mixing.*
- *Meeting between colour, water and oneself.*
- *I did not know that we could mix colours.*
- *We made something that we can recognize.*
- *Green, blue, mauve make me think of nature.*
- *The possible mixing of colours makes one think of the possible mixing of people.*
- *I discover a rainbow with colours put together.*
- *I was shy at the beginning because I did not know how to do. After I did my own mixing, I invented my methods.*
- *I liked the combinations of colours, a little bit like a group that meets.*
- *Watercolour work is a metaphor for meeting.*

## 7. Evaluating our week

The participants first filled in an individual questionnaire requested by the subsidizing body. From these questionnaires it comes out that a big majority of them think that the objectives have been reached and that the content of the workshop was excellent: the subject was interesting, the workshop was culturally rewarding and a useful and interesting European experience. They enjoy the workshop's methodology as well as the trainers' work. This workshop will be a plus for their studies and private life.

**In the Reflect Action workshop**, the participants finished the evaluation wall built every day. This wall enabled to visualize all along the workshop what had been created, said and felt. It also facilitated the use of the space and enabled the participants of the other workshop to see what had been done.

Then there was a common evaluation of different aspects of the week.

**In the writing and graphic arts workshop**, the participants finished the chaos wall by drawing a square with a crayon on the theme: me today that is 4 days later.



## 8. Let's look at both workshops

### Presentation of each workshop

Each workshop presented to the participants of the other workshop the work done during the week.

### Building of on common fresco

There were 3 tables and on each of them there was a big paper cloth. Each participant had to let a mark on each cloth with a pencil, paint, modelling clay by sticking on, cutting up...

Then they looked at the 3 fresco created and they commented some aspects inspiring them.



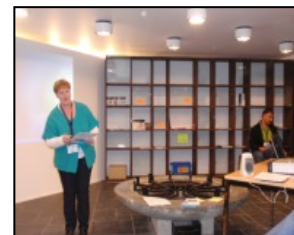
### I bring back in my suitcase

Both groups together they explained what they will bring back home from this workshop.

- New ideas, to do something similar in our countries. We leave with more inspiration.
- An irrepressible desire to change the world.
- We must also think about other countries outside Europe, to help them in order to have equal rights for everybody.
- Your energy, your desire to change things. I will speak a little bit about your experience in my region.
- To build the future with respect
- To say that each brought something and if we are if we are more numerous our children will go on building.
- It is an old dream for me these international meetings. The dream begins!
- Trust, energy, ability to change things and that learners can make their voice heard.
- A very big implication as far as human is concerned. Useful ideas for the project. A big implication from all of us so a success.
- An intense week during which we have better become aware of the social scandal (and not only educational) of illiteracy. We have admired the participants' courage to take control of their life.

### **And the evenings?**

During two evenings the learners could exchange on their countries. The learners presented how literacy works at home. They also had the opportunity to better know the EUR-ALPHA project. The trainers who participated at the Summer University of Lire et Ecrire joined them these evenings.



### **And the departure?**

The Icelandic volcano prevented some to leave as planned. Some left by bus, others by train, truck or boat. Those who had to stay visited Namur.

But, sometimes a few days late, everybody arrived home safely.

If you would like to receive the full report of the workshop, please ask Lire et Ecrire Communauté Française, [lire-et-ecrire@lire-et-ecrire.be](mailto:lire-et-ecrire@lire-et-ecrire.be).

