



Lifelong Learning Programme



CONNECTION

Adult education in cultural institutions in Bulgaria, Italy, Lithuania, Romania and Turkey

Summary of the research report

CONNECTION – Cultural Organisations as Communication and Learning Environments is a project involving partners from 5 European countries, financed in the framework of the programme Lifelong Learning – Grundtvig sub-programme.

CONNECTION project aims to promote learning as social constructivism and to improve the capacity of cultural institutions to be active players in adult education field, to forge new relations with and within the community and to contribute to the social cohesion and cultural dialogue. First year of the project comprised a research carried out by project partners from the 5 countries participating in the project – Romania, Bulgaria, Italy, Turkey and Lithuania, on the **educational activities and practices of cultural institutions** – museums, libraries, cultural centres and the training needs of cultural professionals and managers. After a brief investigation of the cultural systems from the countries participating in the project, the research took the form of questionnaires-based surveys in a first phase, followed by a series of in-depth analyses carried within a limited number of cultural organisations. The results are gathered in one research report composed of 2 parts, both of them published on the project website, accessible to anyone interested.

We present you below a summary of the results of the two surveys targeting cultural professionals and cultural managers, applied in Bulgaria, Italy, Lithuania, Romania and Turkey at regional, national or sectorial level, to museums, libraries and cultural centres. Full results can be found on www.connection-eu.eu

Conclusions and observations on data gathered from cultural professionals:

- there's a large base of experience in organizing educational programmes and activities in cultural institutions, as declared by the respondents; also, there's a high rate of interest between the persons who are not organizing educational programmes and activities, only 3% of respondents are not interested in organising educational programmes.
- educational programmes have as base an annual plan in most cases and have a high frequency as permanent, weekly and monthly activities;

- educational programmes are targeting most often children and teenagers, but also there is a certain experience in working with adults and marginalized groups;
- predominance of formal programmes, like conferences and seminars and traditional methods, like lectures and discussions; very low presence of activities internet-based or based on interactivity with the computer. Materials used in the educational process correspond to the type of programmes and kind of methods that are used (computer and video projector for lectures and conferences).
- educational activities are taking place mainly in the organization's own spaces;
- factors considered of high importance by cultural professionals who act as educators – to assure the fidelity of the participants to educational programmes by 44,65% and to adapt the methods of the needs and level of target group by 41,8%.
- factors considered of low importance – the available equipment by 30,2% and the location by 36%.
- educational programmes are perceived as a possible way of diversifying the public of cultural organizations;
- regarding target groups of educational programmes, the differences between present and future options are relatively small. The direction of the oscillation moves from the groups predominant presently (children and teenagers already in educational structures) to adult persons and people in conditions of marginalization and/or with disabilities.
- educational approaches based on constructivism and social constructivism are accepted by more than 50%, and by more 40% of respondents.
- more than 50% of respondents are using multiple ways for their own professional development, but participation in trainings remains the most used one;
- areas of professional development appreciated as necessary: development of educational programmes, promotion of educational programmes and research of adults educational needs;
- active learning and communication with adults are considered of lower importance;
- the form of training preferred would be mixing lectures, seminars with assisted learning and tutoring;
- the recommended duration of a training session for cultural professional would be of 5 days, in the perspective of mediating the different options, time and resources availability.

Conclusions and observations on the data collected from cultural managers:

- the presence of educational programmes in cultural organizations from the 5 countries is very high, according to cultural managers;
- educational programmes are developed as an initiative of the organization and with its own resources, and to a low extent are considered a legal obligation and are based on contracts with third parties;
- educational programmes are based on an annual plan of activities and have a high frequency as permanent, weekly or monthly activities;
- there is a strong connection of educational programmes with specific events and holidays (51,6%) and with other situations (37,1%) pointing to relations of collaboration with other organizations from the community and to specific requests from the public;
- most often the programmes take the form of round tables, conferences, seminars and information services (in over 50% of cases); modern forms like educational demonstrations, educational games, role playing and theatre, accredited courses and voluntary activities are used to a lesser extent (between 30% and 50%); activities via the internet are largely not used (less than 10%).

- predominant target groups: children from 7 to 14, teenagers from 14 to 18, young adults from 18 to 26; adult persons and seniors over 60 also have significant rates given by cultural managers;
- as socio-economic category, high school and college students constitutes most often the target group of educational programmes;
- regarding the group of people with special needs or in difficult context, 30% or less of the respondents declared they work with convicted people, persons with mental or physical disabilities and with persons with socio-economic disadvantages;
- the opinion that educational programmes can diversify the public of cultural organization is largely embraced;
- the variations regarding the target groups cultural managers would be interested to approach in the future are relatively small; decreasing tendencies are visible concerning the categories of children and teenagers, high-school and college students; categories of public where there is visible an increasing interest are people with social and economic disadvantages (+19,3) and persons with physical and mental disabilities (+8,5%);
- cultural managers expressed in equal proportion the commitment to a traditional approach of learning in cultural institutions (50% for the principle that a cultural institution should offer to its public the right and coherent perspective on cultural or natural heritage) and to a more contemporary approach (50% for the principle that it should offer to its public multiple perspectives and interpretations over the objects and information that have cultural meanings).
- in concordance with these principles, 67,8% of cultural managers consider that adults are interested in the rightness (accuracy) and the quantity of information provided, but also in proportion of that 51,2% that adults are interested to have the information presented from an inter and multidisciplinary perspective;
- interpretation and contribution of adult person to information and cultural content are considered of interest to a lesser extent, there is a tendency of a pedagogical/traditional approach of adults learning;
- the training areas/subjects of interest for cultural managers professional development are cultural marketing, educational programmes and development of audiences for more than 50%, and management of change for 44,6% of respondents;
- the preferences for the form of the training are distributed between lectures, seminars and lectures plus self learning; non-formal learning, tutoring/coaching/mentoring and self learning gathered each between 10% and 15%;
- the duration of the training should from 3 to 5 days;
- regarding the internal organization, only 10,4% of respondents declare to have a specialized department for educational programmes and 49% consider it should have a specialized department, in order to have better programmes; 51% consider this should be a task shared between several departments;
- more than half are using one or several persons to develop and implement educational programmes; the persons developing and implementing educational programmes are in most cases employees of the organizations;
- more than half of respondents declare to have 3 or more persons in-charge with educational programmes in their organizations;
- more than 70% of respondents declare that employees in-charged with educational programmes have a background in education;

- a large majority consider training as a necessity for their employees; 77,25% of respondents consider their employees should develop new competences in the area of development of educational programmes for adults, 55% in the area of research of educational needs of adults, and 48,8% communication and work with adults by;
- active learning is taken into consideration to a lesser extent, which is consistent with the traditional-pedagogical approach of adult leaning preferred by a large part of cultural managers participating in the survey.

The data presented above are based on a total number of questionnaires of 426, where 211 represented questionnaires completed by cultural professionals and 215 questionnaires completed by cultural managers from the five countries.