# Interests and Desires Socrates Grundtvig Project

# Cornerstones
## Draft

**biat**

Berufsbildungsinstitut
Arbeit und Technik

May 2006

# Interests and Desires Socrates Grundtvig Project Cornerstones Draft

The basic ideas of the project are laid down in the proposal under the headings "2 Rationale and background"

And "3 Envisaged outputs of the project". Therefore they need not to be repeated here. The overall aim is described in 2.1 of the proposal and is best described through the title of the project "Creative planning of a meaningful life through the appraisal of interests and desires". The target groups are to be found in section 2.5.

The work to be done is stated in tthe "Objectives of the project" (section 2.2a) which are more or less ordered according to the envisaged time schedule. In addition, in section "6. Planning of activities" the "Overall working methods"(section 6.1) are outlined, and the "Work plan" ("Section6.4) seperates the envisaged work into nine stages. Within these respective aims, objectives, outputs, activities, time scale and the special tasks of the partners including the overall working time input are listed in chronological order.

The "Envisaged outputs of the project" (section 3) name three main outputs:

1) A set of action oriented situations and activities where however the terminology and understanding needs more clarification to be agreed upon by the partnership – See Cornerstones 3+4.

2) An interactive ICT-tool for participants "Detecting my interests and desires" for which a very preliminary structure is proposed. The concrete features will be worked out by the partnership while the work for output 1 is under progression.

3) An interactive ICT guide for practitioners (available online and on CD Rom ) for which again a tentative structure is proposed:

- a first part giving information on the outputs according to No. 1 and how to deal with them independently;
- a second part which provides support for the practitioners in assisting the participants in carrying through the self-appraisal of their interests, wishes, dreams and desires, including their planning of possible future activities;
- a third part which supports the practitioners in observing – not assessing the participants during the process of self-evaluation so that the former can better assist the latter during the envisaged common reflection process.

The following cornerstones try to contribute to the clarification amongst the partnership about some issues which may still need some further discussion. Although the cornerstones lay down some principles of the common work they are of course open to alterations during the progress of the project, due to common or individual experiences.

Because the Socrates Grundtvig project "Interests and Desires" is based in many important features on the previous Leonardo project "Self-Evaluation" the cornerstones are in many respects similar to the principles of this project.

## Cornerstone 1 – Mutual learning

Mutual learning is the most fundamental principle of the working methods of the partnership. This means that the project proposal is the starting point, but that the progress of the work will lead to an open process of interpretation. For that the partners will contribute their pre-suppositions, opinions and understandings to the development of a common interpretation,. But they will probably at the same time design their own curricular module according to the adaptation of common understanding to their interinstitutional and cultural context.

Of course the possible deviations from the proposal should stay in concordance with it as far as it is necessary in order to get the acceptance of the reviewers of the European Commission in the final evaluation. The term "mutual learning" includes some other features for our project which can be cited from the Self-Evaluation Scientific Report:

*"The term refers to the involvement of participants in the project in a spiral of knowledge development – a cycle of reports, workshops and implementation to promote a continuing growth of the knowledge -both tacit and explicit.*

*The term underlines that the project partners are a community of learners, practitioners and users.*

*Mutual learning implies an iterative cycle of development, a discursive style and the importance of face-to-face meetings.*

*The idea of mutual learning draws attention to the shared roles of professionals and members of the target groups – there is an intention for "shared competence".*

*Finally the term provides an intercultural perspective. "Out of the post-modern frame-work has emerged constructivism, which in practical terms is expressed as the move-ment toward diversity and inclusiveness, recognizing that cultural ways of being create different perceptions of the same phenomenon"(Boucouvalas/Henschke, 2002, p.134)."*[1]

The cultural diversity is particularly salient for different VET systemms which again are connected to the structures of the labour market and the possibilities of access to it . Equally important are the different systems of social welfare which determine to a great degree the possibilities for "a life outside gainful employment". Both features together mean that the situation of the target group and it´s opportunities to be supported by our project vary strongly in various countries. As a consequence the curricular modules and the way in which  they are used are also  very different. But this does not mean that it is not possible to gain new insights and incentives from understanding the dynamics of development in other countries.

In addition, however the curricular modules will be based on a set of common principles and understandings which is represented by the more fundamental clarifications of the proposal and the interpretations of these cornerstones.

---

[1] Self-Evaluation Report, p.13

Reflecting this common basis the partners will develop their curricular modules and pedagogic approach on the tradtions, cultures and systems of their own country.


**Cornerstone 2**

**Relation of the Self-Evaluation of competences and the appraisal of Interests and Desires"**

Obviously the appraisal of interests, wishes, dreams and desires through the participants themselves is a process very similar to the self-evaluation of competences. Therefore the partners who have been members of the partnership of the "Self-Evaluation" project may wish to connect the new tasks with the work done in this previous project through relating their individual approaches to the new common aims. This should greatly increase the effectiveness of the work and reduce the work load  at the same time.

Themain difference between the two projects is the rather strong  -. But not exclusive – relation of the competences useful in the labour market, to be detected through self-evaluation, as compared to the interests, wishes, dreams and desires mainly oriented towards times of occupational inactivity. But this shift of focus is not so relevant because the concept of competences as previously employed contains:

- those related to attitudes and values
- social competences
- content –related practical competences
  (also useful for meaningful "leisure time activities")

But also the methodological competences and the learning competences can easily adapted - even without much change of the working - to the new aims. Because of the connections between the two projects some ideas and wordings presented here are taken from the Scientific Report of the "Self-Evaluation" project.

## Cornerstone 3 S. 10a-10c

Empowerment theory accentuates the meaning of communities: "In the future (we) will need to study, experience, and understand(...) the communities and naturally occurring helping systems that evolve in families, neighbourhoods, and social networks in which people find meaning in life and a psychological sense of community. By understanding these systems we may be able to do more to provide alternatives for those who do not 'fit in' than by trying to force such people into the existing limited options developed under professional control (Rappaport, 1977, p.viii)"(Rappaport, 1984, p.1).

Rappaport underlines the importance of participation for empowerment processes: "Those who participate in decisions and activities that are meaningful to them are more likely to be empowered. Settings with more opportunities for participation are expected to be more likely to be empowering settings"(Rappaport, 1987, p.141).

Empowerment theory envisages the opportunity of different perspectives. New perspec-tives give a more complete picture of the world; other perspectives motivate an unem-ployed person to look at resources and competencies in a new way. Therefore, an empow-erment project will support "communities", with the aim, of finding new perspectives.


Cornerstone 4
Common understanding of the underlying assumptions

Even if the project "Interests and Desires" does not mainly aim at the re-insertion of people into gainful employment it appears to be appropriate to rely

on approaches of "Career development" (cf. Brown and Brookes) as a theoretical basis. Leading a meaningful life outside of gainful employment is after all also a (stage within a) career. Most of the theories presented in the compendium by Brown and Brookes take an approach which focusses on the whole life course – past, present and future.

Particularly useful  appears to be the idea, developed by SUPER, to view the life course in terms of "life span" and "life space". It is obvious from the proposal that such an idea underlies the whole project although the partners may wish to choose different methods for the process of self-appraisal.

In order to provide practical advice for activities which the participants might start "tomorrow" the proposal refers several times to the "types of personality" defined by HOLLAND. Some partners hold the opinion that this structure narrows down too much the self-appraisal process, and they would like  to pursue a more open approach. In order to comply with the criteria of the final evaluation of the European Commission it appears to be sensible to use the six "types of personality" – and their combinations – as one aspect for a final comparison. Of the various approaches since the future endeavours planned by the participants will probably mostly fit in with those combinations.

The proposal similarly refers several times to practical activities to be offered to the participants for real experiences of various activities, not only talking about them. The reason is that as experience shows, many prospective participants are shy and have difficulties to express their feelings, experiences and reflections in words. But certainly there are different ways to deal with this problem, and therefore this feature of the proposal should also be opened up – within the limits allowed by interpreting the proposal which contains a rather explicit description of thre envisaged process of self-appraisal in section 3.1.


Cornerstone 5

Theoretical assumptions and terminology

The above mentioned issues are also a question of theoretical assumptions and terminology. As far as a "typology of personalities" is concerned, for now about half a century (or even longer) a debate goes on in psychology if such a thing does exist. Are types of personalities to be found in reality? Obviously the project cannot resolve this issue, and the partners have expressed different opinions which will lead their design work. As far as HOLLAND is concerned, the theoretical foundation of his typology are anyway not an issue at all.........

Weiter S. 15 unten ROT markiert!