

Evaluation of curriculum 'Public relations and journalism for adult educators' by organised multiplier events of the partners of the consortium LEK-AE

Introduction

During the European project LEK-AE the Vrije Universiteit Brussel will be responsible for the evaluation of the developed curriculum 'Public relations and journalism for adult educators'. Each partner of the consortium realised a multiplier event, in which they hosted a workshop concerning one of the developed modules of the curriculum. After each multiplier event next to the participants the trainers reviewed the workshop and the concerned module of the curriculum. This report reflects the results of the analyses concerning all responses of the involved participants and trainers. Finally it describes the possible improvements, which have to be done in order to optimise the quality of the curriculum.

Sample

First of all 72 participants, who joined a multiplier event, evaluated the workshop and the concerned curriculum. According to figure 1A most participants are adult educators (31.9%) or manager of an adult education institution (20.8%). Besides according to figure 1B most participants joined the multiplier event in Denmark at the event of DFS (20.8%) and in Austria (19.4%).

Figure 1A: Participants' profession (N = 72)

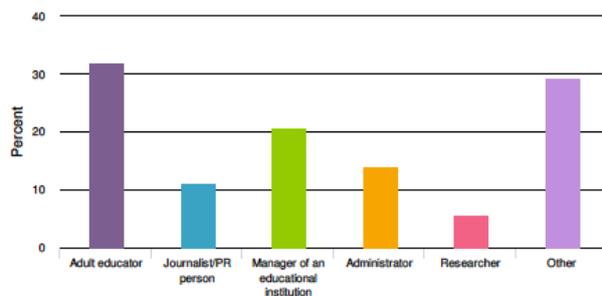
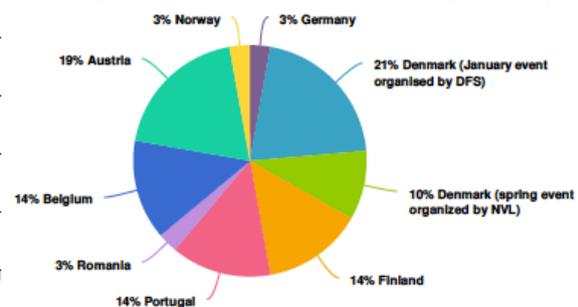


Figure 1B: Country in which participants joined the multiplier event (N = 72)



Next to the participants also 14 trainers evaluated their multiplier event. Most of them were adult educators (50%) or journalist / PR person (42.9%) (see figure 2A). Besides figure 2B shows that there is wide variety concerning the countries, in which they organised the multiplier event.

Figure 2A: Trainers' profession (N = 14)

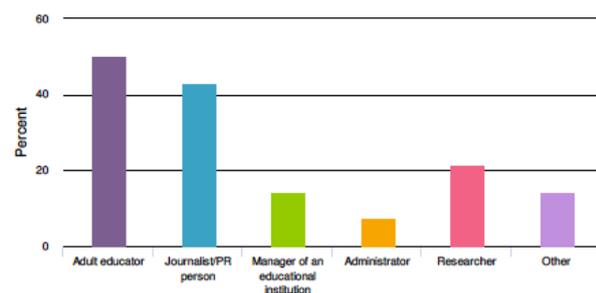
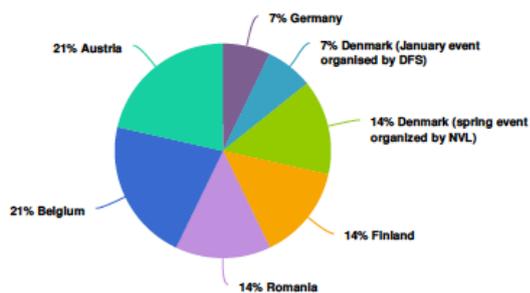


Figure 2B: Country in which trainers joined the multiplier event (N = 14)



Procedure and instrument

Both for the participants and the trainers a digital evaluation questionnaire has been developed in order to evaluate the curriculum (and the multiplier event) on the following themes:

A. Participants:

- Expectations
- Overall satisfaction
- Relevance
- Effectiveness
- Transfer
- Contents

- Coherence of curriculum
- B. *Trainers:*
 - Expectations
 - Overall satisfaction
 - Contents
 - Coherence of curriculum

The digital questionnaire has been distributed directly after each multiplier event and the participants had the possibility to fill it until circa four weeks after each multiplier event.

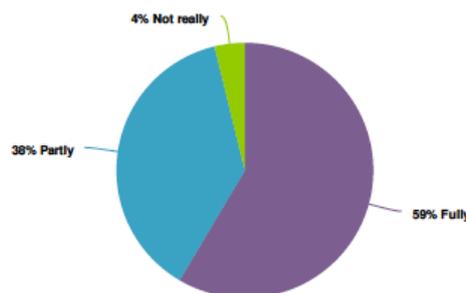
The following modules have been tested:

1. *Journalistic "news values" by Akademie Klausenhof (Germany)*
Selection and structure of information (important and interesting versus boring information) and concrete ideas for stories.
2. *Collection of relevant information by and Asociata Euroed (Romania)*
Information platforms and media in the field of adult education, interviews as an information source (conducting, transcribing and texting).
3. *The effects of writing - between reality, stereotypes and PR by Kansanvalistusseura (Finland)*
Values and attitudes in journalism, the relationship of truth, reality, objectivity and subjectivity.
4. *The use of different types of media and the implications of writing for them by Caixa de Mitos (Portugal) and by Dansk Folkeoplysnings Samråd (Denmark) and Conedu (Austria) in first months 2018*
Personal use of media, online versus print media, requirements of writing for online media.
5. *Adult education and journalism by EAEA / VUB (Belgium) and Nordic Network for Adult Learning (Norway)*
European (online) media on adult education, making adult education more visible in media, writing journalistic texts and especially headlines and teasers/introductions.
6. *Writing good PR-texts by Dansk Folkeoplysnings Samråd (Denmark)*
Focus on facts and content, creativity and humour in texts, organization of PR-work.

1. Expectations

First of all it seems to be clear that most of the participants (58.5%) experienced that their expectations fully have been met by the multiplier event (see figure 3). Besides 37.7% of the participants experienced that the multiplier event did partly met their expectations and just 3.8% of the participants said that the multiplier event did not met their expectations (see figure 3).

Figure 3: The fulfilment of participants' expectations



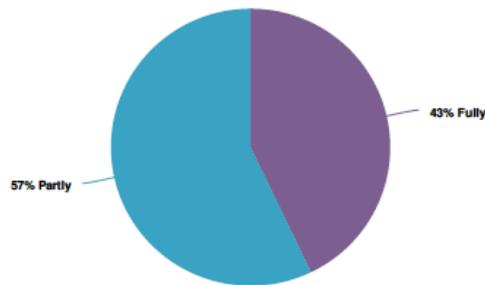
The explanation of the participants when the multiplier event did not met their expectations varies, to mention:

- Variety in assumptions of the participants in the same group;
- Sometimes too less focussing on the process of writing;
- Different participants missed concrete examples how to use it in their own work;
- Sometimes one was not totally enthusiastic about the trainers;
- Sometimes one missed a link to the actual themes of the current society;
- Sometimes a basic introduction was missing;
- Sometimes time was too short.

The most important thing what was mentioned more often was the connection to concrete use in their own profession illustrated by examples.

Second, most of the trainers themselves experienced that the multiplier event met their expectations partly (57.1%) or fully (42.9%) (see figure 4).

Figure 4: The fulfilment of trainers’ expectations



According to the trainers there were different reasons why it did not meet their expectations, namely:

- Shortage of time;
- Sometimes it seemed there was a variety of tasks and one seemed to have a double focus (writing for ELM and EPALÉ next to getting coverage of national media) which made it difficult;
- Sometimes the participants did not write themselves, but preferred debating and plenary advice;
- Sometimes the curriculum was too strict and structured.

To sum up shortage of time was mostly mentioned as one the reasons why expectations were not met among the trainers.

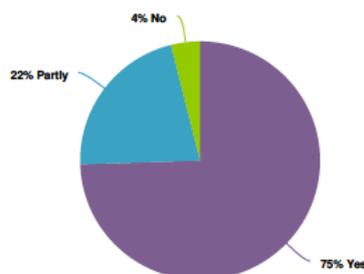
2. Overall satisfaction

Most of the participants were enthusiastic about the overall success of the multiplier event. 79.2% of the participants scored the multiplier event a seven or higher. Likewise 78.5% of the trainers scored a seven or higher concerning the overall success of the multiplier event. So for most people of both groups the multiplier event seemed to be a success.

3. Relevance

Most of the participants experienced that the topics covered were relevant to their practice. According to figure 5 for 74.5% of the participants it was fully relevant and for 21.6% it was partly relevant.

Figure 5: Relevance for participants’ practice



Most of the time the participants explained that the contents was relevant for their job, work or field in which they work. Sometimes it was not (e.g. a journalist) or one experienced that he or she just got information or got information, which one was already familiar with.

Second, 66.7% did not miss anything. The other participants missed on the other hand things like:

- Examples or exercises;
- Hands-on guiding;
- Individual training with evaluation and feedback;
- Smart tricks, tools and good practices (and belonging analyses);
- More time for discussion;
- Short introduction of adult education in Europe;

4. Effectiveness

Concerning the different elements of the training design it seemed that the participants found them effective enough. They could score the different elements on a scale from one (not effective at all) to five (very effective). According to table 1 the average score was good (3.9). Especially the trainers and learning environment seemed to be very good (4.5 and 4.3) next to the possibility to develop new knowledge (4.0) and the fact that the learning process was constructive and interesting (4.0). According to table 1 the development of skills (including the contribution of the learning activity to this), the learning materials and the active involvement during the learning process seemed to be less effective (scores varied from 3.5 to

3.7), but still good according to the scale.

Table 1: Effectiveness of elements of training design

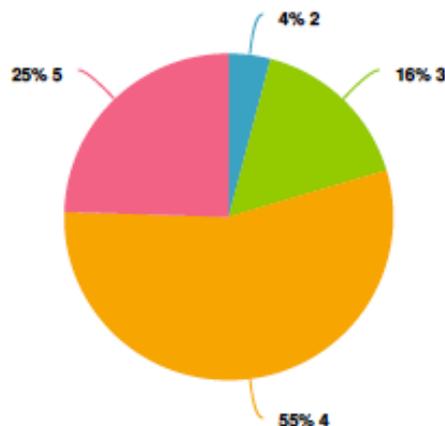
Category	Average score (total average score 3.9)
Development of new knowledge	4.0
Development of new skills	3.5
Actively joining the learning process	3.7
Learning process was constructive and interesting	4.0
Learning activity was well designed and helped in development of skills	3.6
Learning materials were effective	3.6
Methodology was effective	3.7
Learning environment and classrooms were suitable	4.3
Trainers were supportive	4.5

Next to these results 70.6% of the participants experienced that the duration of the multiplier event was adequate and 23.5% told that it was too short. Only 5.9% experienced that the multiplier event was too long. When one experienced the multiplier event was too short or long, one told that sometimes one exercise was redundant or too long, one had to do homework to make it more effective or one would like to have a follow-up. Recommendations were mostly that the workshop could be targeted towards different professions and levels of knowledge.

5. Transfer

Most of the participants (79.6%) experienced that the knowledge and / or skills acquired can be used in their daily professional life. This becomes clear in figure 6, showing that 79.6% of the participants score a 4 or 5 on a scale from one (not at all) to five (very good).

Figure 6: Participants' experiences to acquire knowledge and skills

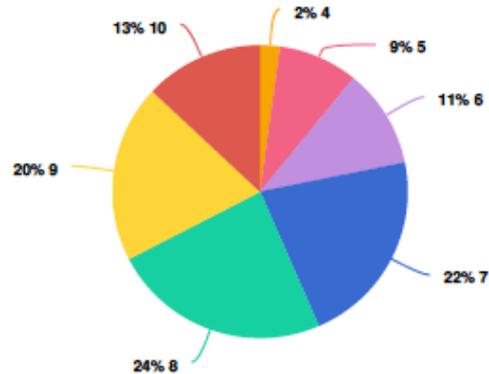


Some participants told that they will use it directly in their daily work, like writing, using medias, using the knowledge, working with European and international partners and adaptation to their pedagogic system. Other will transfer it to colleagues or will use it when there is just a possibility to use it.

6. Contents

Most of the participants were positive concerning the contents of the tested module. According to figure 7 78.2% of the participants score a seven or higher on a scale from one to ten.

Figure 7: Participants' satisfaction concerning the contents of the tested module



Besides the good scores reasons for a lower score were:

- Too wide target-group;
- Shortage of time;
- Sometimes one was too familiar with the contents (e.g. a journalist);
- Sometimes it should be adapted to the geographical situation (e.g. Eastern part of Europe);
- Sometimes an exercise was not good enough;
- Sometimes more practicing was needed.

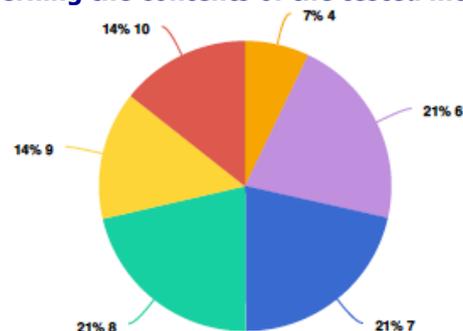
Furthermore the participants' answers regarding to the best part of the contents or the multiplier event varied a lot. It is difficult to say, which elements were the best of all. According to which elements could be improved the participants were pretty clear, for example to mention:

- More exercises;
- More examples;
- Separate target-groups;
- Use of videos;
- Use of Facebook;
- The exercise of cutting and pasting parts of the newspapers;
- More discussion;
- Invitation for a lecture of someone with experience outside the field.

Especially the use of more examples and more possibilities to practice the skills and to do some exercises could be improved according to several participants.

Next to the participants also most of the trainers were enthusiastic about the overall contents of the tested module. According to figure 8 71.4% of the trainers scored a seven on a scale from one to ten.

Figure 8: Trainers' satisfaction concerning the contents of the tested module



Besides the high scores reasons for a lower score were:

- The lack of some cultural differences between countries (and thus 'freedom for interpretation' in the curriculum);
- Some information was too basic;
- Shortage of time;
- Sometimes the module on PR was not relevant to adult education professionals;
- Sometimes too classical viewpoint on media.

Furthermore most of the time the trainers experienced that the practical exercises for the individuals (when they could actually work with the materials and contents) next to the discussions were the most successful parts of the multiplier event. Next to this one participant referred to the contents of the presentation

concerning basic rules and advices about Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Finally if the trainers experienced that a part needed to be improved, one mentioned:

- The them 'How to contact journalists' needs to be included;
- More flexibility in time and usage of tailor-made exercises is needed;
- A short introduction to all modules and the total curriculum should be included;
- Online media should not be called 'alternative', due to the fact that it is used at a large scale nowadays;
- Include more time;
- Include a 'bridge between 'PR texts' and 'PR work';
- Reflection on own media;
- Some exercises were too easy.

7. Coherence of curriculum

Just 17.4% of the participants missed a specific module. The two additional answers (next to the fact that one referred to a module which was not tested in their own multiplier event) were focussing on the possibility to write 'on a deeper level' with the possibility to get feedback and 'PR and / or journalism beyond adult education media'.

According to the trainers this seemed to be the same, due to the fact that 21.4% missed a specific module. Here three answers made clear what one was missing, namely:

- Partitioning of module 5 into two parts: 'How to write on online media for adult education like EPALE, ELM and DialogWeb' next to 'How to contact journalists in order to get more coverage of adult learning in national media';
- Interaction with the audience, net to writing for external and internal use, collaborative journalism, means and effects of an open dialogue with the audience, multimedia and the new media landscape;
- Social media in adult education marketing.

General conclusions and advice for improvement

Based on the results of the analyses of the experiences of the participants and the trainers it seems that the curriculum 'Public relations and journalism for adult educators' is a well-developed good product, which is useful for the potential target group. This became clear due to the fact that most participants and trainers experienced that they are overall satisfied of the multiplier event and the contents of the tested module. Besides most of the expectations were (partly) met and most participants experienced that they could transfer the acquired knowledge and skills in their daily professional life. Also the topics were relevant for their practice. Furthermore the average score on the effectiveness of the different elements of the training design of the curriculum was good.

But still there are some possibilities to improve the curriculum 'Public relations and journalism for adult educators'. Here are some suggestions based on the additional comments of the participants and trainers:

A. Exercises and examples

Most mentioned is the fact that more time for exercises (including (individual) work with feedback) and more examples of daily use and how to use the new knowledge and / or skills in your work are needed and wishful. Besides extra time for discussions seems to be an option.

B. Target group

Second the target group seems to be diverse. It seems to be very important to distinguish the right target group including the right level of knowledge. For example for journalists the curriculum seems sometimes to be too easy. Sometimes it also could be possible to separate subgroups in order to get a homogenous group during the learning process.

C. Flexibility of curriculum

Due to the fact that there a lot of modules one should possible decide which one would like to follow. Besides it should be worthwhile to include some cultural differences between countries (and thus 'freedom for interpretation') in the curriculum.

D. Preparation of participants

In order to be well prepared during the learning process it is optional to include some exercises for participants to prepare themselves on forehand.

E. Time

A recommendation is to take enough time for the learning process. This seems to increase the learning effect and the possibility to internalise the knowledge and skills.

F. Some contents wise advices

Besides there were some specific advices on some parts of the curriculum, to mention:

- a. Sometimes a basic introduction and introduction of adult education in Europe was missing;
- b. Use of videos should be reconsidered;

- c. Sometimes there is a too classical viewpoint on media, because online media should not be called 'alternative', due to the fact that it is used at a large scale nowadays;
- d. The them 'How to contact journalists' needs to be included;
- e. A short introduction to all modules and the total curriculum should be included;
- f. Include a 'bridge between 'PR texts' and 'PR work'.

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27-05-2018