

# "OWL - OLDER WORKERS IN LEARNING"

LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME  
LEONARDO DA VINCI - PARTNERSHIPS

LLP-LDV-PA-08-IT-282



**Peer Review**  
**Sweden**  
**25 - 27 March 2009**

<b>Authors</b>	Marie Ekelund, Madeleine Kurzwelly
<b>Organisation</b>	Studium
<b>Place of visit</b>	Gothenburg, Sweden
<b>Date</b>	25/3-27/3- 09
<p><b>1. Background material (same as for preparation of the review; cf format above)</b></p> <p>c.f. annex 1 (Background Information)</p>	
<p><b>2. Description of the peer review process</b></p> <p>The intention during the first day was to give the team a general idea and knowledge of VET in Sweden and with focus on Gothenburg. Therefore actors from different parts of the VET system as Adult Education Authority, Studium and the region of Gothenburg presented their views on VET.</p> <p>There was also a presentation of a special model for workbased learning – LPA.</p> <p>One purpose on the second day was to visualize how a manager at a home for elderly people support the employees to take part in workbased training. In the morning we visited a home for elderly people and met the manager and employees. They presented their views on and experiences of workbased learning. We also met former beneficiaries and one of them told us about her career. The visit was based on workbased learning on different levels and the importance of a manager who takes an active part in the learningprocess.</p> <p>In the afternoon we visited the Department of education at the University of Gothenburg where we met two professors who gave their view of learning and how old people learn.</p> <p>The third day was dedicated to a visit at a school for adult education. The purpose was to give a presentation of advanced VET in Mölndal and adult perspective in learning. We were given opportunities to meet teachers and students participating in adult education on different levels.</p>	

At the end of the day there was time for reflection and discussion.

### 3. Summary of the feedback received

## **Question n° 1**

### **How can the training coordinators involve the labour market?**

The evaluators find different areas for the cooperation between the labour market and the training coordinators.

Most of the evaluators find that there should be an ongoing discussion and process between the municipalities, the employers and trade unions regarding contents in training, programmes and needs in the workplaces. There need to be a close connection between the partners so the education system can follow the needs in the labour market. It is also important that private companies and employers are made aware of the value of cooperation. It is important that employers are involved in planning training, it makes the courses useful and successful. It is pointed out by evaluators it is important that employers feel their responsibility to make the training successful. There are different cultures in cooperation regarding training (employers, trade unions and training coordinators) in our countries.

In Sweden political decisions are made that make the training coordinators job easier because there are obligations for the employers to fulfil regarding the levels and quality of the employees education and training in the care of the elderly and handicapped. This is regulated through legislation and political decisions.

There is a need to engage stakeholders at all levels, to find meeting points for discussion and planning in order to obtain understanding and transparency in the organisations and also to deliver and assess the provision.

It is also pointed out that it could be useful to set up a research activity to

find out how labour market and economy system is changing to anticipate changes. It is important to promote changes when providing VET and to spread new ideas for example at conferences, articles and so on. Evaluators express that it is important that VET providers see themselves as promoters of changes to meet needs in the future.

It is also important to share and publish the good practice in order to inspire other stakeholders.

One evaluator suggests more agreements between trade unions and the companies. It is also pointed out that marketing activities through workers already trained from the companies could be useful to inspire other stakeholders.

Evaluators point out that there are differences between partner countries regarding culture of cooperation in training. In Germany employers, mostly private, traditionally have kept a role as trainers and follow the need in the labour market closely. Due to the large private sector it may be hard to innovate training because there is no “central” decision made. Whereas in other countries, Sweden for example, the civic “conscience” pushes the employers to participate in training.

If a collaboration is developed between employers, trade unions and training institutes, evaluators think employers will feel more responsibility for education and learning of their employees.

## **Question n° 2**

### **Learning processes outside the classroom?**

How can the whole workplace take part in the process of the individual?

How can the workplace take good use of the competencies?

The evaluators point out that the learning atmosphere at the workplaces is important to stimulate the workers to develop new methods and knowledge. It is also expressed that learning processes must be integrated in the strategy of growth of the companies. The learning atmosphere should be introduced in introduction programmes where the company goals should be made visible and also the connection between learning and company goals.

The example at Tre Stifelser was considered a good example but perhaps several members of a team could be involved in training at the same time in order to increase exchange of experiences and knowledge. This could facilitate the maintenance of the learning atmosphere and could inspire other members of the working team. Transparency is the key to partnerships. Competencies can both have a positive and negative effect upon training. Competencies need to be contextualised so they don't become the only measure of success.

It is important for the employers to take good use new competencies as they invest both time and money. It is also mentioned that it is vital to meet the needs of knowledge felt by the student/employee. It is pointed out that this is also a question of organisation where the commitment of the workplace to promote change and acceptance of new competencies is not seen as a threat but beneficial to the whole workplace. This could be facilitated through organising learning working teams. The whole team could be in training together.

Evaluators find it important to stimulate long term strategies regarding

validation of competencies, introduction and integration programmes and creative internal discussion groups. One suggestion is to organize continual evaluations of all employees. Through this it would be possible to take good use of new competencies and to integrate them into the activity at the workplace. If the atmosphere at the workplace is supporting, employees feel a connection with the company, the result could be an active employee with better self confidence and working capacity.

Why don't the employers support and give attention to employees participating in WBL?

Do you have any other suggestions of the further development that could be taken by the promoters of this WBL example?

Evaluators share a clear view that employers are mostly interested in income and financial results of their companies than in involving their employees in training. It's important to know that investing in training is good investment for the company/employer. Employers believe that time spent on learning is not a time of value for the workplace.

One of the evaluator say that in Italy WBL and also training in general is not seen as a useful solution to unemployment and to improve quality. It's seen only as a cost for the employers. There is a gap between employers and employees. Employers are not aware of employees needs. The reason for this is that rewards and costs are considered more important for employers. Evidence or proof of a notable positive financial reward is important for employers. Maybe market strategies of the different enterprises can explain why some employers are not interested in WBL.

Evaluators point out that employers negative position towards WBL is partly based on expectations from employees for higher salaries after training.

It is important to see a competitive advantage and to market the success of the employees achieved goals. The training coordinators should do more marketing with the employers so they understand about the benefits for the companies.

#### **4. Reflection on the feedback and conclusions**

Evaluators expressed a clear view about the importance and need of a continuing dialogue between employers, trade unions and employees. The aim and goal of WBL must be based in the present and future needs of the employees and companies.

There seem to be a big difference in culture in the partner countries regarding cooperation between employers and training institutes. This is a result of a number of social, economic and cultural factors. There is also a big difference between private and public sector and the influence of the trade unions also seems to be different. Evaluators point out that it is vital to find arguments and advantages for employers to take part in WBL so it is made visible that this will lead to a better competitive position.. In the long run the result could also be a more professional staff who find positive challenges in new tasks and situations. The consequence could be that the employee remain at the workplace. Finally this could be a question of perspectives for the employers – longterm or shortterm?

The big question is how to get the employers to see training as a value instead of a cost for the company. Maybe this is a question for further discussion?

# Annex 1

## Background Information

### Visit Sweden 25 – 27 March 2009

Case Study	
1	<p><u>General background information</u> <b><i>National and local economic and labour market situation, ageing/demographic change, social partners, vocational education and training system, continuing education etc.</i></b></p> <p>The region of Västra Götaland came into being in 1999 by merging three former county councils and including parts of Gothenburg's decision-making functions, mainly those concerned with healthcare. With time, the former historic county borders became an obstacle to mutual interests in fields like public transport and catchments areas for healthcare. The planning procedure for the new, considerably larger region was carried out through political action rather than a government inquiry.</p> <p>The region has 49 municipalities and a population of nearly 1.5 million. It's almost 300 kilometers across in all directions. The region is in the heart of Scandinavia and is recognised as centre of Nordic transports. 50 % of Sweden's exports go through the region and the automotive industry, represented by Volvo and Saab, is its most important industrial activity. The harbours of Västra Götaland handle almost 50% of all Swedish goods. 20% of the Swedish food-stuffs are produced in the region and the major part of the petrochemical industry is located here. Considerable advances in the pharma-ceutical industry and in electronics have been noted in the region and half of Sweden's fishing industry is based here.</p> <p>Healthcare is one of the region's major issues. Västra Götaland is responsible for the overall management of healthcare; hospitals, primary healthcare, specialized dental healthcare and free dental care for children and young people. A majority of the region's 48 000 employees are found in healthcare. The region shoulders responsibility for business development and expertise, in eco-friendly technologies, culture and tourism and a model for equal opportunities and integration.</p> <p>The 149 Regional Councillors appoint the 17 members on the Regional Executive Board. The Executive Board prepares proposals for the Council with the assistance of a Health and Medical Care Committee, 12 local healthcare committees, provision committees report directly to the Council. Regional development, environment and culture each has a committee of 15 regional representatives working with another 12 municipally elected representatives in drafting committees thus providing a wider base for public opinion.</p>



	<p>The administration is spread over six Regional Offices across the region in order to underline the close proximity to the citizens. The city of Vänersborg is the regional “capital”, where the Regional Council meets and the Regional Executive Board with its secretariat resides.</p> <p>For further information: <a href="http://www.vgregion.se">www.vgregion.se</a>, <a href="http://goteborg.se">goteborg.se</a></p>
2	<p><b>Context and background of the specific case</b></p> <p><b>Which was the problem, to which problematic situation did the action react? Which were the proposed solutions?</b></p> <p>We are facing a reduction in the number of people in working age. During the next ten years many people will be in pension and a smaller workforce will have to work harder. Among the OECD member countries Sweden has one of the oldest populations. Almost one in four Swedes will be over the age of 65 by 2030 because of the rapidly rising number of older people. Demographic change signifies that if the retirement age changes only slightly there will be a shortage of labour in Sweden over the next decades. The average age of retirement in Sweden is 62 years. To meet the future challenges this long-term trend of early retirement has to be reversed and the employment rate of older workers must increase.</p> <p>We must also put to good use the desire of older workers to learn new things, to stimulate them so that they want to remain in the labourmarket for longer and find methods to harness their skills. We also must develop strategies for transferring know-how from older to younger workers. Changes in society mean that education, training and skill development are playing an important role. The opportunity to set aside time for studies will decrease and more learning will have to take place during working hours and in the workplace.</p> <p>For the company, it’s important that the training coordinators train the individuals in subjects the labour market needs. The company can influence the contents of the training courses. Therefore it’s important to focus on how to connect the parts. Adult education in the future will have to change from being focused on specific skills because it must become a constantly developing process for the individual. By making use of the entire life competence and making the actual skills formal, enormous growth take place and self confidence of the individual is strengthened. Sweden has a well-established tradition of life-long learning and is one of the most equitable countries, according to OECD, in terms of providing training for men and women of all ages.</p> <p>Studium is a school governed by the Education Authority of Gothenburg. Studium provides adult education covering many sectors and different education levels of the Swedish Education system. There are approximately 3 000 students per year at Studium and the employees are about 200. Studium provides advanced vocational education, post secondary adult</p>

	<p>education, upper secondary adult education, basic adult education, Swedish for immigrants, contract education and EU-projects.</p> <p>Studium has many years experience of using society as an arena for learning, by validation, WBL and integrating learning into workplace processes. In the EQUAL Project Life Competence 50+ a successful workbased learning model was developed and is now implemented on a permanent basis by Studium and since 2008 this method, called LPA, is part of Gothenburg's regular training programme for the health sector in general and especially for the care of the elderly and handicapped.</p> <p>One starting point for LPA in Gothenburg was the great demand in the workplaces of in-service training. The workplaces in the care of elderly and handicapped had and still have a large number of employees who lack formal education for their work.</p> <p>Another starting point was that a close cooperation between education/training and workplaces facilitate efficient learning for adults. The process starts with validation that shows what the individual knows, in relationship to how knowledge and skills are defined in the subject, course goals and grades. The aim is to acknowledge and identify the skills and knowledge the employees already have and to make them aware of this. In this process it becomes clear if the actual skills are sufficient. This is performed by vocational teachers in the programme for health care and supervisors in the workplaces. After this an individual study plan is drawn up and supplementary studies begin. The employees remain in the work places during a large part of the process. This reduces the need for temporary replacements and gives the workplace continuity.</p>
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p>What was the feedback of beneficiaries and users – what was good and what was less good?  <b>The general picture of the project is positive, it's serious and carefully prepared. The cooperation between training institute, employers and stakeholders has been good. The employees have increased knowledge important for their workplaces. Employers pointed out they could see more interest in learning and developing competences in the employees. LPA was recognized to link theoretical and practical knowledge both by beneficiaries and users. The beneficiaries expressed a feeling of better self esteem and development. One effect of training was also a change in attitudes to their work. They find it today more important and they are interested in further training and to develop new competences. They also have gained awareness on how much they know about caring and nursing in the care of elderly. Successful transfer presuppose that employers take advantage of new knowledge and support the workers to use it. Without this support the effect of training will be low. It's not enough with new theoretical knowledge, employers need to see it in a context. It's important to develop the activity in better quality, develop working methods and encourage the possibility for the employers to participate more in different issues at the workplace. One effect of the project was that the employees have got new tasks and more responsibility at the workplaces, they also expressed more strength and confidence in the contact with the clients. The employees expressed that they received more attention from the employers. This stimulates the development of their professionalism. One beneficiarie said: " I feel more confident and feel more proud in my profession. I know how to analyse different situations and how to act."</b></p>

4	<p><u>What was feedback in your own institution?</u></p> <p>The vocational teachers involved in the project thought the method very well combines theoretical and practical knowledge, because of the parallel processes in working and studying. The employees have the opportunity to quickly test new knowledge and the training will be rooted in reality. WBL is linked to professional life. During reflections and discussions the employees are encouraged to choose subjects from the workplace, this will make the course actual and rooted in reality.</p> <p>One teacher said:” As we link practical situations to theoretical knowledge, the employees tend to adapt to new situations easier.”</p> <p>The teachers pointed out, that it takes time to complete the training. The employees are often working full time and one day per week they are studying in their studygroups. They need to spend a lot of sparetime for studying. The teachers also pointed out the necessity of supporting and committing employers.</p>
5	<p><u>If there was a local evaluation – what did it say ?</u></p> <p>There was a local evaluation in 2008 that pointed out areas for improvement:</p> <p>The commitment of the employers must increase. They must be more engaged in defining needs in the workplaces to make the workers motivated to learn new methods and develop new skills. The employers need also to acknowledge the growth and development with the workers and to take good use of the workers developed proficiency.</p> <p>The workplaces need to create a more educational environment to stimulate the whole workplace. There need to be time for reflection to raise the awareness of attitudes and systems in the workplaces regarding clients, routines and so on. In this the role of the supervisors is very important. The evaluation also points out that in this the vocational teachers need to have a more flexible way of meeting the demands of the workplaces.</p>

**6**

What are the specific questions which you want to ask the peer reviewers during the visit?  
**The visit should cover these themes:**

1. How can the training co-ordinators involve the labour market?
2. Learning processes outside the classroom?

**In order to focus the visit further the partners will be asked to come up with suggestions and answers to the following questions during and after the visit:**  
**Why don't the employers support and give attention to the employees participating in WBL?**  
**How can the whole workplace take part in the process of the individual?**  
**How can the workplace take good use of new competences?**

These questions are meant to focus the discussion and to ensure that Studium and Krokslättsgymnasiet will receive targeted and excellent feedback from the partners. At the same time a focused discussion should enhance the active learning process for the partners.

Annex 2



Göteborgs Stad  
Utbildning



Studium



**DETAILED PROGRAMME**  
**Visit in Sweden 25/26/27 March 2009**

Reference persons for practical details	Ms Marie Ekelund <a href="mailto:marie.ekelund@educ.goteborg.se">marie.ekelund@educ.goteborg.se</a> Phone +4631 367 3256 Mobile +46736411528 Ms Madeleine Kurzwelly <a href="mailto:madeleine.kurzwelly@educ.goteborg.se">madeleine.kurzwelly@educ.goteborg.se</a> +4631 367 3271 +46702583450
Participants from partner organisations	DE Ms Sabine Bechheim IT Mr Natale Madeo Ms Elena Schina Mr Tullio Colombo Ms Elisa Valentini UK Mr Andy Ash Ms Maria Cristina Migliore PL Mr Adam Glicksman Mr Kazimierz Bebenek Ms Joanna Furtak S Ms Marie Ekelund Ms Madeleine Kurzwelly Ms Danuta Ciasnocha Ms Inger Johansson

Studium



**Foreseeable costs during the visit in Gothenburg 25 -27/3 2009**

Tramfee	130SEK
Lunch 25 <sup>th</sup> of Mars	120SEK
Lunch 26 <sup>th</sup> of Mars	160SEK
Lunch 27 <sup>th</sup> of Mars	100SEK
Dinner 25 <sup>th</sup> of Mars	350SEK
Coffee	20SEK

First meeting time/point	<b>Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> of March, at 19.30,</b> (to go together for a meal) or <b>Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> at 8.10,</b> in the lobby of Hotell Liseberg Heden
Hotel references	<b>Hotell Liseberg Heden</b> Sten Sturegatan , 411 38 Göteborg Tel.+46317506900, fax.+46317506930

## Day 1 Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> of March 2009 Gothenburg

Place	Time	Activity
Meeting point at 8.10 in the lobby of Hotell Liseberg Heden Bus leaves 8.24 from Sten Sturegatan and ferry leaves at 9.00 from Lilla Bommen to Studium Lärdomsgat 3 Room 429	<b>9.30-10.00</b>	<b>Welcome</b> and a short presentation of participants
	<b>10.00-11.00</b>	Ms Caroline Foss Principal at The Adult Education Authority <b>Presentation of VET</b> in Sweden and Gothenburg
	<b>11.00-11.30</b>	<b>Coffee break</b>
	<b>11.30-12.15</b>	Ms Annacarin Engström Senior principal at Studium <b>Presentation of Studium</b>  Ms Madeleine Kurzwelly Ms Marie Ekelund Teachers at Studium <b>LPA- a model for workbased learning</b>
	<b>12.15-13.45</b>	<b>Lunch</b> at Restaurant Lindholmen
	<b>13.45-14.45</b>	Ms Margaretha Allen GR Education <b>Regional cooperation</b> Ms Linda Andersson <b>GR Labour market</b>
	<b>14.45-15.15</b>	Coffee break
	<b>15.15-16.15</b>	Mr Ola Olanders Assistant principal at Studium <b>Presentation of advanced vocational education and training</b>
	<b>16.15-16.45</b>	Time for discussion
Haga Nygata 25 tel. +4631 711 9780 Meeting at the lobby in Hotel Liseberg Heden at 19.00	<b>19.30</b>	<b>Dinner</b> at Restaurant Sjöbären

## Day 2 Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> of March 2009 Gothenburg

Place	Time	Activity
Meeting point at the lobby in hotel Liseberg Heden at 8.15  Tram nr 8 leaves 8.33 to <b>Tre stiftelser</b> Änggårdsbacken Per Dubbsgatan	<b>9.00-12.15</b>      <b>10.15</b>	<b>Visit to Tre Stiftelser</b> , a home for care of the elderly. Ms Ann-Britt Lindahl, manager at Tre stiftelser Ms Marie Bernhardsson Assistant manager and former beneficiary  <b>Coffeebreak</b>
	<b>12.15-13.30</b>	<b>Lunch at Änggårdsbacken, Tre stiftelser</b>
The university of Gothenburg Grönsakstorget  Bus nr 16	<b>14.00-16.00</b>	Mr Per-Olof Tång Professor in education Mr Roland Kadefors Professor The University of Gothenburg Department of education and workbased learning <b>“How do older people learn?”</b>
		Free evening



## Day 3 Friday 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2009 Gothenburg

Place	Time	Activity
Meeting point at app 8.15 in the lobby of Hotell Liseberg Heden tram nr 4 from Korsvägen Krokslättsgymnasiet Mölndal	<b>9.00-9.20</b>	Ms Aina Gunther Senior principal Krokslättsgymnasiet
	<b>9.20-9.40</b>	<b>”The adult perspective in learning”</b> Meeting with students
	<b>9.40-10.00</b>	<b>The project ”Competence in focus”</b> Ms Inger Johansson
	<b>10.00.10.30</b>	<b>Coffeebreak</b>
	<b>10.30-12.00</b>	<b>Presentation of Advanced VET in Mölndal</b> Lecturers and students at Krokslättsgymnasiet
	<b>12.00-13.15</b>	<b>Lunch at Krokslättsgymnasiet</b>
	<b>13.15-15.00</b>	<b>Time for reflection, discussion and evaluation.</b>
	<b>15.00</b>	End of meeting and departures