



Intellectual Output 4 - Pilot Reports

INVENTION AND RE-INVENTION IN A SMALL ADULT EDUCATION ORGANISATION | DAFNI KEK

Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership Project “Diversity Capacities - Improving the Capacities of Adult Education Institutions to Successful Dealing with Diversity”

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“For apart from inquiry, apart from the praxis, individuals cannot be truly human. Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other.”

— Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed



Illustration 1: © Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the oppressed

The Organisation

DAFNI KEK is a non-profit education and research centre for adult education (formerly a Vocational Training / Lifelong Learning Centre) which is located in Achaia, in Western Greece.



Illustration 2: From the archive of Dafni Kek (2017): Outreach Empowerment Diversity (OED) Workshops for Institutions and Educators in Adult Education © Dafni Kek

1. Staying Up-to-date with Societal Issues

DAFNI KEK is a non-profit education and research centre for adult education (formerly a Vocational Training / Lifelong Learning Centre) which is located in Achaia, in Western Greece.

Due to recent reforms and major state budget cuts towards courses for disadvantaged groups and adult education in general, the organisation has shifted towards an inclusive research centre. The centre offers open access materials for self-education, one to one counselling sessions, diversity communication events where people from different social and cultural groups can get together and exchange ideas, learning processes and future plans.



Learning is “the process of making a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of an experience” - Jack Mezirow (1990)

1.1 Guided by Freire’s Teachings

The core team of the organisation thinks that the statement of Paulo Freire that is prominent in the organisation’s website as well as hanging in the walls of their offices, really covers the essence around working against social injustice, including injustice towards diverse groups of people from different cultures and countries, and that is:



“...there is no transformation without action... Progressive educators need to convince themselves that they are not only teachers--this doesn't exist--not only teaching specialists. We are political militants because we are teachers...Our job implies that we teach subjects with sobriety and competence, but it also requires our involvement in and dedication to overcoming social injustice.”

PAULO FREIRE - Teachers as Cultural Workers: Letters to Those Who Dare Teach

Having the above quote as a guide and self-assessment reminder, the core team of DAFNI KEK is trying to stay up-to-date with societal issues and position itself and services in such a way to support the society, starting from the locality.

Resources

Mezirow, Jack and Associates (1990): Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood - Chapter 1, Jossey Bass . Publicly available copy can be found through the Cmap subdomain of Florida Institute for Human & Machine Cognition (IHMC), in the link: <https://cmapspublic.ihmc.us/rid=1LW06D9V6-26428MK-1Z64/Mezirow's%20chapter,%20How%20Critical%20Refletion%20Triggers%20TL.pdf> [last accessed: 15/6/2021]

Freire, Paulo (1998): Teachers As Cultural Workers: Letters to Those Who Dare Teach



DAFNI KEK employs 6 people on a regular basis and has a pool of around 50 external professionals that could work occasionally on a contract based work relationship depending on the needs and requirements. In terms of their potential beneficiaries, these are mainly people that are unemployed, migrants, disabled, Roma, ethnic minorities or people from rural areas, so diversity orientation is an integral part in order to better serve the diverse needs of their beneficiaries.

1.2 Current Activities and Aspirations from the DivCap Project

For the last few years DAFNI KEK works mainly with projects funded by the European Union. This allows them to work and develop research and open access materials in English and Greek language for their learners/beneficiaries as well as to implement open workshops and small scale blended courses. Due to its previous assessment by EOPPEP*, DAFNI KEK makes use of the relevant qualification and certification frameworks to assess and update its work to the end users. They believe that this way, apart from the empowering aspect of adult education, the users also have the ability to showcase their involvement in such a way that it could practically count towards their qualifications and competences.

It isn't always a successful process because an empowering process requires a disempowering reality which can initially be draining for everyone affected by it - directly or indirectly. Nevertheless, it is a process that rather takes time and its effect becomes more understood and effective as the time goes [...] Firstly involves the core team reaching a point of mutual understanding and more or less a co-decided approach on some issues.
(statement made during Dafni Kek staff meeting)



Within the DivCap project, DAFNI KEK aims to increase their diversity capacities and communicate their services more effectively and in a more accessible way to the diverse needs of their diverse learners/beneficiaries. For this case, they aim as a first step on the mission statement, by changing some articles in the statute to reflect this commitment and in a later time to develop all these statements and plans for action and communication that would allow the even greater articulation of this change.



Notes

* EOPPEP: Transliteration of the Greek acronym ΕΟΠΠΕΠ which refers to the [“National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance”](#)

2. Status regarding Diversity in the Organisation | Key Findings

2.1 Summary of Case-study Findings

Based on the questionnaire-based study conducted among staff members (including educators/trainers, administrative, technical and management members) of Dafni KEK, the organisation has the following operational elements.

DAFNI KEK is a private, non-profit and independent organisation that works in a direct, horizontal and collective way among its members, where family links are also present. There is an evident background on knowledge, work and reflection on the importance of diversity within the organisation, but there is a lack of specific measures which could be attributed to the size of the organisation.

From the answers of the staff it is obvious that learners have an impact on the organisation and its approach.

There is are a few monocultural/monolingual elements, but also some multicultural references and there is a need for further communication of the diversity approach.

Based on the assessment, the organisation could benefit from the “greenprint” approach of the De Caluwe & Vermaak colour model. Additionally, it is suggested that they develop as a first stage of their diversity policy change the following measures:

- (a) an action plan with steps and timeline of the intended actions and
- (b) involving new persons with migrant background in task-oriented contract and
- (c) an external critical “supervisor” to support and provide feedback.

2.2 Analysis of the key findings

Based on the findings mentioned above, there are some elements that need to be further explained.

Concerning operational aspects, as stated above, Dafni Kek is “an independent organisation which works in direct, horizontal and collective way [...] where family links are also present”. This aspect makes it clear that the decision to promote diversity, as well as the necessary actions to be taken, is a process that doesn’t require a complex intervention procedure in terms of approval, but mostly depends on the commitment and constant learning of the people involved.

Resources

Vermaak, H.; Caluwé, L. de (2018): The colors of change - revisited. Situating and describing the theory and its practical applications. Draft Manuscript. In: Shani, R.; Noumair, D. (Eds) (2018): Research in Organizational Change and Development (vol. 26), Bingley (UK): Emerald In sight, <https://hansvermaak.com/wp-content/uploads/Vermaak-Caluwe-SHARE-VERSION-Colors-Revisited-ROCD-2018-FINAL-DRAFT.pdf> [last access 2020-02-24]



As for the second point, the fact that the people involved show elements of understanding of the need and importance of diversity, as well as seeming experienced in working with diverse groups, it is an element that can assist better this diversity-increasing process. As it is stated though, there is a lack of specific measures which need to be taken in order for the process to be effective.

Thirdly, the case study mentions that the staff showed that learners have an important impact on the decisions taken by the organisation in terms of changes and moving forward. This allows the organisation to provide educational services that reflect the actual needs of the local society and can be really helpful in their contact and collaboration with migrant organisations/associations.

Finally, the case study mentions that there are “monocultural/monolingual elements but also some multicultural references and a need for communication of the diversity approach”. This assumption stems from the fact that Dafni Kek, up until recently, was based in a location which has more rural than urban characteristics and which can be considered as relatively monocultural, since for many years, the main context of reference was the rural areas of Achaia.

We believe it is somehow justifiable that Dafni Kek has some monocultural aspects in its operation, since for many years its educational projects were targeted towards these [urban] populations with these specific characteristics.

Of course, it is also true that rural areas also include people with a migration background, since in many cases (especially for economic or seasonal migrants) rural areas have been one of the first options to look for work. Given though the monocultural aspects of these areas, promoting diversity related approaches wasn’t something that was taken seriously by the majority of people and trainers up until some years ago that technology helped bring to the surface the importance of the issue.

Here is also a good place to make a bit of a criticism on our previous approaches. For many years, members of our organisation or even ourselves, we weren’t so open as we have been the last few years that we were given more opportunities to listen and learn, so if we knew then what we know now, maybe we could have supported interculturality more through our activities.

(statement made during during staff meetings)



Since 2011, the organisation has been involved in EU projects which has helped increasing the intercultural aspects, as well as through implementing ministry-supported Greek language preparation for certification addressed to migrants residing in Greece (2011-2013).

Especially during the language preparation courses, it became very clear that trainers, no matter how many qualifications and official experience they hold, if they lack intercultural competences they cannot achieve the intended learning outcomes and the students end up not returning to adult education.

In terms of interculturality, the team of Dafni Kek also reflected on the experience working with the Roma community, which was a really influential experience that showed them the importance of listening to one's learners and adapting the learning methods based on their wishes.



The experience with the Roma community, was very influential, since it helped us to realise that learners, especially those that come from socially disadvantaged environments, have a very loving approach towards education because they really miss it. For some context, many Roma communities in Greece live under extreme poverty and/or social exclusion, which affects the education of the younger generations - despite the fact that officially they are “welcome” to schools. For this reason, the adults, especially when they are given the chance to participate in adult education, they prefer - from our experience - at least at the beginning, the use of school-like techniques, such as working on desks with books, notebooks and pens, like they would do in a regular school.

Concerning the communication of a diversity and intercultural approach, this is where the team of DAFNI KEK claims that the experience in EU projects has taught them a lot and has provided them with many tools to take more concrete steps. The main issue in this case is mostly of a managerial nature, since in their opinion:

“...A good and effective communication strategy is a full-time job by itself. When trying to communicate with people we want to make sure that our actions have been noticed and it would make people ask for more information. This suggests that there should be a staff member that is knowledgeable on an informational level of all running activities, is able to work with our approach and can communicate with people directly while also receiving their feedback and interest for participation. Direct communication is key in our case, since it is the most used means of communication between our organisation and our learners, especially those from socially disadvantaged groups.”

(statement made during staff meetings)



2.3 De Caluwe and Vermaak Colour Model Suggestion

The proposed approach for the staff and management of Dafni KEK, is the “green-print thinking” approach. This approach gives “emphasis on learning” (learning approach) and based on its description *“Changing and learning are deemed inextricably linked: they are thought to mean almost the same. The only way forward from a green point of view is to dig deeper: to discover one’s limits and expand and deepen the way we see and act in the world.”*

The focus at this stage is to strengthen the practices of reflection and self-assessment among the staff, and make more structured efforts for all involved to come together, be critical and try to adapt/change practices based on realistic standards. An important issue is to actually concentrate on making consistent small steps and slowly but steadily implement these actions that will enhance the diversity at the workplace.

3. Implementing Change

3.1 Aims and Approaches

The main goal of the change process is to become more focused on the issue of diversity and address the services of Dafni Kek to their intended target groups in a manner, that makes them feel included and understood. To achieve that, the staff needed to find those elements that act as barriers as well as develop a better communication approach.

The aims of the DAFNI KEK team will be presented below divided by short, medium and long-term goals.

The short-term activities are:

- Statute update: provides commitment on the most central level of the organisation and also acts as an accountability aspect for next steps and actions
- Create a mission statement: Dafni Kek lacks public documentation that supports their mission and approach, so they decided to also include it in this phase
- Transfer the general approach in the form of policies: as seen through the case study, there is a stable knowledge and approach towards diversity which isn’t clearly stated publicly - similarly to the mission statement
- Appoint a “Diversity and Inclusion Ambassador”: given the current situation in terms of the abilities of the organisation as well as the general public needs, the team decided to increase its staff by appointing a “Diversity and Inclusion Ambassador” which is a person that comes from any of the diverse target groups that the organisation aims to reach

Resources

Vermaak, H.; Caluwé, L. de (2018): The colors of change - revisited. Situating and describing the theory and its practical applications. Draft Manuscript. In: Shani, R.; Noumair, D. (Eds) (2018): Research in Organizational Change and Development (vol. 26), Bingley (UK): Emerald Insight, <https://hansvermaak.com/wp-content/uploads/Vermaak-Caluwe-SHARE-VERSION-Colors-Revisited-ROCD-2018-FINAL-DRAFT.pdf> [last access 2020-02-24]



Medium term activities:

- Development of intercultural and diversity competence training for old and new staff and external colleagues (professionals that work occasionally on fixed term contracts)
- Collective overview, reflection and feedback strategy
- Communication strategy based on each person's abilities (supporting mechanisms for learners to enhance social inclusion)
- Learning and critical mentality / Reading list

Long term activities:

- Knowledge management: the team of DAFNI KEK expressed the need for resurfacing educational material that contribute directly (content) or indirectly (means) to the diversity of the organisation
- Upgrading and better formulating actual learners/staff outreach, inclusion and retention strategies
- Actively support labour-market inclusion for socially under-represented groups with promoting job positions that are also open to people from diverse groups. This action has been influenced by the work of an NGO based in Athens that does exactly that.

The activities presented are not exhaustive and they are bound to change. They mostly represent the first ideas of the team of DAFNI KEK, as they emerged through discussions, and which are still at their very first stages of implementation so new needs haven't yet arisen.

For the needs of this report, they will focus on the development of a mission statement which is followed by tangible examples of the implementation process.

3.2 Statute Update

Analysis

Through the DivCap project, the team of DAFNI KEK, decided to make changes that will enhance the diversity of the organisation starting from the basis of the organisation, its statute. By updating the statute, the team and managers of DAFNI KEK aim at taking the issue of diversity seriously and even try to hold themselves accountable for future steps.

The diversity aspect will be reflected initially on the levels of services, cooperations and employees. In the future it could also be extended to the Board of Directors, but that is something to be decided in the future depending on the organisation's progress.

Another issue for this change is, that the statute has remained in its core unchanged for the last 25 years since the establishment of the organisation (apart from the changes in the persons involved) despite the changes in approach and operations in the last years.

Approach

Concerning the document by itself, it is a neutral-tone legal document, with phrases that do not reflect any kind of social orientation and priorities in terms of target groups.

The plan concerning the changes was to reassess and rewrite Article 3 (Scope/Mission), add three other articles concerning cooperation with other organisations, the description and circumstances for appointing a Diversity and Inclusion Ambassador and finally a provision for operational policies (including references to diversity, anti-discrimination and a monitoring system for receiving and tracking complaints).

Process

To do that, the involved persons from Dafni Kek have determined the following process of updating the statute:

- a. Re-read the statute
- b. Make notes on crucial aspects that are missing
- c. Research publicly available statutes from other non-profit adult education organisation, including NGOs, associations and cooperatives and make a list of good practice examples
- d. Read the example statutes in terms of diversity and use them as inspiration for making the statute updates
- e. Make a draft example and review it with the whole team (staff and management)
- f. Make adjustment according to feedback and share the final document with a legal professional
- g. Final document is submitted to the relevant authorities for sealing and is uploaded also on the website

3.3 Mission Statement

Analysis

The mission statement is present on the DAFNI KEK website, under the name of “Profile”. Yet it is still an outdated text, since it reflects the organisation’s approach as it was operating 10 years ago. Since then many things have changed in the operation and approaches of those involved, things that need to be reflected through the mission statement. This is important because the mission statement is generally the first resource used by people to determine whether they like the approach and see if it fits their standards and it also plays a role in cooperation with other organisations. In any case, it showcases how an organisation perceived themselves (or aspire to be) and how they want to be perceived. There is though the case of the Freire quote on the website of the organisation as well as the main offices which help make the approach more prevalent, but nevertheless the mission statement still needs to be updated because in some aspects it clashes with the more critical education side that Freire suggests.

Approach

Although a mission statement is generally a small text, it needs considerable thought and review before going public. For this reason, the team of DAFNI KEK has researched and collected some examples of mission statement from similar or relevant organisations, in order to detect those elements that could also fit for their case.

The specific elements that they want to achieve through this mission statement, is to reflect the values and objectives that the organisation has and aspires to achieve, while also be accessible. Accessibility in this case means to not have an overcomplicated language and long sentences but giving emphasis to those points that matter. In this case, there is the risk for overgeneralising, something that they want to avoid, but also the risk of using words that could be perceived as overly emotional and with a bit of a “savior” syndrome, which again they want to avoid. These risks have been detected in some cases of mission statements from the examples found.

Finally, one last aspect that the team wants to make sure through the mission statement is, that the motive to make this statement is the DivCap project, so an important part of the mission statement should reflect the diversity aspect of the organisation. What though needs to be also obvious, is to reflect all the other aspects of the organisation, as perceived through the activities and projects carried out.

Process

The process described in terms of developing the mission statement is as follows:

- a. Research examples publicly available from other organisations, which will help inspire the structure and the content to be reflected
- b. Review all ongoing and past works of the organisation and make a list of prevalent approaches, themes and societal issues tackled throughout the years
- c. Review feedback from the diverse target groups addressed throughout the years and try to assess issues that have not been tackled in order to give extra focus on those (if possible)
- d. Determine main and secondary aspects to be reflected
- e. Make a draft that will be assessed by all involved
- f. Format it and publicize it

3.4 Diversity-related policies

Analysis

As it has been mentioned in the section “Statute Update”, DAFNI KEK’s board has decided to make an integral part of its operation the provision for the existence of concrete policies that support the Diversity and Intercultural approach.

These policies will be published in the website of the organisation, in an accessible way so as to help all people involved to be knowledgeable of the boundaries and obligations towards one another. These policies will also help monitoring incidents of non-compliance which will help to better address them and solve them so that they will not be repeated.

Approach

As in all previous actions, for this process the DAFNI KEK team has researched and gathered several examples (publicly available) from similar or relevant organisations, to find inspiration for their policies in terms of cases covered as well as phrasing and emphasis.

These policies will act as a code of conduct and they are made internally, considering the severity of the statements while also trying to convey the importance of the attitude rather than the consequences. As they state:

“We want to avoid the idea of “policing” our environment but there is an important need to make clear that some things cannot be tolerated. Creating a safe space for expression and education is our foremost priority, so it is our obligation to defend it and provide the best opportunities possible for all of us to work that way. The policies are here to help defend all parties’ rights and obligations and will help us to make our learning and operational interventions, hopefully, more respectful and equal.”



(statement made during staff meeting)

The aim of the team is to use the policies to address issues of diversity, non-discrimination and cooperation.

Process

The process followed is very similar to those described above. An important aspect to address here is also the critical review by a legal professional. This review apart from allowing the organisation to protect themselves and their learners, it is also a great opportunity for familiarisation with relevant laws which can also benefit the learners in their future steps.

3.5 Diversity and Inclusion Ambassador

Analysis

This intervention reflects one of the latest developments that the team of DAFNI KEK made. The “Diversity and Inclusion Ambassador” is a position that will be occupied by a person that themselves represent diversity of any kind. At this point, the role of this person will be to contribute to the communication of the activities with other organisations and people and to assess certain functions in terms of approach, phrasing, means of delivery and accessibility. This development is part of the mission of the organisation, which is to promote visibility, representation and opportunities based on equity.

Approach

The main approach for this role is to have a person that represents diversity of any kind and depending on current activities of the organisation, to keep the relevance with the target groups.

This position has the potential of periodic movement, meaning that in case there are specific incidents that arise, this position will be assumed by a person that will be codecidedly allocated within the group.


For example, if the Ambassador represents an ethnic minority but there is an incident or upcoming activity concerning people with disabilities, then the current Ambassador will return to work as regular staff and the position will be assumed by a person representing disabilities (if they want).

Of course, this depends on whether there are people available with these characteristics and whether the organisation has the ability to hire a new person. This is still a new position that has just started being put to practice, so all descriptions are still on a conceptual level and haven't been tried in all their spectrum.

Here, it would also be important to mention two significant aspects: a) the potential for **tokenism** as well as b) **positive discrimination** (which are interconnected in a way but will be analysed separately) and for which the team is also aware of as potentials.

The **tokenism** aspect could be attributed to the fact that a person of a specific profile is being used to make the position of the organisation more favourable as a diversity conscious organisation. The team is aware of that, but they justify their position by saying that the Ambassador is a staff member and their identity is not exploited but rather recognised and given importance in the communication and outreach of the organisation. They are not being idolised or exploited for marketing purposes but serve as representatives of their communities instead of being overlooked and have this position assumed by someone that has no such life experiences but they would have this position because of their studies/academic background. The position of the Ambassador is a position that needs to be assumed by a person that has these life experiences and which can better address people with similar experiences.

The second aspect is that of positive discrimination. As the team mentioned, when trying to add a new staff member, a lot of importance will be given to their social profile, approach and social interests rather than their actual academic status or previous experience. This happens for many reasons, which as they state are:



“We understand that social exclusion of certain groups of people has a very direct impact (in most cases) on their academic and professional achievements. It would be unfair to compare two people with completely different life opportunities, the same way. Additionally, by prioritizing a person from a specific group as a potential employee we believe that we can contribute to their feeling of inclusion as well as give, through them, incentives to their communities to engage in educational activities. It is also our duty as adult educators (especially considering the influence of Freire and critical pedagogy) to promote inclusion and distribution of representation and economic inclusion to those mostly in need of it. Finally, we do not support extreme competition (corporate culture) when it comes to work. We want to promote healthy working relations among staff as well as among learners and make the working experience a learning one (and vice-versa). This doesn't mean that people that do not fit in the “diversity” characterization are not welcome, on the contrary we want to achieve a good balance between the different identities in order to bring people together and learn from one another.”

(statement made during staff meeting)

Process

This position, for our organisation is “directly influenced from the opportunities given by Erasmus+ projects and other EU grants” in order to ensure funding and support. For the needs of other organisations other kinds of funds could be allocated towards similar positions

The staff of Dafni Kek have mentioned a lot throughout the discussions, that the opportunities that the Erasmus+ provides can be really beneficial in implementing actual inclusion and integration.

This is especially relevant in the case of innovation where organisations have the chance to involve representatives of the groups they address, not only as beneficiaries or respondents in research and implementation of trainings, but also as the staff being actively involved in the job that is addressed to them.

These employment opportunities can be adjusted to the abilities of each person but they also aim to inspire academic growth.

These positions are not guaranteed for life, so they can be temporary, nevertheless they allow in building experience and overcoming social exclusion. It doesn't mean that it can solve all issues, but they believe that, based on current reality, it can have a positive impact.

3.6 General Conclusion

As a general observation, the team appeared to have a very careful approach towards the above mentioned changes, because as it is evident from their answers, they are also addressing potential criticism points that can be made through this public positioning process. It could be considered a bit defensive from their side, but probably it is reflection of their interactions with their general environment.

Medium and long-term Goals

In this section there is a brief description of the process of the previously mentioned medium and long-term goals to better communicate diversity and interculturality.

Development of intercultural and diversity competence training for old and new staff and colleagues

This action is heavily influenced from the DivCap Applied Diversity Awareness (ADA) Workshops and it includes the activities from the workshop as well as good practices that the organisation is familiar with through the [“Outreach Empowerment Diversity” \(OED\) project series](#).

Apart from the regular staff, these workshops will also be addressed to external collaborators that participate as trainers in educational activities, for reasons such as those mentioned in the “analysis of case study findings” as well as for better addressing the needs of all involved. So far, the team of DAFNI KEK has scheduled the implementation of the ADA workshops during the summer of 2021, in the framework of Erasmus+ partner’s meetings.

Collective overview, reflection and feedback strategy

This is based on an already implemented action, that of gathering the staff and sharing issues, ideas and feedback on actions. The reference to “strategy” is there to make sure that diversity issues become a constant subject of these meetings and that concrete issues and measures are being addressed and suggested respectively.

Communication strategy based on each person’s abilities

Although this position is partly covered by the “Diversity and Inclusion Ambassador”, their work is more focused towards quality related aspects compared to strictly communicative ones. The communication strategy, as also mentioned in the “Analysis of case study findings” aims to assume a very active role among staff members and their communication with the learners/external trainers/etc. and should achieve effective outreach with the intended target groups. It also includes all those means that will be used to specifically address relevant organisation (such as migrant associations) while also acting complementary to the approaches for collaboration as described in the statute and the relevant policies. It also includes the strengthening of cooperation with other associations, NGOs, cooperatives and other kinds of organisations/institutions/workplaces.

Learning and critical mentality / Reading list

The learning and critical mentality are constituting clear references of the team of DAFNI KEK. Nevertheless, combined also with the “Green print thinking” suggested by the case study assessor, the team decided to start creating a repository of relevant readings or films, that will be used to increase the diversity competences of the staff. Depending on the circumstances, they aim to have one highly recommended reading every three months followed by the rest of the resources shared for anyone interested based on their abilities and time.

Knowledge management

Throughout the organisation’s history, there have been a lot of tools created that address diverse needs and professional skills. The organisation’s website can act as a medium to republish many of these tools while also promote tools and methodologies, openly accessible from other organisations that favour diversity and they can

address both the needs of the educators and the learners (which could also turn educators at some point). This also brought forward the need for a restructuring of their website in order to make access to resources easier based on someone’s needs and (social) characteristics as part of the whole, while also recognising and representing the different identities, being inclusive and open with a “focused accessibility”.

Upgrading and better formulating actual learners/staff outreach, inclusion and retention strategies

Highly related to previous actions of the short and medium term goals, this goal reflects the changes and possibly transferrable innovations to be achieved around the aspects of outreach, inclusion and retention. It is still on a very conceptual stage and it will be better formulated depending on the results and feedback from the other relevant communication actions.

Actively support labour-market inclusion for socially underrepresented groups with promoting job positions that are also open to people from diverse groups

The inspiration of this action is the “Job Adverts Thursday” which is run by the NGO “Generation 2.0 for Rights, Equality & Diversity” (G2RED). As they mentioned, this is a very interesting idea and they are looking forward to also try to implement it in their local context along with their sister organisation, Cyclisis. This action would be used to promote job positions that openly encourage applications from people from diverse groups, while also supporting the intercultural competence training of many local businesses.



“Our strategies emerge from the objectives we set complemented by the experience we had with our learners and our involvement and monitoring of the current affairs in our context and around social justice. As adult education providers, we ought to be up to date with current affairs and try to be as holistic as possible to help battle social pathogenies of our environment but also as individuals”

(Statement made during staff meeting)

Notes

For more on the “Job Adverts Thursday” by G2RED visit this link:
<https://g2red.org/category/job-adverts-thursday/>

3.7 Challenges

DivCap related activities

As the team mentioned, the original plan of the activities they had planned for the piloting, drew a lot of inspiration from the Applied Diversity Awareness (ADA) Workshops developed during the DivCap project and specifically they wanted to implement the following activities and use the findings as the basis for their change process. These activities are:

- The story of my name
- Diversity survey
- Diversity work

Due to Covid19, they were unable to implement them as they intended - face-to-face - and combined with the new reality of working from home, they lost track of this process. So the main activities that allowed them to make the pilotings was reading the material provided by the DivCap project, doing extra studying and research on individual level and having informal and unscheduled discussions on the matter using as an occasion other issues that would emerge that would give a good trigger to also consider the issue further.

Through these processes, they came up with some draft plans which tend to change due to new knowledge or new circumstances arising, so they needed to make sure that they don't lose focus of the intended actions. For this reason, they tried through their experience all these years, to find those practices that hinder the communication of their work and outreach of the learners and they understood that there are some organisational aspects that need to be solved before implementing the communication in the way they want it.

In their case, they used an alternative route to determine their approach and they tried to find which are the bad practices that they see either in themselves or other organisations, when it comes to communicating diversity. By understanding or defining the problematic aspects in terms of means, ways and approaches, they felt more ready to use or adapt existing good practices in their communication approach.

Organisational challenges

Task division - Time Management

Due to the nature of their work, which includes a lot of research and creative thinking (while also including the usual bureaucratic aspects as all legal entities), the team members tends to assume many different roles. There are of course distinctions and more specific tasks that one assumes, but all are interested in contributing less or more in the research and development phases even by just reading/testing and providing feedback.

Through the process for determining the action plan for increasing their diversity mentality, they were really enthusiastic and with a lot of ideas. But they realised that this is a common “mistake”, because it causes overwhelm when added to all running projects. For this reason, the team decided that they also need to become a bit more structured and better manage their time during this time that they all work from home, if they really want to achieve their diversity goals.

Setting boundaries

Another organisational challenge to take into consideration, is setting boundaries to their plans and the services they offer because there is a tendency to address all requests they receive.

General challenges

Impact of the Covid pandemic

Due to the pandemic, there is a confusion created throughout the society, because temporary measures have become almost permanent (at least for the last year) which doesn't allow for a good evaluation of the actions that need to be taken and be effective. For this reason, as well as the psychological, mental and/or physical exhaustion combined with the complete uncertainty that the whole society faces right now, it was almost impossible to start active implementation of the discussed measures. This means that the intended changes in statute and mission statement have remained in draft stage, due to difficulties and delays in submitting and receiving approval from relevant authorities (in the case of the statute). Concerning the mission statement, it is closely tied to digital updates that need to be implemented before the publication of the mission statement. Accessibility and open resources are an integral part of the mission statement, so they need to be also implemented before the new mission statement is made public.

Restricted access to online infrastructure of target groups

As mentioned above, the greatest challenge at this time is the uncertainty that is created by policy makers because of the pandemic. Initially, when the pandemic started the idea was that DAFNI KEK could transfer everything online. But the challenge in that is that the target group of the organisation in many cases doesn't have (continuous) access to the required infrastructure in order to participate online. For this reason, part of the mission statement and policies of DAFNI KEK is to try and establish open hours where people, who have no access to technological infrastructure, can come inside (respecting all safety measures) and use the technological equipment for their learning needs.

4. Looking forward

4.1 Summary of the experiences during the pilots

During the process for defining the change process and starting its implementation, the Dafni Kek team concluded that practically promoting diversity through the organisation's actions require active involvement and constant reflection. In their case it was important to review all their previous experience and by assessing what went wrong and what went well, they tried to find that giving actual time and space for communication while avoiding the instrumentalisation of the communication channels, to achieve just quantitative indicators, was the most important aspect for their approach. Communication is the means to promote their work and offer their services to the intended target groups. This requires that they have dedicated days and hours to address the needs of the learners (existing or potential). For this reason and considering the peculiarities of their working conditions and the general conditions, a realistic goal that they want to achieve is to make space and time in their schedules and organise communication weeks with learners, external colleagues and other organisations to find better ways for them to be part of the activities of the organisation, while at the same time addressing and taking into account the diverse needs that emerge.

To better achieve that, they needed an “**accountability**” tool which is reflected through the statute changes, the mission statement rewriting and the establishment of policies that clarify the obligations and commitment of the organisation.

4.2 Lessons learnt

Going into this process of change, the Dafni Kek team was “really thrilled and enthusiastic with the material provided” to make all these changes. All staff members have been provided with the material for an initial study and discussion afterwards. The material gave them a lot of ideas of the things they could implement in their case, but it also made clear that there are still many things they do not know. Given the current situation and the fact that DAFNI KEK's responsibilities increased, the whole team didn't have enough time to fully implement the process as they would wish. So they drafted an action plan, which they used as a base for the changes that they can implement little by little, as well as write down ideas for discussion for the next group meetings and finding ways to make time by being a bit more consistent with the working and non-working hours.

Change through small steps

Another important lesson they learnt, is that change is more likely to happen through small steps (as it was also highlighted by the assessment of their case study) that can be implemented in a small time frame, rather than larger scale actions, that require a lot of preparation and end up being indefinitely postponed for when there will be time available, as well as avoiding ambitious plans that overwhelm. Again, this aspect seems a little challenging to the team, since so far all processes described require considerable amount of work and co-planning which takes a lot of time. Despite that, it is obvious that the team wants to be present in all aspects of the change process and they prefer to have an active involvement, instead of delegating the task, in its whole, to an external expert.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the process for the diversity change has been a process that brought to the surface the need for some structural changes that hadn't been considered before. It became evident to the team that one of the basic reasons why the communication activities do not have the dynamic they wish. For this reason, and taking the project's outputs as inspiration for the next steps, as well as the resources provided both by the DivCap Project and other resources they found themselves and they defined their process.

4.3 What worked well

They believe that the current action plan has been devised taking into consideration experience of many years, combined with more knowledge and references on relevant practices from different contexts and collective decision. Given the size of the organisation and the way they work, being independent and working in a horizontal and collective way, they consider it a good practice to be transparent with actions and critical of themselves and their work in a constructive way that helps detect problematic aspects and correct them when possible. It is also really important to give time as individuals to be up to date with current events and emerging societal needs in order to remain as relevant as possible.

4.4 Recommendations

DAFNI KEK, as already mentioned, is a local entity dedicated to offer easy access opportunities to everyone with no barriers. Due to the size of a Small-Medium Enterprise (SME), they believe that each member of the staff should have a global understanding on the decisions making, priorities and directions to follow. Each one of the members is responsible for a specific domain, but ready to assist the rest, if needed to make things work effectively.

In this context of daily practices and in the process of review and self-reflection, the following recommendations have been made by the team themselves:

Staff and management

- should not overlook small changes and be patient
- should become more visible and available to the broader community timewise
- need to take communication more seriously by adopting a more cohesive communication strategy
- should remain and be even more inclusive, open and respectful
- take time when they feel overwhelmed
- reflect and self-assess



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