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TBK

Nordic-Baltic meeting, Helsinki, 30th-31st May 2016

Welcome and introduction to FAEA by Aaro Harju.

Introduction to the house of the Finnish Folk High School Association by Jyrki Iljäs.

Country reports - Political situation

From the written country reports, two themes turned out to be common: The funding situation and reforms or changes in legislation.

Funding

Denmark: Decrease in funding for study associations call for action, otherwise the market orientation will increase. Other strategies of the study associations are partnership strategies towards fx local authorities providing welfare services or voluntary strategies including more voluntary teachers or instructors inspired by Sweden.

Norway: Government is planning to earmark some of the funding for Folkbildning to the integration of refugees. In reality this is undermining the funding of Folkbildning.

Finland: Because of the recession, there have been funding cuts. Hoping that the situation has now been stabilised. Local authorities are also cutting funding, redirecting the money to refugees and youth.

Estonia: For at least the next two years funding will be more project based, which has to be applied for.

Lithuania (spoken by Per): The impression is that the funding situation in Lithuania is very strict.

Iceland: The Icelandic reaction to the recession was education. Partnership collaboration (unions and employers) have proven to be successful.

Latvia: The financial situation is bad. There is a new plan for adult education. Uncertain what that will mean for the financial situation in the future.

Sweden: Government funding is at a good level. Funding at local level is falling systematically. Have not found a way to change that. Some members work on traditional Folkbildning, others take part in a growing market selling courses for companies and the public sector. The state has provided substantial new funding for Folkbildning for asylum seekers. Currently there are over 170.000 people in the asylum system in Sweden. Studieförbunden has published the report "Svenska från dag 1":

<http://studieforbunden.se/studieforbund/folkbildning-med-asylsokande/svenska-fran-dag-1/>

The work on refugees has provided a better standing for Folkbildning in the public opinion. It has shown the importance of having a solid structure to organise an initiative to do that.

Johanni is asking: Is it appropriate always to cry "wolf" about losing money and about competition from the market?



Comments included the following points

- We have to proof our worth. We have to document what we do. We have to think in a new way.
- It is a shame that focus is so narrow on labour market. We need a broader perspective on competences.
- Radicalisation issues calls for democratic skills and citizenship education.
- Another problem is unemployment – entrepreneurial skills are important.

Information from EAEA by Per Paludan Hansen

Presentation of Per Paludan Hansen is enclosed.

Per is suggesting a Nordic awareness raising activity based on the EAEA “Manifesto for Adult Learning in the 21st Century”. He is suggesting a working group between Folkbildning Norden and The Nordic Folk High Schools.

“Manifesto for Adult Learning in the 21st Century”:

<http://www.eaea.org/en/policy-advocacy/manifesto-for-adult-learning-in-the-21st-century.html>

Country reports - Political situation, continued

Reforms / changes in legislation

Estonia: A new Act on Adult Education in 2015. All adult education is now being defined as continuing education, both liberal, vocational, general, etc. adult education. No license for education is needed anymore, only a registration, in order to apply for public funding. This is done in a database open to the public. It makes it less bureaucratic, and is more open. On one side, it is closer to formal education. On the other it provides the possibility to receive documentation of the learning to be used for employment or further education. Tax reduction is possible for participation in adult learning.

Latvia: The new “adult education management board” has not yet been appointed, so it is yet too early to say anything about that. One reform concerns a new target: employment / employability.

Finland: There will be done a very big reform on vocational education, based on the needs of labour market and not the learner. This means that vocational education in the future might not be a suitable base for further education.

Norway: Non-formal adult education providers have just been rejected as providers of vocational education.

NVL project “Competences from the view of working life” shows that employers are more progressive on the broader perspective on skills than some decision makers.

Norway: We should be aware of other partners, i.e. employers.

Finland: Reorganisation in the ministry. Only a few clerks are working in the field.

Estonia: Opposite development in Estonia.

Discussion about the challenge of adult education being closer connected to the employment sector, for example as being part of employment ministries/directorates in the individual countries, in the EU, in the Nordic Council of Ministers. It requires more lobby work on our behalf.

Iceland: The educational system has been aligned: students have to finish quicker and reforms of student loans has been implemented. Therefore it has become even more important to talk to stakeholders/employers.

Country reports - New knowledge in the field of Folkbildning

Denmark: The descriptions of new knowledge in the country reports is rather fragmented. The suggestion is therefore to make a sort of mapping of research institutes and environments, researchers and recent studies relevant for Folkbildning.

Finland: be aware of relevant research networks and the Mimer institute. FAEA has regularly contact with three professors/universities. The original purpose was to put research into use in the adult education sector.

Norway: Can EPALE be used to make a mapping of research? Can we use researchers from other countries to get more/new research going in our own countries?

Sweden: Have been working a lot on evaluation. Are now working on several systems of evaluation. Some going the indicator-way, some a more sociological way. Will like to make longitudinal studies.

Finland mentions two interesting reports:

- Emilia Valkonen's dissertation on the features of market orientation in adult education centres (comes with an abstract in English):
http://epublications.uef.fi/pub/urn_isbn_978-952-61-1948-9/urn_isbn_978-952-61-1948-9.pdf
- Jyri Manninen's feasibility study on calculating the financial benefits of studying at liberal adult education centres (only in Finnish): http://kansalaisopistojenliitto.fi/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/2015_kansalaisopisto-opiskelun_hyodyt.pdf

EPALE have money to translate.

Information from NVL by Johanni Larjanko

LEK – Let Europe Know, a continuation of Infonet. Is going to offer training sessions in better writing. First event in Germany two days in November. Later a webinar. Asking for people in the network who could be interested in participating. Johanni will send information about it and requests possible names no later than 15th June.

There used to be a network called Nordinfo, parallel to Folkbildning Norden. Is there any interest in reviving this network? Some countries are interested other are more reserved. Johanni will make a 1-2 pages concept note for us to decide on.

NVL made a report on validation to be used in study circles. On Thursday there will be a webinar run as a study circle. NVL reports on validation: <http://nvl.org/Rapporter/NVL-rapporter/Validering>

EAEA is organising a conference in June about the action plan for validation. There will be a back to back expert seminar. Could be a special issue for the next meeting in Folkbildning Norden.

NVL is offering itself for the Nordic project on refugees. The offer is that Maria Marquard and Antra Carlsen could be a part of the planning group of the conference. NVL is planning a conference in Malmö in December on integration. There is a possibility that the conference of the Nordic project could be an official conference of the Norwegian chairmanship. NVL also offers help for the research framework, and will also be able to localise good cases for the project.

Suggests EPAL as a place to show cases/examples etc. about refugees, ect.

Finnish chairmanship of the Nordic Council of Ministers by Ulla-Jill Karlsen, Ministry of Education and Culture

Jyrki will forward the presentation by Ulla-Jill Karlsen.

In August or September a steering group of civil servants of the Nordic Council of Ministers will meet to discuss integration. They will talk about good practices and are welcoming input.

Country reports – Folkbildning for refugees and other possible common themes

Activities and projects

Participants of the meeting was encouraged to ask eachother about specific activities and projects mentioned in the country reports.

Denmark: “Folkbildning for refugees” is a network of 23 DAEA member organisations working in the field. Main purpose is mutual inspiration.

Finland: Bildningsalliancen has a similar network of 23 member organisations, but also with universities, about refugees/integration. Folk high schools have programs for unaccompanied refugees.

Sweden: How do we relate validation in Folkbildning and the European Qualification Framework (EQF)? We need to discuss it a lot more. Have a current project on validation of skills of young people.

Johanni is reminding us on the NVL report on validation (se link to NVL reports above). We need to be aware of the work that has previously been done. Also we need to be prepared for the response of Folkbildning to the EQF.

Common themes

Five suggestions for common themes has occurred during the meeting.

1) Refugees

Denmark have managed to get funding for the Nordic project proposed at the latest Nordic meeting. The project aims at collecting best cases of Folkbildning integrating refugees. The kick-off meeting will take place after the Nordic-Baltic meeting. Baltic countries will be invited to take part in the project at a later stage. Project management has shifted from Denmark to Sweden.

Validation vs EQF

The issue of validation versus EQF will be included on the agenda for the next Nordic-Baltic meeting. An idea is to invite NVL to give a status on the work, another idea is to ask Folkbildningsförbunden and Leikn to prepare inputs for the discussion.

Mapping research

We agreed to make the section “New knowledge in the field of Folkbildning” of the country reports more detailed for the next Nordic-Baltic meeting. That means mentioning relevant research institutes, research environments, names of researchers and titles of recent studies and reports in the individual countries. For that purpose, we set up a working group. Trine will initiate the work by calling in names for the working group.

EAEA Manifesto

We decided to leave it up to the individual countries to take the action regarding the manifesto in the way that make sense to them. Also the manifesto might be a relevant input into a discussion of redefining

Network of communication officers

As mentioned above, Johanni will send out a concept note on this suggestion.

Any other business and next meeting

Chairmanship is shifting from Denmark to Norway in order to follow the shift of chairmanship in the Nordic Council of Ministers.

We agreed to change the frequency of meetings from two to one meetings a year. All meetings are going to be Nordic-Baltic meetings.

If possible we will place future meetings back-to-back with other meetings or conferences such as the conference of the Nordic refugee project. EAEA conferences etc.