ADDED VALUE BY EMPOWERMENT

RECOMMENDATIONS

by TCP AVE

June 2007

Partners in AVE:

- N.E.E.D.S. Hungary
- Spark the Netherlands
- Mobilee the Netherlands
- UP AROS Sweden
- First Aid Austria

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Recommendations

TCP AVE bases its recommendations on the actual grass root experiences of the projects participating in TCP AVE. Best practices, gained from the in-depth daily experiences with our target groups, from the actual projects can be used to illustrate policy recommendations on a more abstract level. We therefore do not intent to formulate actual "Policy Recommendations" in a political way but recommendations based on experiences that can be used for proof in decision-making.

For Asylum seekers

Recommendations on dignified reception:
Meet every asylum seeker as a potential future citizen and neighbour!
Regard asylum seekers as bringing new possibilities and creative solutions into Europe.
Offer social integration and labour market integration for asylum seekers from their first day in the country, independent of the outcome of their application for asylum.

For the TCP

Recommendation on how to accomplish a dignified reception system:
Create networks and partnerships including all, target group, field workers and staff, local stakeholder, policy and decision makers. Create competency raising programmes for your network and/or partnership and they will become creative! Use electronic communities for communication and information.
Regard cultural differences as a positive challenge.
This TCP therefore recommends partnerships developing a Communication Strategy and project identity.

For Europe

Recommendation on developing a European harmonised reception system:
Strong encouragement of trans national partnerships and networks. This should include activities such as exchange programmes and joint activities for development of a harmonised European reception system for asylum seekers. Encouragement is necessary on primary, policy and decision making levels in order to develop a common European ground of basic norms and values for a dignified reception of asylum seekers.
Regard cultural differences as a positive challenge.

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Conclusions

Overall conclusions from AVE

The overall objective TCP AVE was to develop methods and create networks in order to increase the knowledge and understanding of immigrants and asylum seekers' reception, education and possibilities to enter the labour market. The objective was also to develop a comprehensive network of different activities to suit the needs and competencies of immigrants and asylum seekers as well as the operative actors. Activities would focus on gathering knowledge, and raising the partnership's competencies as well as on the quality of life of asylum seekers while waiting for a decision on their application for asylum.
TCP AVE focused on 10 activities that will facilitate the conditions for asylum seekers and immigrants:

To make a comparative study on the legal framework
To give recommendations on national level and towards the EU
To organize staff exchange and training program
To develop a pragmatic information package for asylum seekers and staff (staff of help desks/consultancies)
To raise positive opinion by information, education and media
To develop communication strategies
To develop/create/provide portfolio and assessment
To activate the asylum seeker through labour market training and social events
To make visible the double sided benefit
To enable an e-platform and e-based exchange

TCP AVE has thus been working on different levels focusing on:
- comparative studies on a European level
- competency raising exchange programmes between the transnational members of TCP AVE
- joint development of products between the transnational members of TCP AVE
- education, coaching and work placement of asylum seekers and immigrants
- the TCP's organisation of activities and equipment to facilitate cooperation across borders

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Comparative studies

TCP AVE finds that there are vast differences between the countries' reception systems and conditions for asylum seekers through the comparative studies that have been done: The Integration of Asylum Seekers in the European Union, Analysis and Action; The multilateral exchange programme of social workers and the Swedish study through field trips to reception centres. These differences concern asylum seekers' health care, housing, education including vocational training, work placement and possibilities of employment and thus support themselves. The differences also concern the public opinions of the reception of asylum seekers, which of course are of concern for national governments and the legislations. In these comparative studies TCP AVE also found similarities in particular on the field level concerning the staff's enthusiasm, involvement and concern. In comparing the four countries of TCP AVE it is clear that the harmonising of the reception standards of asylum seekers within the European Union is a very slow process.

Competency Raising Exchange Programmes

A great number of exchanges have taken place within the TCP AVE action programme. A large number of staff working with asylum seekers in the field, policy and decision makers all have participated in these exchanges thus spreading the new impressions and knowledge vertically as well as horizontally. It is important to note that each country has been able to show progressiveness in one or another field concerning the reception of asylum seekers but the added value has throughout the programmes been the encounters and the personal meetings with staff, policy and decision makers as well as asylum seekers. One important competency raising aspect of the exchange programmes is the widening of perspectives opening up for change and further development. Foremost , the exchange programmes help to jointly develop a common European ground of basic norms and values of the reception of asylum seekers.

Joint development of products

Upon entering into the TCP AVE action programme each DP had plans to develop different products on a national level. An ambition of the TCP was to, as soon as possible, set up an electronic information and communication platform. A pilot e-platform was then jointly worked on during the Uppsala GA 2006. Portfolio and assessment became of interest to all participants and also the focus of bilateral as well as multilateral exchanges. The Netherlands developed an elaborate digital portfolio as a best practise result of one of their DPs which was presented during a

multilateral exchange in March 2007 in Assen, NL. At the same meeting Sweden presented the Digital Empowerment Tool (DET) developed within its DP. It was also realised that the two tools, the portfolio and the DET in all probability were not only compatible but also complementary. It is also decided that a joint development in order to merge the two products will take place. This is a successful example of true trans national cooperation where locally developed products through the joint trans national effort get to further its developing power and possibly merge in to a tool box of many uses and users rather than being just one locally used tool.

Education, coaching and work placement of asylum seekers

Multilateral work exchanges have lead to new educational programmes for asylum seekers, as well as new teaching techniques. One language programme developed in Sweden has been exported to the Netherlands through the TCP AVEs joint interest in language programmes for asylum seekers and immigrants. E-learning has been an area of interest and an Austrian e-learning programme has been studied. Coaching and work placement of asylum seekers has taken place in Sweden and The Netherlands. In Sweden asylum seekers may be exempted from needing a work permit providing that the procedures of application for asylum are expected to take longer than four months. In The Netherlands only a temporary placement is possible. A continued joint effort is being planned using e-learning and e-business in the educational programmes for asylum seekers.

TCP AVEs organisation of activities and equipment facilitating cooperation across borders

TCP AVE has organised the TCP and the joint work in such a way that each TCP member has had the opportunity to voice its opinions and participate in the action plans. Coordinators' meetings preceding the General Assembly have not only meant that each TCP member could discuss and influence the agenda but also made it possible to efficiently carry out the formal meeting and take necessary decisions. Each TCP member has contributed to the permanent secretariat, to the international research and the e-platform. Moreover, the different national DP members and their staff have been given the opportunity to participate in workshops, conferences and field trips. Through the electronic information and communication platform DP and TCP members have had easy access to each other and communication has been effortless and inexpensive.

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To conclude TCP AVE finds that to successfully accomplish the goals and objectives of the TCP there are a number of success factors to get the job done and keep the TCP viable and happy:

Identified success factors for a viable TCP:

- joint cause
- jointly prepared formal meetings
- involvement of DP members
- easy electronic access to each other through e-platform, Skype, Netviewer etc
- competency raising activities e.g. workshops, conferences, social events
- listen to the target group
- lots of social activities and having fun

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