



Competence development of the adult educators

- developing quality within the area of adult learning

Basic Skills for Adults

Conference and Grundtvig Contact Seminar

26.-29. October



Perspectives challenges and opportunities

1. Background Nordic perspectives
2. Perspectives related to Professionalization of Teachers of Basic Skills
3. Recommendations and ideas



Nordic experiences

2010 -2011 a Nordic Mapping study

“The Nordic Adult Educator – a mapping of competence requirements of the adult educators and education and training opportunities within the field of adult education in the Nordic countries”

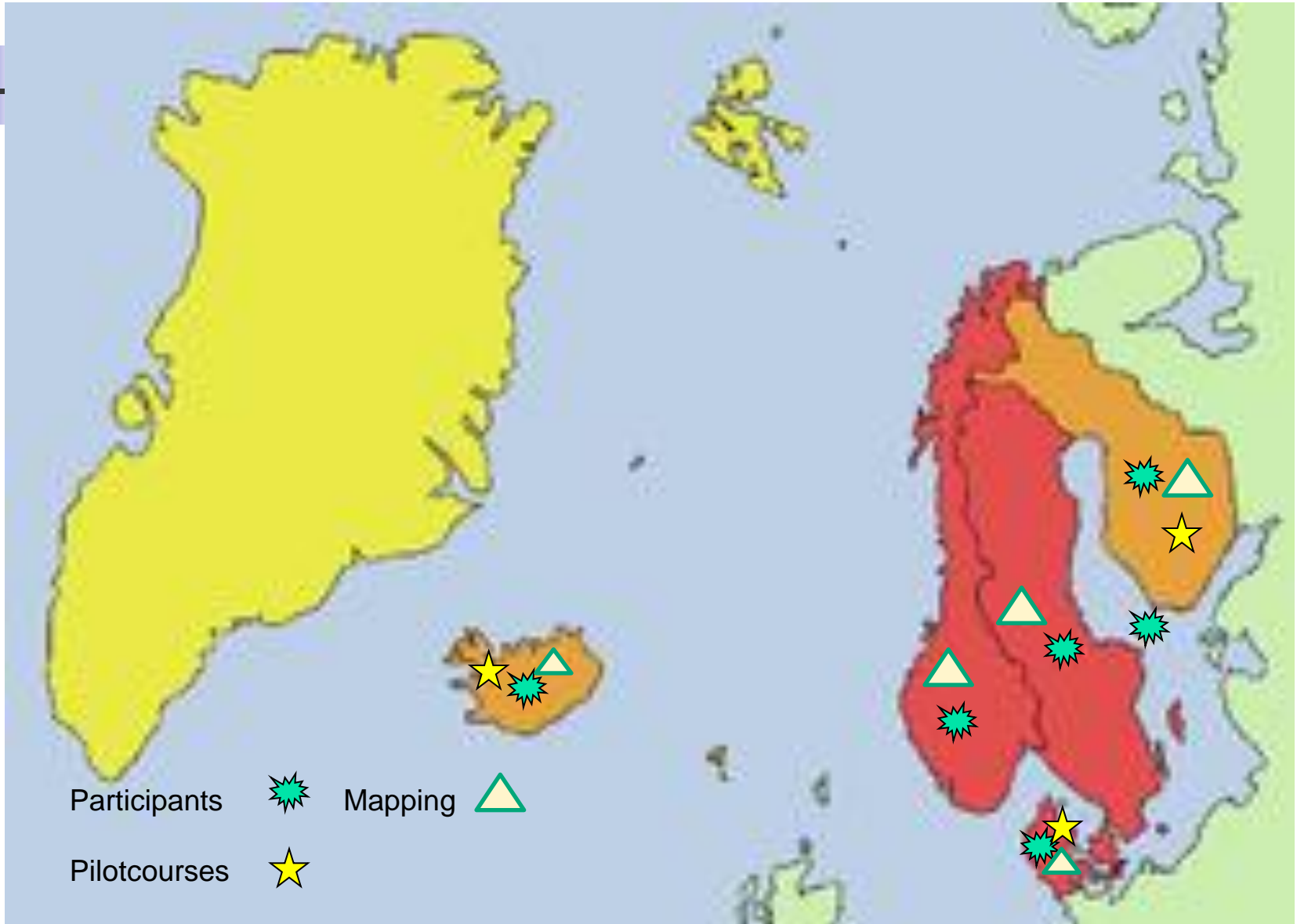
initiated by the Advisory Group for Nordic Co-operation on Adult Education (SVL)

2006 -2010 a Development project “Innovative best practice – teacher competence requirements”

carried out by NVL Taskforce on Adult Learning

The Nordic Countries

Taskforce participants, pilot courses, countries involved in the mapping



Adult educator competences required

for adult educators in innovative practice

Strong **professional knowledge was regarded
as a prerequisite** and was hardly mentioned.

Skills to **adapt the subject to concrete contexts and demands**

Ability to remain present in a changeable context

Well developed communication skills

Dialogical and analytical competences

Ability to facilitate cultural meetings

Process leading competence



The content of the mapping

Three areas

- A mapping of formal competence requirements for adult educators
- An interview study – interviews with 29 leaders with responsibility for recruitment of staff. Six interviews in each country – non formal, formal and vocational schools
- A mapping of education and training opportunities within adult learning

Formal requirements for adult educators



- For almost all adult educators, regardless of sector and institution, there are high requirements for formal subject-knowledge
- In most cases formal general pedagogical knowledge is also required
- There are almost no formal requirements on adult pedagogy skills and competences for adult educators.
- The lack of requirements on adult pedagogical competence is noteworthy compared to the general tendency for the Nordic teacher educations to become more specialized on subjects and certain age-groups.
- Finland has the most extensive requirements on subject-knowledge, while Iceland is the Nordic country with the least amount of formal requirements.

Viewpoints of headmasters interviewed

- Similar patterns regarding competence requirements can be traced in the interviews. Some of the patterns can also be related to the country and the sector the leaders represent.
- Subject-knowledge is seen to be the most important competence for the adult educator
- The focus on either general or adult pedagogy varies, but most headmasters express the need for general pedagogical competences
- The leaders find that adult learners have characteristics, which requires a particular pedagogy and didactic
- Many of their arguments are also found in the literature (e.g. Larsson 2006, Wahlgren 2010)

Special Adult Teaching Requirements

Viewpoints of headmasters interviewed

It is important that the adult educator is capable of

- › **including and using adult learners' life- and work experiences**
- › **respecting adult learners as adults and creating an equal relation**
- › **creating a learning environment where everybody learn from each other**
- › **working with groups of heterogeneous learners and using learners' diversity as a resource**
- › **using experience- and dialogue based teaching methods**
- › **recognize and relate to adult learners' barriers for learning**
- › **understanding the situation at the labor market**
- › **using validation for prior learning**
- › **being flexible towards different settings for the learning activities**
- › **being able to develop teaching materials targeted at adult learners**

Some more personal characteristics are also seen as important; authenticity, hardiness, enthusiasm, assertiveness, suitable communication style

Education and training opportunities

- Full initial teacher education with specialization in adult learners only in Finland. Some specialization courses available in Sweden.
- In Sweden a 60ECTS teacher education directed towards non-formal adult education and a 60ECTS adult educator programme for teachers
- In all countries there are some opportunities for continuing education
- Most extensive range of continuing education within adult learning is found in Denmark, but payment is required
- Educations not aimed directly at teaching: BA-level in Finland and Norway, a 120 ECTS master programme is found in all nordic countries except Denmark, where master programmes are 60 ECTS and only available as continuing education.



Teacher of Basic Skills

Identical competence requirements:

- High subject knowledge
- General and adult pedagogic knowledge

Specific requirements:

- Knowledge teaching basic skills
 - Adults lacking basic skills



Professional non academic knowledge

Professional knowledge must be complemented with an ability to be present and in contact

- with the students

- with the subject and the context

Experience based, contextual knowledge
Emotional, kognitive, embodied knowledge
Phronesis

Key points related to

“be present” and

“improve the effect of education”

- **To ensure**
 - training possibilities within the education offers
 - relation between the theory and practice within the education offers and between own practice and education (Transfer)
 - meeting differences: among sectors, cross-nationally, and across professions

- **To experience** different:
 - methods,
 - ways of acting in classrooms,
 - learning environments

Recommendations

– at a content, organisational level

- Developing activities, which promote **mutual employment of strengths** in different countries and sectors, and among educators
- **Use authentic learning environments** for teacher training e.g. workplaces, innovative / alternative institutions
- **Inspiration** from and **cooperation** with other professions such as drama, business etc.
- Strengthen the relation between **theory and practice** in education and training opportunities
- **Transfer** process: “before – during – after” education

Recommendations

– at a political, structural level

- Establishment of network between different institutions / operator initiatives working with developing education and training opportunities for adult educators.
- Extend and strengthen the range of available opportunities for continuing education for adult educators. (academic, practical, training)
- Extend the formal requirements for adult educators to having knowledge of adult pedagogy and didactics (both in theory and practice)
- Develop training and education opportunities which are targeted at adult educators employed part-time



Ideas – models

Common courses adult teaching pedagogic
Cross sectoral, cross national
Authentic environments



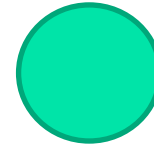
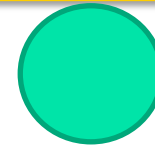
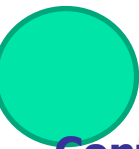
Specific courses: IT, basic skills, second language, vocational,
technical subjects

Common courses adult teaching pedagogic
Cross sectoral, cross national
Authentic environments
ECTS to prefer

Ideas – models

regional learning circles

Common course introduction
Cross sectoral

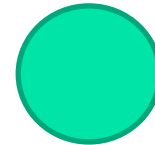
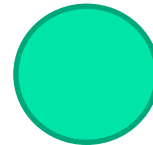
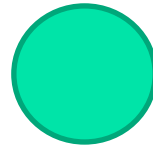
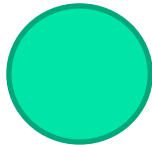
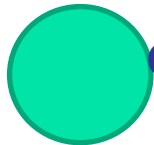


Strong knowledge sharing

Content: adult educator's needs and knowledges

Researcher or specialist in each circle

Close relation practice and competence development



Common courses evaluation, knowledge sharing
Cross sectoral, cross national



Inspiration and links

- NVL webpage <http://www.nordvux.net/>
- The mapping study:
http://www.nordvux.net/download/6803/nordiske_voksenlaerer.pdf
- Report "Innovative best practice"
http://www.nordvux.net/download/5738/vuxped_rapport_upd.pdf
- National Center for Competence Development <http://ncfk.dpu.dk/>