

Grundtvig Multilateral Networks

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What is Forage?

Since the first European Year of Older People and Intergenerational Solidarity in 1993 there have been many pan European exchanges, projects, training events, seminars, programmes and networks concerned with learning in later life.

The numbers increased significantly with the Grundtvig programme providing impetus and funding for imaginative and innovative work across all of Europe. However we have not made best use of all these rich experiences in terms of building upon them, sharing information, analysing and assessing value and impact against education and ageing policies and research evidence and creating networks to do all this.

The Forage partnership wishes to be the initial source of information for later life learning activities in Europe in order to:

- Allow for better dissemination of project reports
- Encourage further use of tools and outputs to increase opportunities available to individuals
- Create an archive and access point for EU and other initiatives concerned with disciplines that intersect with later-life learning
- Provide a source of advice and information to emerging and current EU programmes and access to sources of research evidence of the value of later life learning.
- Provide information on relevant focus years and days; seminars and training events
- Provide regular information on relevant new policy directions
- Negotiate for standardised methods of data collection and dissemination to assist comparisons, analyses and understanding
- Better frame and stimulate debates across bureaucracies, disciplines and silos
- Be an agency where debate stimulates change

The Forage partnership wants:

- To connect later-life learning ideas, projects, policy, research and voices of older people, and thereby promote an integrated and coherent approach in future policy and practice
- To develop dialogue with key national and European politicians and decision makers concerning emerging and key themes and issues in later life learning
- To signpost to a lexicon of terms used across Europe and in disciplines relevant to later-life learning
- To increase the membership of the network by:
 - Adopting dissemination strategies to publicise the Forage identity and aims
 - Developing the resource in all major languages used in the EU
 - Embedding publication strategies to promote the network from the initial stages of development
 - Aspiring to create a free-standing association for later life learning in Europe

The Forage partnership main goals are following:

- To create an interactive portal for each EU country to feed data about later-life learning – practice, policy, research, success and failure into an ongoing, sustainable, interactive and accessible database for wider use
- To promote the use of data for research, analysis, sectoral searching, project building and partner searching
- To document, evaluate and analyse projects at a European level and promote new ways to utilise results
- To promote collaboration and participation across disciplines
- To create links and methods of cross-communication with other relevant EU networks, projects, programmes and potential partners
- To give access to any databases of (good) practice in a range of learning areas around later life learning; education and ageing and training of educators in these fields
- To offer an online forum for ‘live’ participation in debates/discussions around particular topics
- To enhance the usage and value of data held on EVE, ADAM and EST databases
- To encourage debate through our three pan European seminars and ‘virtual’ conferences, discussion groups, forums and consultations. These will be reported in our nine newsletter and three annual progress reports
- To produce reports to disseminate to key stakeholders about our work and findings

The Forage partnership:

1. Leicester University, Leicester, UK
2. Bia-net, Graz, Austria
3. Cyprus Adult Education, Cyprus
4. Finnish Adult Education Association, Helsinki, Finland
5. Mesthenos-50+ Hellas, Athens, Greece
6. Trebag Property & Management Ltd, Budapest, Hungary
7. Lunaria, Rome, Italy
8. The Elephant Nijmegen, Nederland
9. PRO-MED sp. z o. o., Gdansk, Poland
10. AidLearn, Lisbon, Portugal
11. IMBD, Brno, Czech Republic
12. EUROED, Bucharest, Romania
13. Association for Education & Ageing – AEA, UK
14. Bratislava University, Bratislava, Slovakia
15. MERIG, Graz, Austria
16. U3A, Ljubljana, Slovenia
17. Cordoba University, Cordoba, Spain
18. U3A at Age Action, Dublin, Ireland

Current Associate Partners

1. Workers Education Association, Belfast, Northern Ireland
2. The Age Platform Europe, Brussels Belgium
3. BAGSO, Bonn, Germany

Who to contact and how you can get involved

Forage commences officially on 1st January 2012 and partner contacts will be appointed until then any interested parties should contact:

- Jo Leadbetter, Forage administrator jl172@leicester.ac.uk or
- Jim Soulsby Forage Coordinator jim.soulsby@btinternet.com

Forage is looking for more associate members and representation from every European country. If you are interested in joining us please contact Jim Soulsby at the above address. To register for regular information, access to website and database when developed and information about events please contact Jo Leadbetter.