

This issue of the newsletter features reports on the visits to Denmark in November 2000 and Canada in January 2001. So far the trips have proved most informative, having not only augmented the information base for the comparative study but also offered insight into specific policies and practices. For the purpose of the Thematic Review, we are now ready to focus on issues that are common to a number of countries, to identify good practices and to develop an inventory of the wide range of interesting programmes and approaches in the provision of adult education. The development of the knowledge society and the growing need to strengthen human capital are bringing learning to the forefront. In this regard, countries see adult learning as an important policy target, even if efforts to boost this stage of lifelong learning vary.

Although it is too soon to present in-depth responses to the themes identified for examination in this Thematic Review, we have prepared a short progress report from the first 4 countries visited: Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The report, available from the website, includes some preliminary ideas of key features that effective adult learning policies could contain. These are grouped under three main categories: a conducive environment, features of the adult learning system and adult learning practices.

Once again, we take this opportunity to thank the countries visited for their warm hospitality and also to acknowledge the high quality contributions, work and enthusiasm of country participants and experts.

Beatriz Pont

What's happening?

- The visits to Finland (Feb. 1st-9th, 2001) and Portugal (March 12th-19th, 2001) were completed and will be reviewed in Newsletter No. 5.
- The Adult Learning Web Site is constantly updated with the latest documents available (<http://www.oecd.org/els/education/al/>).

What's new?

- Spain has joined the Thematic Review.
- "Literacy in a thousand words" was published in the *OECD Observer* No. 223.
- The meeting of OECD Education Ministers, *Investing in Competencies for All*, took place in April 2nd-4th, 2001, preceded by a Forum on ICTs and Education. A special edition of *Education Policy Analysis 2001* was published for the meeting.

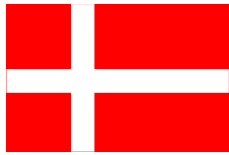
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Denmark Visit 6-14 November 2000



Denmark

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Monday November 6th

15:00-17:00 **Place: Copenhagen**
Steering group and authors of the Background Report: Discussion of the Background Report

Tuesday November 7th

09:00-14:45 **Place: Copenhagen**
Officials from the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education: Adult education and continuing vocational training, Adult Education Reform 2000, Active labour market policies
15:30-16:30 Dialogue with the social partners: Employers' Federation (DA) and Employees' Organisation (LO)

Wednesday November 8th

08:30-11:00 **Place: Randers**
AMU-Center Randers: Continuing vocational training
13:00-15:00 Randers Technical College: Adult vocational education and training
15:15-16:45 Local firm: Randers Reb A/S, steel wire rope manufacturer
18:15-21:00 Hadsten High School

Thursday November 9th

08:45-12:00 **Place: Århus**
VUC Århus: General adult education centre at lower and upper secondary levels
13:30-15:00 *Post Danmark*: The National Postage Company
15:15-16:45 *Arbejdsmarkedet*: Regional Labour Council of Århus County

Friday November 10th

09:00-10:45 **Place: Århus**
Åboulevardens Daghøjskole: Day Folk High School
11:00-13:00 *Frit Oplysningsforbund (FO)*: Adult educational association in Århus
14:30-16:00 Århus University: Open Education

Monday November 13th

09:00-12:00 **Place: Copenhagen**
Research institutes and researchers: Adult Education researcher group from Roskilde University Centre and Danish University for Education
13:00-14:00 Mrs Margrethe Vestager, Minister of Education
14:15-16:15 Officials from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour: ICT in education; Adult Vocational Training ICT Action Plan; Quality assurance according to Labour Market Authorities and Ministry of Education
16:15-17:15 Dialogue with the social partners: DA and LO

Tuesday November 14th

09:00-10:00 **Place: Copenhagen**
Educational guidance for adults by Labour Market Authority
12:00-13:00 Steering group: Proposal for the Country Note

Canada Visit 8 - 19 January 2001



Canada

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Monday January 8th **Place: Ottawa**
09:00-11:00 Background Report authors and steering group
11:00-12:00 Statistics Canada
13:30-15:00 Human Resources Development Canada
15:00-16:00 Conference Board of Canada
16:00-17:00 The Alliance of Sector Councils

Tuesday January 9th **Place: Québec City**
08:30-09:30 Quebec adult education policies
09:35-10:05 Financing of continuing education and training
10:15-11:15 Roundtable: General, professional and technical training and education

11:30-13:00 Community literacy groups
13:30-15:00 College of General and Professional Education (CEGEP): Limoilou College
15:30-16:30 Huron-Wendat Training and Labour Force Development Centre

Wednesday January 10th **Place: Montréal**
08:30-09:30 Ministry of Social Solidarity: Employment policies
09:30-10:45 Act to foster the development of manpower training
11:30-13:00 Non-governmental organisations
14:45-16:15 "Francisation" for immigrants

Thursday January 11th **Place: Fredericton**
08:30-09:30 Senior staff of Training and Education Development (Place 2000)

09:45-10:30 Saint Thomas University
10:40-11:15 University of New Brunswick
11:30-13:30 SmartForce - e-learning company
13:30-14:00 Landsbridge on-line University
14:30-16:30 StarChoice Communications Inc. - employee training

Friday January 12th **Place: Moncton**
09:00-10:00 Community Academic Services Program, St. Antoine
10:30-11:00 Connect NB: MacDonald Community Access Centre
11:30-13:30 Moncton Community College: Automotive apprenticeship, cooks program

13:45-14:30 Moncton University
14:45-16:00 Oulton's Business College

Monday January 15th **Place: Regina**
08:15-09:00 Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training (PSEST)
09:15-10:30 Senior PSEST staff
10:30-12:15 Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (SIFC) at the University of Regina
12:15-13:15 University of Regina, Continuing Education, Co-op Education, Human Resource Development
13:30-14:30 Canada - Saskatchewan Career and Employment Centre

14:30-17:00 Adult learning in the Regina Food Bank and the Neil Squire Foundation (literacy training to people with disabilities)

Tuesday January 16th **Place: Saskatoon**
08:30-10:30 Saskatchewan Regional Colleges, Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology (SIIT) and Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI)
11:00-12:30 Saskatoon Committee on Basic Education
13:30-15:00 University of Saskatchewan Extension Services, PLAR and Distance Education

15:00-17:00 Experts in adult education
Wednesday January 17th **Place: Victoria**
08:00-09:00 Royal Roads University
09:00-12:00 Senior members of: Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology (MAETT); Post Secondary Education Division (MAETT); Camosun College; Centre for Curriculum Transfer and Technology (C2T2); Industry Training and Apprenticeship Commission (ITAC); Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security
13:00-15:30 Malaspina University-College, vocational and applied program areas

Thursday January 18th **Place: Vancouver**
07:45-09:00 Private Post Secondary Education Commission
09:30-10:30 TELUS Corporation - telecommunications company
10:45-12:00 British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT)
14:00-15:00 MTU Maintenance Canada - engine services provider
15:45-18:00 Vancouver Community College (VCC)

Friday January 19th **Place: Vancouver**
09:00-11:30 Regional Experts on Adult Learning
13:30-16:00 Steering group: Proposal for the Country Note

Country Comments

Denmark

The process of implementing a major Adult Education and Training Reform, adopted by Parliament in May 2000, was in the minds of the representatives of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour when trying to explain the Danish adult learning system -and the reasons for wanting to improve it- to the five OECD experts during their visit at the beginning of November 2000.

Indeed, a continuing question OECD experts asked was, "Why, when you are doing so well in the International Adult Literacy Survey, do you want to change your adult education system?" Our guests were very keen on getting not only an overview of the many aspects of adult education and training in Denmark, including the reform and why - but also a good understanding of the various sectors of adult learning, which the experts visited during the tight programme prepared for them.

We had many interesting discussions with the experts, which we at least found very fruitful. After the preliminary conclusions presented to us by the rapporteur, Mrs Danielle Colardyn, we are looking forward very much to the Country Note, which we trust will prove useful to us.

Canada

In Canada, responsibility for education and training rests primarily with the provinces and territories, a situation that posed a significant planning challenge for Canadian organisers of the OECD Country visit. In just two weeks, how could we provide a comprehensive and representative overview of the diversity of Canada's adult learning systems, while at the same time providing insight into the cultural, geographic, and economic factors influencing policy choices and programme priorities? The answer was a very demanding schedule, which had the Review Team visit Canada from east to west, 9 different cities (essentially one each day), and a full range of learning stakeholders - policy makers, educators, students, business leaders and adult learning providers.

Canadian participants to the Thematic Review discussions felt that their time had been well invested - not only in support of an important international exercise, but also in terms of the richness of the discussion and the ability of the Review Team to challenge established viewpoints and practices. We learned as much in this process as did the OECD! We would like to take this opportunity to thank the individual members of the OECD team - for their insight and challenging questions, for their candor, and for their constant good spirits through what was certainly a very demanding two weeks.