



Valuing diversity in the professional development of trainers - 6 scenarios on training policy and practice towards equal opportunities principles

By Magda Balica
Researcher
Institute of Educational Sciences
Bucharest, Romania

With support from: Pekka Kämäräinen, Eileen Lübcke, Nikitas Patiniotis, Lianne van Elk, Annemieke Bakker Arkema, Eduardo Figueira

Summary

Introduction	3
1. Methodological considerations.....	3
2. Research results	6
2.1. Dilemmas and contradictions on equal opportunities	6
2.2. Equal opportunities in practice – 6 possible scenarios	10
SCENARIO I. Ensuring a diversity of trainees and trainers – paradigmatic case of an explicit policy of recruitment towards implementation of equal opportunities mainstreaming.....	10
SCENARIO II. Implicit towards explicit diversity policy – awareness, planning and networking on equal opportunities issue	13
SCENARIO III. “Diversity” curriculum development for trainers – a response to an emerging market’s requirement	15
SCENARIO IV. “Girl’s day campaigns” – trainers involved in measures to attract females towards economic fields traditionally male dominated.....	16
SCENARIO V. Implicit diversity policy: “train the trainers” for certain issues related to specific trainees groups (woman, repatriate persons, ex-prisoners, and people with specific disabilities)	18
SCENARIO VI. Strong equal opportunities policy versus formal response in practice - raising a reflective approach in studies, information campaigns, workshops and discussions	19
3. Framework principles towards equal opportunities mainstreaming in the professional development of trainers	23

Introduction

This paper is based on the work of the European cooperation project TTplus with the theme “equal opportunities in the professional development of trainers” as a mainstreaming issue off all activities developed during the project process and product. Equal opportunities dimension in training practices can not be appropriately understood besides the cultural and social environment in which a trainer is practicing. Being women or men, working with different type of social groups or minorities in a professional training area could vary often in relation to different factors: culture regarding the role of trainer, the trainer status into a specific society or community, organizational model of the institutions providing training, general perceptions, expectations and practices on equal opportunities issues in different societies. Although many VET research papers take into consideration the equal opportunities factor in analysing training profiles, achievements or performances, equal opportunities dimension in training practices is often implicit in most of them. Apart of the interest in looking at specific contexts with the aim of making proposals for appropriate professional development frameworks for trainers, the LEONARDO Project TTPlus takes explicitly the task to identify the equal opportunities features in training practices in different countries, proposing also a specific research methodology for looking deeper on this specific issue. The paper synthesizes the research methodology and outcomes around the topic of equal opportunities in professional development and practices of trainers at the workplace.

1. Methodological considerations

The first stage of our TTplus project when we approached the training practices in enterprises by analyzing specific case studies demonstrated the fact that what we usually name by “trainer” may cover often a very broad typology of status, role, personal interests, teaching styles, training approaches, personal carrier goals, personal learning pathways. Trainers may be men or women, may be teachers or mentors, facilitators or peers, moderators or coach. Trainers may work as internal or external staff, may be a part of a professional training organization, may be employed by a company or could be freelancer. The learners of which the trainer is

concerned of are also very different in many ways (cultural background, ethnicity, level of education, skills that have to be developed, goals etc.). The trainer may be an expert in the content, but also could have only good general training skills that can be applied in any type of content. And the list of diversity could go on.

In other words, diversity in the trainer's world could be characterized by a complexity of factors: cultural, organizational, social or individual. One of the initial question of our project was related to the opportunities that trainers have for their personal carrier development and to what extend those opportunities are equal no matter the trainer profile is. Expanding this initial question in a more detailed way, we can ask at list three additional questions: What are the policies and practices addressing diversity of trainers developed in different cases in Europe? How equal opportunity mainstreaming for trainers is applied at the level of different organization? What are the main outcomes and impact of applying (or not applying) the equal opportunities mainstreaming on the trainers personal development?

In order to follow those questions, we developed in our TTplus project an interview guide addressed to the main stakeholders in training in all partner countries. The main goal of the interview was to understand how mainstreaming equal opportunities impacts on the training of trainers in different cases in Europe. In the framework of our project we propose the following understanding of equal opportunities for trainers:

- Equal access to information and resources related to the training opportunities;
- Relevant training content, related to the practical and social experience of the trainer
- Equal opportunities for assessment, validation and recognition of competences and skills
- Equal opportunities for personal and carrier development

Main questions on mainstreaming equal opportunities in the training of trainers that could be addressed during the interviews:

- How accessible is the training to different categories and profiles of trainers? (What type of policies and strategies are developed in order to ensure equal opportunities dimension in training profession?; There are any specific recruitment and selection strategies targeted to ensure the access of all in the training carrier, no matter gender, ethnicity, age or territoriality?; Which are the most used strategies and tools for sharing

information and resources between trainers, at all levels and/or organizations?)

- How relevant is the training content for all the trainers?
- Are the strategies and tools for assessment, validation and recognition of competences flexible enough in order to value the training skills and performances of all trainers in different context and situations?
- What is the main impact of mainstreaming equal opportunities in different cases?

The interview guide has been addressed to the stakeholders and each partner interviewed at least 2 stakeholders in the country. The stakeholders were different type of policy decision makers, association of training organization's, trade union, trainers associations, NGO-s working in the field of equal opportunities, training community representatives concerned with equal opportunities issue etc. The guide was designed in more general terms, but each partner chose a specific issue or more issues related to diversity of trainers or any type of group of individuals that might be considered disadvantaged in relation to training opportunities, information or resources. In one case could be gender, in other territoriality or cultural differences, or even mixed issues in the same interview.

The stakeholders were selected on the basis of their specific interest in one of another issue related to the mainstreaming equal opportunities. In some cases was also interesting to understand why there are no specific measures on equal opportunities so far. We took also into consideration that equal opportunities issue is related to awareness level, understanding, culture and personal perceptions. Someone could say that they have no problem with gender or with ethnic minority within their organization, but in fact they actually use a set of practices enhancing equal opportunities, even not being perceived as a specific measure as such.

2. Research results

According to the TTplus methodology, equal opportunity issue was a subject of a guided interview applied to 12 stakeholders from 6 partner countries all over Europe: Greece, UK, Germany, Portugal, Holland and Romania. The interviews collected a series of cases and scenarios of practice related to equal opportunities issue, but in the same time some dilemmas and contradictions appeared also in terms of shift in policy, organizational settings or even mentalities towards diversity in our days. We start with a short presentation of the main dilemmas and contradictions on equal opportunities, as interviews highlighted in our research. In the second subchapter we present also a set of 6 scenarios related to the equal opportunities issue.

Dilemmas and contradictions on equal opportunities

Equal opportunity is still a dilemmatic issue in many organizations. Rather often, our interviewed stakeholders responded upon this issue in very reflective way, raising interesting research questions. The most important dilemmas or contradictions collected by our interviews are presented as followings.

- **Explicit versus implicit policy on equal opportunities mainstreaming**

The interviews with stakeholders in 6 European countries shown that there is a great variety of situations regarding the level of policy development on equal opportunities. In some countries like UK or Holland the policy on equal opportunities is highly formalised and is supported by specific regulations, strategies, financial budget or special organizations. In other countries like Portugal, Romania or Germany, equal opportunities in companies is focused on a more narrow policy perspective, according to the specific situations in the country like: ethnic minority, gender or disabled people.

All the cases in our research shown actually that in trainer profession the equal opportunity agenda is rather implicit and in most of the situations is

limited to contextualized and specific measures like: developing a curriculum for trainers on diversity issues (UK, Holland, Romania), selection of trainers with international experience and competence in foreign languages (Greece, UK) or awareness measures and information towards the training community (UK, Germany, Romania, Holland).

Furthermore, in some companies the implementation of a more implicit policy towards equal opportunities is preferred against an explicit strategy, fearing of reverse discrimination or segregation: *This autumn the strategies about diversity will be adjusted. No special diversity policy is applied, because we think applying a diversity policy (with rules like: "so much % need to have a different ethnic background" etc) will lead to segregation. The topic of equal opportunities needs to be integrated in the personnel policy itself. There is a need to be a balance in the attention given to equal opportunities, as too much attention may lead to unequal opportunities.* (Holland, interview with a stakeholder in company).

- **Formal implementation versus real needs and understanding of the issue of equal opportunities in training profession**

In some cases, the interviewed stakeholders expressed their worries regarding the formal implementations of different policies and strategies on equal opportunities. Some voices said that a policy in itself is not useful as far as is not responding to a clear need in the company or the need is not perceived as a problem by its members: *In general I think it's not useful to focus on diversity when the organisation doesn't feel an internal need to do so. Measurements that are taken only to be (politically) correct, will never work.* (Holland, interview with a stakeholder in company).

Moreover, in some cases the stakeholders shown their concerns regarding the danger of "formal" implementation of the policy, against the real understanding of the issue: *I worry sometimes that the responses are informed to much by the need to make sure they don't break the law rather than saying what they're really doing it.* (UK, interview with a stakeholder in company).

- **Efficiency versus equity policy**

As we already presented, diversity is a noticeable phenomenon of the trainer's profession in many countries but in some of them seems not to be a fact of expresses firms' policy. Some cases in our research shown that companies are primarily interested to recruit and select *...the qualitatively best and cheapest trainers, as they see training twofold as a factor enhancing productivity and quality but also as a cost factor. In this context diversity is not a central policy [...] Efficiency is the overall doctrine of today's organization. This doctrine exists also in the employment of trainers.* (External observer, Greece).

In other case, one of the stakeholder interviewed referred also to the fact that actually most probably the trainers *are white indigene person in good healthy conditions* and more rarely a person coming from a different background. Only in one case in our research the recruitment strategy for trainers takes into consideration the equal opportunities principle, while most of other cases there are no specific rules on that. In some other cases, the stakeholders interviewed shown their concern for a more reflective approach on the issue: *The training coordinator selects an appropriate trainer when one is needed to give training. No special diversity program is applied in this selection or recruitment procedure. The matter should get more attention, because it is possible there are unequal chances for trainers unintentionally.* (Holland, interview with stakeholder).

- **Diversity – issue to be resolved or prerequisite of social innovation?**

In almost all our cases, the stakeholders interviewed recognized that equal opportunity is an issue of our today's society, even their stories are not always related to the trainer's profession. For some of the interviewed person, equal opportunities is seen as an issue in specific cases like gender balanced, ethnicity or sexual orientation and they admit that more have to be don in the future in order to deal with. Interesting is that in one of our case, diversity is a clear policy and practice of the recruitment and selection strategy for trainers and is seen as a tool for social innovation: *The diversity of the trainees and trainers reduces the problem of competition and ensures a more collaborative situation. Diversity research has shown in various cases that heterogeneous groups are better able to find innovative solutions, produce more results and people are more satisfied with the outcomes. The diversity approach of the programme seems to fit perfectly to its ambiguous goal.* (UK, interview with stakeholder).

- **Pro-active versus reactive measures on equal opportunities mainstreaming**

Very often in the interview we noticed that our stakeholders express their reserved opinion regarding the relevance of the issue of equal opportunities for trainers in companies. Even equal opportunities seems to be largely accepted as a relevant issue regarding the trainees diversity, the development of training profession or the qualities of a good trainer rests relatively outside the equal opportunity discussion. Even so, our cases demonstrated a more reflective concern of the stakeholder on this issue. Most of them admitted that awareness measures, discussions, information are needed for a more shaped policy on this. Never the less, almost all the stakeholders interviewed are in favour for a more proactive approach of the issue, instead reactive ones here and now:

I think if organization actually develop what they do, understanding the issue of diversity they are more likely to get the output reflecting those needs and for example be aware of the need to be flexible in terms of timing of offerings and so on. [...]. So I think its all part of the design process really and helping people to understand that when you're developing something you think widely than you otherwise would do assume that everybody is the same because they're not, everybody has the same needs because they don't. I think there is probably a lot more things to be done to enable people in all professional areas to understand what we're talking about better and not to be thinking this has nothing to do with them. That is only has to do with tiny aspects of the board agenda. So I think that there aren't any easy answers or simple solutions on equal opportunities. (UK, interview with stakeholder).

It's the way you engage everybody's understanding with what this complex stuff is about, in a way that doesn't scare them off and in a way that makes them understand its not simply about certain narrow dimensions it's not just about gender and so on. Its about much broader agenda of issues. Until people realize that they have a personal interest, even if there not older or even if there not married or they don't have disability. Everybody thinks its about someone else and nothing to do with them which is not the case. In general, she thinks it is important to train the intercultural competences of trainers. The challenges of the multicultural working environment are to make a bridge between people, to be open and interested and to have open discussions. (Holland, interview with stakeholder).

Equal opportunities in practice – 6 possible scenarios

The research methodology in the case of equal opportunities followed the same TTplus methodological approach, based on the application of scenarios seen as a subsequent step towards constructing empirical and practical contexts for demonstrative interpretation. According to the TTplus methodology, the research results on equal opportunities in training of trainers consists actually in 6 scenarios of practice, based on paradigmatic cases identified during our interviews with the stakeholders in 6 European countries: Portugal, Greece, UK, Germany, Romania and Portugal. The presentation of each scenario is based on the following items:

- Brief details of the context for the scenario
- What problem(s) does the scenario address?
- How does the scenario resolve the problem(s)
- The stakeholder perspective on the experiences and process
- The story from the perspective of an external observer

SCENARIO I. Ensuring a diversity of trainees and trainers – paradigmatic case of an explicit policy of recruitment and selection towards implementation of equal opportunities mainstreaming

a) Brief details of the context for the scenario

The interviewed stakeholder represents a very wealthy charity organisation with the aim to improve the quality of the Health sector in the UK. The current training schemes are quite ambitious: Their aim is to change the whole Health service sector to improve the quality of the service for the patient. The organization is completely independent. Only controlled by a board with the aim to link in what is going on in the policy for the health care sector. Training itself is highly valued in the organization. Every person employed by the organisation has an individual budget for training.

b) What problem(s) does the scenario address?

How to increase quality of the service for the patient by training policy? How the training policy may approach diversity of the trainees (in terms of qualifications / positions, gender, ethnicity, geographical residence.)

c) How does the scenario resolve the problem(s)

The researched training scheme is called the “fellow leadership” programme and is aiming to improve the leadership qualities of participants in service for a better patient-health care –relationship. The training scheme runs for 12 years with 6 cohorts, starting every second year in October with 16 participants.

To get on board the selection process is quite strict:

- a formal application must be provided, additional support by line manager and chief executive of organization. 4 program manager looking through the applications, written report for each application with a score. 30 people (this year from 86) selected through leading program manager
- 2 online questionnaires to fill in by this 30 people
- 2 days assessment center with verbal reasoning skills, competence based interview looking at intellectual flexibility, group communication, holding into account etc. The assessment center is run by trainers from the pool, decision are done by assistance director and 3 of the trainers.

The assessment process is aiming at the diversity of the trainees. 16 people are chosen, not the best, but to get a mix of qualifications / positions, gender, ethnicity, geographical distribution etc.

The organization is keeping a pool of 13 trainers / consultants; they have started with 10 and integrated 3 more for ethnic minority groups.

d) The stakeholder perspective on the experiences and process

The diversity of the trainees enables the establishment and development of a network throughout the whole training scheme, across institutions, professions, and regions. For trainees it is easier to connect to people with the same professional background, but since there will not more than two people of the same profession on one cohort, trainees will approach their colleagues from different training cohort (through contact of the foundation, through contact of their cohort-member).

This will lead to the establishment of relations across organisations, regions, and trainee programmes. The same applies to a network of topic-related relationships. The leadership fellow programme does not narrow / limit the

work to specific areas, e.g. to improve service for patients with chronic diseases. It is in the decision of the trainee in which field he wants to become active. This will also create connections and relations, but different from the one created through the same professional background.

The diversity of the trainees ensures several things. Firstly, is about a variety of information that maybe helpful in the creation of innovative approaches. E. g. I work for a primary care trust. Since the other participants work in hospitals, I will get information from my peer-learners how e. g. diabetes is treated in a stationary environment and might be able to adapt this information to her ambulant service. One of the main tools is action-learning-sets which need an open atmosphere.

The diversity of the trainees and trainers reduces the problem of competition and ensures a more collaborative situation. Diversity research has shown in various cases that heterogeneous groups are better able to find innovative solutions, produce more results and people are more satisfied with the outcomes. The diversity approach of the programme seems to fit perfectly to its ambiguous goal.

e) The story from the perspective of an external observer

The diversity of the trainers is a direct result of:

- the training scheme. A couple of training schemes focus on health service for ethnic minorities. This has led to the recruitment of trainers from ethnic minority group.
- the diversity of the participant. Each training scheme is accompanied by two trainers, if possible by a man and a woman. The paradigm of a high diversity of the participants leads to a diversity within the pool of trainer. The main selection criteria are still related to the competence profile of the trainer, but where possible a mixed team of trainers with regard to the gender or ethnicity is taken over for the responsibility of the training scheme.

SCENARIO II. Implicit towards explicit diversity policy – awareness, planning and networking on equal opportunities issue

a) Brief details of the context for the scenario

The interviewee is coordinator of the topic 'equal opportunities'. She started at the organisation as a teacher in written communication (16 years ago), and after she carried out a project about interculturalisation and ethnic diversities, she became coordinator of the topic equal opportunities (a new function then, about 1 ½ years ago). The function implies inventorying where attention for equal opportunities is needed, in what ways, which problems arise, how, etc. Equal opportunity is one of the five core topics of the organisation and is especially applied at the personnel sector.

b) What problem(s) does the scenario address?

The matter of equal opportunities should get more attention. Besides the fact that diversity is a core topic in the company, there is not much attention for diversity in relation to the trainers. No special diversity program is applied in the selection procedures. There is financial support available but the budget depends on the "diversity plans" and set up for the next year.

c) How does the scenario resolve the problem(s)

Equal opportunities became one of the five core topics of this organisation, which is a justification of the theme. People realise it is not just a vogue phenomenon, and are receptive for advice and information about diversity and willing to cooperate. At the highest level of managers, the topic gets attention and is discussed in meetings. Slowly the division of men at the professional departments and women at administration has started to change.

Every region is responsible for the diversity topic and the cooperation with other organisations in relation to diversity in their own region. At national level the organisation is one of the first renewed organisations that apply equal opportunity themes. The topic coordinator attends meetings with all ministries who deal with this topic. At international level, the organisation attends conferences (next conference is organised by the Danish government) about equal opportunities and a case is incorporated in the conference book (see attachment).

The course developers get extra training in the diversity topic, which results in special attention to equal opportunities in the content of the courses. For example, the course developers do not always use white male managers in a case. There are not really specific tools for training addressed to specific groups. However a realisation game for the trainers exists at which they practice difficulties and situations they can encounter, such as sexual preference and physical restriction.

d) The stakeholder perspective on the experiences and process

This autumn the strategies about diversity will be adjusted. No special diversity policy is applied, because they think applying a diversity policy (with rules like: "so much % need to have a different ethnic background " etc) will lead to segregation. The topic of equal opportunities needs to be integrated in the personnel policy itself. There need to be a balance in the attention given to equal opportunities, as too much attention may lead to unequal opportunities. The main strategy now is having the topic accepted, which is reached mainly by having discussions with each other about this topic. Furthermore, every region of the organisation has its own managers or consultants who are responsible for the diversity topic in their own region and who discuss matters in a network group (and can stimulate actions of other managers in relation to diversity). A group Council existing of the highest level of presidents of the region managers discuss the topic every half year.

Additionally, the staff directors of every region discuss their equal opportunities policies and objective with each other at special theme meetings. Objectives are for example more women in management (special management route for women), and more immigrants at higher functions. Moreover, the diversity theme will be discussed at the part-time trainer's day. A special trainee's route exists for high potential immigrants, who are selected by an external selection institute. In this route they work for two years at different projects in the organisation, after which they may be employed when their work is good.

e) The story from the perspective of an external observer

Even a formal policy on equal opportunities exists, the practice is still depending on the level of awareness and information that members of the company have. There is a clear interest on the issue in the company, even is still early to measure a real impact for actual trainers.

Scenario III. "Diversity" curriculum development for trainers – a response to an emerging market's requirement

a) Brief details of the context for the scenario

The interviewee is a development manager with special interest in diversity and equal opportunities. She works for a big training company. She inventories what is needed in companies on this subject and she is responsible for developing an offer around these subjects. Her primary focus is the external training. She is not necessarily familiar with the internal HRM-policy around this topic.

b) What problem(s) does the scenario address?

The training market requires programs and training schemes on diversity issue. There are more international trainees in the client-companies that require training in different languages.

c) How does the scenario resolve the problem(s)

The company developed training programs on intercultural competences for all trainers of the company. One of the goals is to be more sensitive to cultural differences. There is also training on language skills.

d) The stakeholder perspective on the experiences and process

I am not familiar with internal policy on the diversity subject. I think that there is not much attention because there was no need for this. It becomes interesting for the company if it has commercial possibilities. Now, companies ask for it so they develop training on diversity, and they also offer coaching and consultancy.

In general I think it's not useful to focus on diversity when the organisation doesn't feel an internal need to do this. Measurements that are taken only to be (politically) correct, will never work.

With our general selection strategy we'll find mostly white Dutch people. This is not because we discriminate but because of the fact that there are not much high educated trainers/psychologist with a different cultural background. The department Internationalisation selects people who speak

different languages and people with international experience. In this department the share of people with a different background is bigger.

I still ask myself: do we have to do something different? If it is about creating a more diverse pool of trainers, the best way is to adjust the recruitment strategy to these special groups. Until now, there was no need to do this. In general, I think it is important to train the intercultural competences of trainers. The challenges of the multicultural working environment are to make a bridge between people, to be open and interested and to have open discussions.

e) The story from the perspective of an external observer

The story presents a reactive type measure on equal opportunities, as a response to the training market. The principle of diversity is more likely to be an implicit one, as far as the measures are not supported by any type of financial or strategic concern at the level of company.

SCENARIO IV. "Girl's day campaigns" – trainers involved in measures to attract females towards economic fields traditionally male dominated

a) Brief details of the context for the scenario

The visited companies focused on training in electric occupations but included companies with clearly different locations, work processes and occupational profiles. Regarding the issue 'gender balance' it is worthwhile to note that the sectoral starting point brought into picture companies with typically male-dominated occupations. From this perspective the interviews made transparent different levels of involvement in bringing female trainees to hitherto male-dominated occupational fields. For instance in the company I (specialised in ICT-system services), the issue was taken up at the end of the interview of the training manager.

Regarding the training for commercial occupations (which was not covered by the other questions of the interview) there appeared to be a relative gender balance – both regarding the trainees and the trainers. The company II (large steel-producing company): The issue was taken up at the end of the interview of the training manager. Both in the metal and electric occupations

the workforce was male-dominated. Yet, in particular in the electric occupations there was an increase in the number of women applying for training opportunities and taken in as trainees.

b) What problem(s) does the scenario address?

Both in the metal and electric occupations the workforce was male-dominated.

c) How does the scenario resolve the problem(s)

The companies were actively involved in the Girls' Days campaigns. Furthermore, given the increasing number of female trainees, the training philosophy emphasised the importance of sharing responsibilities, working in teams and taking into account each others' possibilities to undertake different tasks. Yet, in particular in the electric occupations there was an increase in the number of women applying for training opportunities and taken in as trainees.

d) The stakeholder perspective on the experiences and process

The male trainees need to be reminded that their female fellow trainees may not be able to undertake some tasks due to physiological reasons. Therefore, 'equal treatment' should give way to 'equal opportunities' according to each others' possibilities.

e) The story from the perspective of an external observer

The sample companies were not deliberately opting for such segregation of certain occupational fields but did not experience the current situation as a problem as long as there were good applicants. However, the companies were involved in the "Girls' Days" campaigns but the companies did not see that it should have a responsibility to take extra efforts beyond this.

SCENARIO V. Implicit diversity policy: “train the trainers” for certain issues related to specific trainees groups (woman, repatriate persons, ex-prisoners, and people with specific disabilities)

a) Brief details of the context for the scenario

The scenario is based on the findings of the interviews we conducted in the three case studies in companies (shipping firm, informatics firm and training company). The scenario use also the information collected during two other interviews with specialists of the training departments that are incorporated in the general associations of employers and employees.

Diversity is a noticeable phenomenon but seems not to be a fact of expresses firms’ policy. It happened by chance since firms tend to employee the qualitatively best and, in economic terms, cheapest trainers, as they see training twofold as a factor enhancing productivity and quality but also as a cost factor. In this context diversity is not a central policy. It was different in the past decades, in periods where the state owned firms were leading some sectors of economy (energy, telecommunication, but also banks, insurances, shipyards etc.) In many of these firms existed at that time a “possible discrimination rule” for women employees. This rule disappeared in our times where all these firms are privatized.

No positive discrimination rule exists in the three cases but also overall in the country in case.

b) What problem(s) does the scenario address?

Diversity of the public audience of training, international background of clients is a reality for companies involved in the case.

c) How does the scenario resolve the problem(s)

In all the cases there exist further training measures for trainers, called “train the trainer”. If appropriate, subject of this further training has to do with women or foreigners; but also other groups were reported like: repatriate Greeks, ex-prisoners, people with specific abilities etc.

Very often happens that trainers are women (mainly in fields that have to do with enhancement of social or communication skills). Foreigners are employed as trainers when their audience (labor force) is an international one. This is mainly the cause in shipping where the mariners are mostly foreigners.

d) The stakeholder perspective on the experiences and process

We do not have an explicit policy on diversity. Our training curriculum is always adapted to the needs of the trainees. Only in case of specific categories of clients we do take some actions in order to offer an efficient training.

e) The story from the perspective of an external observer

Nowadays organizations see training with a purely economic approach; that means that diversity measures exist, but this happens not on the basis of explicitly expressed policies. Efficiency is the overall doctrine of today's organization. This doctrine exists also in the employment of trainers.

SCENARIO VI. Strong equal opportunities policy versus formal response in practice - raising a reflective approach in studies, information campaigns, workshops and discussions

a) Brief details of the context for the scenario

The interviewed person is a diversity expert from a leading professional body for people involved in management and development of people. They have over 130000 single members and provide training and information. They have a charity part and a commercial part and are actively involved in government consultation.

b) What problem(s) does the scenario address?

There is a lot of activity in the country in terms of the education system itself and in terms of the charges placed on providers regarding their needs and their legal obligations on respecting diversity type issues. But some of those

issues have only been introduced relatively recently and there is a worry sometimes that the responses to this policy of diversity are driven to much by the need to make sure they don't break the law rather than implementing real practice according to the real need of diversity.

c) How does the scenario resolve the problem(s)

The company is working on increasing awareness and information by publishing a lot of research and advice and guidance which is freely available to the members of the organization. The guidance and information is meant to help the members practice diversity better in their own organization. The company is actually acting as a leading edge thinking on diversity issue as an enormous challenge of our today's society.

d) The stakeholder perspective on the experiences and process

We do have a policy document on equal opportunities which, our organization has articulated what it feels about diversity and so on and valuing people as individuals. And also has recently been taking up by our governance predecessors a major issue for us as a professional body and the way in which it needs to inform all sorts of different activities, both on the commercial side and the other side regarding membership development and regarding our research piece.

The way in which we try and deliver understanding on the subject of diversity is to constantly keep informing people about what diversity is and why it's important, how you can move the agenda forward and so on. So it's kind of like trying to produce new material and new evidence, new guidance all the time. It's not a static thing at all and we try to convey a message to everyone else that you know you can't just buy stuff off the shelves and everything is sorted, it's about managing change and working to very well crafted values.

Well, I think that if you're looking at trainers as employees then obviously you need to make sure that you're not marginalizing a particular kind of profession. Looking at the way in which they can participate as providers in the area is going to be important and they are not denied the opportunity to progress. Absolutely! And we often hear conversations about the fact that in terms of education there is a lot of miss-representation or under-

representation of women. So we do know that there are problems there and we haven't got all those answer right.

Well, we are a registered charity. We have to provide a lot of free information which we would do anyway because we want to make sure that people understand the value of good people management. But we also have a commercial arm that makes money to plod back into the activities which cost money like the research and so on. People who study for our qualification have to finance their education themselves. But many employers actually will sponsor individuals to become professional qualified trainers. That's how things tend to work.

There are also specialist diversity offerings, yes there are, but we also have conferences on diversity issues and we also have forum events which cost a lot less then a conference does on a commercial basis where people can come and log in here and speak with each other on some topics. So those ways of communication with members are used for all sort of topics including this issue.

If the trainers are going to be successful they are going to need to understand how to relate to their audiences, bearing in mind that their audiences are diverse themselves and we have promoted the fact that there is a need not only to think about the content of what they are doing and whether that is easy to access and digest by the people who are different, but also for when they offer that training, how, where that will take places is that accessible, the timing of the day, if it's residential, do they recognize it, sometimes parents will find it difficult to attend and all that. You don't automatically marginalize people because you're offering your training course in a inaccessible part of Whales or which part of the country nobody can get to, costly-wise, time from home, all that sort of things And I think more trainers need to be aware. Some may not actually tune into that fact, but there will be people, perhaps who come on training course that if they have a slight language problem they might need to be, you know, the way we deliver the training needs to be easy to understand and accessible. When we write materials we also are very focused on producing materials which is written in plain English and so on and so forth. There are lots of dimensions like that, it's not formulaic , but hopefully overtime more and more people will tune in to the fact that, you know , we are dealing with people who are different and that is our reality.

Yea I think that is more generally recognized as a challenge than the actual content piece, because in kind of easier to understand and so very important if you're going to reach the people who actually need the training. I mean that's not just within this organization, it's a general policy from government, to actually have opportunities to learn and develop in different arenas, to top your skills in different ways.

e) The story from the perspective of an external observer

It is quite interesting the reflective approach that question the balance between policy and strategies and the real practice on diversity. There is probably a lot more things to be done to enable people in all professional areas to understand the real meaning of the policy. The big challenge of the presented case is how people can realize that they have a personal interest, even if they are not older or even if they are not married or they don't have disability. Everybody thinks its about someone else and nothing to do with them which is not the case.

3. Framework principles towards equal opportunities mainstreaming in the professional development of trainers

One of the final goals of the TTplus project was to propose a set of principles for further development of training profession in Europe. The principle document is presented in detailed in other related TTplus papers¹. As far as equal opportunities issue is concerned, we followed the same general principles approach agreed by the TTplus methodology. Consequently, based on the results of the research undertaken in the framework of TTplus project, we propose the following framework principles for continuing professional development of trainers, from the equal opportunities perspective:

- **Awareness on equal opportunity in training professions**

Equal opportunity is an emerging issue in Europe. Trainers are also exposed to a diversity of issues connected to equal opportunities as: equal access to information and resources related to the training opportunities; relevant training content, related to the practical and social experience of the trainer; equal opportunities for assessment, validation and recognition of competences and skills, equal opportunities for personal and carrier development. All those issues are more and more recognized in different cases, but the public needs more information, debates and food for reflections on this issue.

- **Proactive equal opportunities measures for trainers**

Even equal opportunities seems to be largely accepted as a relevant issue regarding the trainees diversity, the development of training profession or the qualities of a good trainer rests relatively outside the equal opportunity discussion. A more reflective approach may increase the awareness before any type of discrimination or segregation might appear. To imagine the future through the eye of tomorrow could bring more clarity on the issue of equal opportunities.

¹ Attwell G., J. Hughes, TTplus consultation paper: Supporting and improving the continuing professional development of trainers: A Framework for recognizing learning, 2008

- **Valuing differences – as a source of social innovation in training**

The diversity of the trainers and their working context in Europe is definitely a huge pool of innovations. Community of practice principle, networking and sharing experiences may become one of the most important sources of carrier development for trainers.

- **Contextualized equal opportunities policy and strategies for trainers**

According to the diversity principle, even equal opportunities approach should be the subject of contextualization. Our research showed a variety of cases and situations that defines the trainer's world, taking into account a complexity of factors: cultural, organizational, social or individual. No policy or measure can work if we don't into considerations all those factors.