REPORT ON FINAL CONFERENCE IN OPEN BADGES FOR ADULT EDUCATION PROJECT IN SLOVENIA

Final conference in Ptuj, Slovenia, was organized on Wednesday, 24th of April 2019 in the premises of Public University of Ptuj.

The invitations to the final conference were send via e-mail correspondence and post to more than 100 participants on our mailing list, 10 days prior to the event. We also used social media to reach even more people. In the showcase in front of the Ptuj University, we posted a poster for our event, which can be seen by all visitors of our university as well as by passers-by, as we are located in the very centre of Ptuj.

The final conference began at 10 am with the informal get together and greetings from General Manager of Public University of Ptuj, Mrs. Mojca Volk.

It continued with the presentation of the project Open badges for adult education and the project partners. We introduced them to the project main objectives and goals and the institutions involved in the project activities. Each participant receive handouts with project results, guides for adult education organizations, guide for teachers and guide for learners on advantages and use of open badges and a postcard.

After a small break we continued with the presentation of project results:

- Guide for the adult education organization on advantages and use of digital badges
- Guide for the teachers, educators on advantages and use of digital badges
- Guide for learners on advantages and use of digital badges
- Set of badges (we presented 100 badges for key and transversal competences developed during the project)
- 10 videos showing the process of delivering badges: What is an open badge, Information within the badge, How to create an issuer in Badgr, How to create a badge in Badgr, How to design a digital badge, How to create a backpack, How to share your badges on social network, How to award the badge to the recipient, How to add badges to Europass CV, and a short summery video for the organizations.

- A Catalogue of good practices in use of Open Badges in adult education

The presentation of the project results was followed by the discussion and feedback of the participants.

32 participants of the final conference were asked to comment on the guides, videos, produced badges and the good practices for use of digital badges. Representatives of adult education organizations in Slovenia, secondary school in Ptuj, Employment service, teachers, counsellors, different association and adults enrolled in educational programmes commented on the project results.

a. GUIDES – we asked them if the information within guides is clear, sufficient and understandable, do they like the layout and design.

Most of them agreed that the guides contain enough information for the reader to understand the importance and usability of digital badges. Some of them would like more explanation about the platforms available to design and issue a badge, since the platforms are always constantly evolving and upgrading, and new ones also appear. We explained that it is more important to know the very process of granting digital badges as to which platform to choose. All of them liked the design of the guides.

b. VIDEOS – we asked them what was theirs first impression on the videos, were they clear, understandable, illustrative, usable, short or long enough, do the videos cover all information they would like to know about digital badges. We wanted to give the right and concise information in the videos that should be simple and presented with ease, so to enable users the pleasant and easy experience.

First response of the participants was that the videos are usable, easy to understand and prepared in steps which are easy to follow – they have seen all there is to know about badges and how to create, design, issue and award them. They said that the length of the videos is suitable – they are not too long. Some commented about the design, perhaps it would be good to involve same real people testimonies in it and choose more diverse viewpoints and music

background. Others though that the same approach in each video is the best for the recognition of the project and consistency.

    c. SET OF BADGES – 50 badges for key competences and 50 badges for transversal competences developed by the partners.

We presented the concept behind the badge design and the criteria we used, the platform we used and presentation of some other options on how to create a badge and we asked participants about the badges: the design, the criteria, if there is some other badges they would add to the collection, are they usable, can they recognize what the icons on the badge is for and so on.

Most of the participants agreed, that it is better to create and design its own badges – meaning that each organization can issue their own instead of using the ones we created in the project, because the courses, educational programs and criteria diverse in each organization. Some of them lean more towards awarding badges already provided by the project. They said that design is simple, clear; still the badges should be more accomplished, striking and appealing. It should be all about a visual image, appealing at first glance.

    d. CATALOQUE OF GOOD PRACTICES in use of Open Badges in adult education – we asked the participants about their thoughts about the presented good practices and wanted to know if some of them got an idea or a recommendation for some new ones. Did they recognize the practices as something they could implement in their organizations, work?

Participants felt that the good practices of the project partners were interesting, useful and imaginative. They were surprised how many different ways we can use digital badges as a motivating tool and reward. They suggested that open badges could also be useful in elementary and secondary schools, and in various societies that organize a wide variety of programs. The participants agreed that this is a great way to stimulate, reword and motivate our target groups, but are a little sceptical about the recognition of its value by the employers. However it is a good step in a right direction to have the opportunity to display our different competences and skills.

We finished the event at 14 pm, thanked all the participants for their cooperation and feedback and invited them in further cooperation.