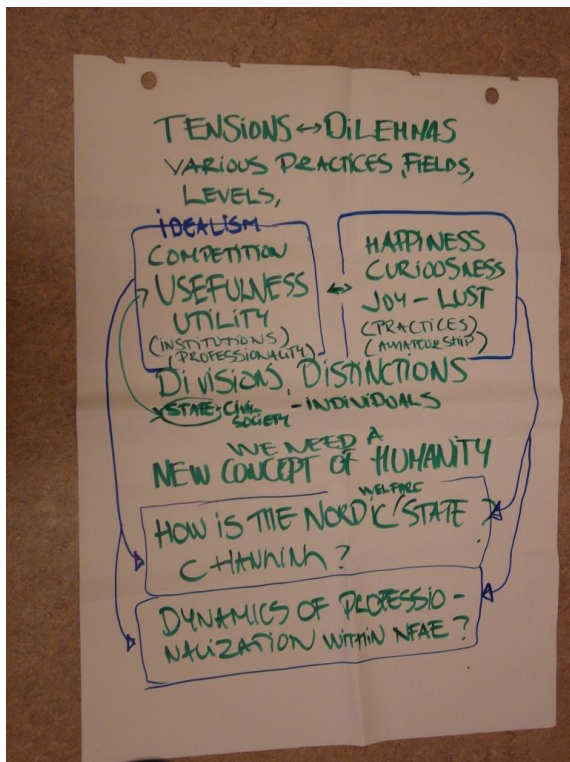


Nordic Research Seminar on Non-formal Adult Education, December 2011, Helsinki

Suggestions and ideas for further research and co-operation workshop – results of the group discussions

Group 1

The group started to design a research project by noting tensions and dilemmas, divisions and distinctions there are between the Nordic countries and between the Nordic countries and the rest of the world in the fields, levels and arenas of non-formal adult education. The relationship between the state and the civil society and an individual differs, for example. The tensions and dilemmas are seen in the requirements of competition, usefulness and utility both institutions and professionals have to fulfill in order to continue the work. The other aspect in the non-formal adult education is the curiousness of a person and the lust, joy and happiness in the studies and practices of adult education that inspire people and bring them together. Adult education institutions should know how to organize and formulate their way of working knowing exactly what is going on in the practice. For foundations, we would need even a new concept of humanity. Some ways of going on further in the research project would be for example to go into these adult education institutions and study how they reflect the change of the Nordic welfare state or to go into these practices studying if there are any signs of the Nordic welfare state. One research approach could be the professionalization within the non-formal adult education and the professional development and change of a person for example from the amateur teacher to an adult education professional could be studied. In that case, the professional struggles between the two before mentioned arenas (competition, usefulness, utility / happiness, curiousness, joy) would be interesting.



Group 2

The group started to think about the similarities in the non-formal adult education between the Nordic countries knowing that it is not easy to find them because of different concepts and practices. There are concepts used like liberal / popular / non-formal / non-vocational / edifying / civilizing and cultivating education. It was asked if there is a Nordic tradition of adult education, but some members of a group have found that there may not be even a shared tradition in one country or in one form of adult education. It may be difficult to find words for the every-day work and practices even with colleagues let alone explaining them to others. It is time to start sharing ideas between the forms of adult education in one country and between the Nordic countries. It is also important to collect people together for example in the conferences to talk to each other and share cases and support the networking that way. We already have networks like MIMER in the University of Linköping, Folkbildningsrådet in Sweden, VSY and ATS in Finland and Folkhögskolerådet, NFR. Students doing their master's and doctoral theses, that is often small-scale research with cases, need to be connected. The discussing and sharing cases with other researchers should have a continuation as basic historizing and comparative research and senior researchers should also be involved in this. By means of working together, arguments about the similarities and traditions in adult education could be made. It is a problem in the working culture of the school-like universities and departments that teachers and researchers don't have a responsibility to share ideas with the students and collaborate with them writing together for example. More important than this kind of activity seems to be to get students to finish their studies quickly so that the university will get the money off.

What to do next?
Study

- The similarities between Nordic countries in (Adult) Liberal / Popular / Non formal / Non vocational / Edifying / Civilizing / Cultivating Education
is there a Nordic tradition?

- Connecting people and sharing cases
NFR Mimer (LiU)
FBR (Folkbildningsrådet)
VSY + ATS

→ Continue to basic,
~~comparative and his-~~
toricizing comparative
research
bring the cases in to wider discussion