

Innovation Prize in Continuing Education 2011

Laudatio für den Preisträger der Kategorie Raum und Zeit „Die Lernlandschaft der GIZ – In der Vorbereitungsstätte für Entwicklungszusammenarbeit“ der Deutschen Akademie für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (AIZ) der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

Prof. Dr. Arne Carlsen, UNESCO-Institut für Lebenslanges Lernen (UIL)

Mitglied der Jury des Preises für Innovation in der Erwachsenenbildung 2011

- *Es gilt das gesprochene Wort* -

Ladies and Gentlemen

This is a festive moment and I am very honoured to award this year's prize offered by the DIE to innovative practice for "Unlimited Learning-Didactical Approaches to Dislimitation and Boundaries" in the category "Space and Time".

The theme of this year's prize is the social phenomenon of boundaries, displacement and overcoming barriers to open opportunities to explore new ways of learning. Examples of spatially- and temporally-unbounded learning include learning together from different cultures and generations, learning in virtual worlds, perhaps even in different countries.

After intensive consultations the jury came to the conclusion that the 2011 prize for the category "Space and Time" should be awarded to GIZ, for the project "Learning Landscape of GIZ, Training Centre for Development Cooperation", developed by Adelheid Uhlmann, Thorsten Hölzer and their team.

The project initiates a single place of learning in the Uhlof mansion – built in a 3,000 m² park landscape – used by the GIZ. Currently, the name of the centre has changed to **Deutsche Akademie für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (AIZ) der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)**.

This project responded to all evaluation criteria as follows:

- **Criterion 1: Is the phenomenon of dislimitation for the educational field obvious?**

The removal of boundaries is highly symbolic. The mansion is built on the frontiers between North Rhine-Westphalia and Rhineland-Palatinate. These were the former frontiers of the government district in Cologne and Koblenz and the frontiers between the British and French occupation zones.

The Academy for International Cooperation of the GIZ welcomes different cultures, languages, nations and generations. At this centre, learning is no longer done in a classroom as such, but in a "learning landscape", a space which enables self-directed learning in an area of 800m² without fixed time limits. It aims to provide flexible learning.

- **Criterion 2: Are the objectives clearly defined with regard to the issue of dislimitation/dispersal of dislimitation?**

The answer is yes. This project is about a delimitation of learning and unlimited didactical approaches. Specialists in international cooperation teach "intercultural competence and country analysis", "development policy", "management and consulting" and "language and communication". As far as time is concerned, teaching and learning can take place 24 hours a day. Information, and a variety of media and learning materials are kept in one single room. The idea is that the needs of every target group should be taken into account. Learning is thus demand-driven, tailor-made and flexible.

- **Criterion 3: Is there a reference to social needs/social challenges involved?**

The idea of this project is to cover needs of the all individual target groups.

- **Criterion 4: Is the project based on a comprehensive, clearly-defined didactical approach?**

There is a clear didactical approach: *Innovation in learning* supports the fact that real learning comes when the individual brings theory to practice and experience. Thus the learning journey consists of four phases: 1. Learning to know oneself; 2. Questioning; 3. Bringing learning to practice; and 4. Finding answers. These different phases of learning correspond to the different "virtual landscapes" especially developed in this project. Innovation in the model of development of international competences also plays a central role.

- **Criterion 5: Are the needs of the individual target group taken into account?**

These needs are taken into consideration, as the project involves target groups of all cultures, ages, ethnic and social backgrounds.

- **Criterion 6: What are the benefits/effects? Are there evaluable (or evaluated) findings?**

The contribution of this project to unlimited learning and didactical approaches to dislimitation of boundaries has already been mentioned. Its benefits are that **all** individuals have opportunities to access knowledge and facilities as fully and freely as possible. It contributes to inclusive learning which leads to inclusion and participation in society.

- **Criterion 7: Is the project sustainable/innovative? Is it transferable/practical in other areas of continuing education?**

The phenomenon of the dislimitation for the educational field is obvious and the objectives of the project correspond to the dislimitation theme. The innovation criterion has a decisive role in the project and the didactic innovation aspect is very central.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Learning together with people of different cultures, nations, languages or ages, learning in different places and during different times leads to new ways of unbounded learning. It helps to break down barriers between people, encourages them to live together and learn from one another.

Each individual and each group has different learning needs and demands which can be hampered by various obstacles. In order to overcome such barriers, it is important to identify these needs and interests and adopt methods to address them. Inclusion offers learners the possibility of full self-expression and the fulfilment that achievement brings.

The role of adult education in solving the problem of social exclusion is complicated. Hence: "Different forms of exclusion seem to question the capacity of the educational systems to provide effective learning opportunities based on a restricted concept of integration."¹

This project reflects tolerance by meeting learners different needs and thus contributes to build and sustain an inclusive society.

I would like to congratulate the Mrs Uhlmann, Mr. Hölzer and the GIZ team once more and encourage them to continue this innovative work.

¹UNESCO. 2007. Background note, Preparatory Meeting of the 48th ICE, Nairobi, Kenya. July 2007. Geneva: IBE.