

CIDREE CONFERENCE Oslo November 13th, 2014

From Political Decisions to Change in the Classroom:
Successful Implementation of Education Policy

The CIDREE conference 2014 took place in Oslo on the 13th November 2014. The conference was a cooperation between CIDREE and The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training.

The starting point

The title for the conference was identical with the title of the CIDREE yearbook launched at the conference. The challenges concerning implementation have been much discussed in our organization during the last years, and we have made many efforts to systemize our experience in this field. For us the conference presented an excellent opportunity to discuss these experiences with our colleagues in the CIDREE family. For some, the topic of the conference may seem a bit general and therefore maybe not suited as a starting point. This is partly true. However, we felt at the start of this process that we would like to invite the different member organisations to make some genuine reflections on their experiences, and we suggested that the conference and the article presented in the book should be based on one or few cases. We hoped that this strategy would both produce some interesting general debates, and that at the same time it should be visible how different challenges play out in the obvious different contexts around Europe.

In organising this conference it has been a goal for us to support the mission statement of CIDREE as best we can, especially the part on “contribute to the quality of the member institutions through mutual linking and sharing high-level knowledge and experience”. For us, this means that the member institutions should be actively taking part in as many aspects as possible, both in the work of the yearbook and the conference.

The conference

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training chose to locate the conference at the Rica Holmenkollen Park Hotel, which is located in stunning surroundings 350 metres above Oslo city centre, with fabulous views of the Norwegian capital city and the fjord beyond. Unfortunately, there was no snow but the atmosphere was still great.



The conference attracted members and guests from 15 different European Countries. In total, we welcomed 50 participants from CIDREE member organisations, researchers and elsewhere.

The program

The morning program

After some opening remarks from Petter Skarheim, Director General at The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training and Alan Armstrong, President CIDREE 2014-2016, editor of the yearbook Frode Nyhamn made some reflections on the perspectives present in the yearbook before we moved on to the actual launch of the yearbook.

In the following section, authors from four of the countries presented their articles in the yearbook:



- A: “Change Laboratories” within Secondary Schools: Towards Accompaniment and Support of Teachers in the Appropriation of New Reforms in Priority Education (France)
- B: Teachers Taking Ownership of Educational Change via Participation in Professional Learning Communities (Estonia)
- C: Benefits and Risks of Phased Implementation: Analyzing the Norwegian Strategy for Lower Secondary Education 2013-2017 (Norway)
- D: The Lenses and Cultures for Positive Change (Scotland)

The motivation for choosing these articles was that they are of course interesting in themselves, but also because we felt they represented a good mix of ground level change processes on one side, and more general perspectives on change on the system level on the other. As far as we could judge, the participants at the conference appreciated these contributions.



When it comes to the content of the contributions, both the Norwegian author and the Scottish author challenged the starting point for the conference by questioning if implementation is really the issue. They did also present several alternative perspectives on how to address change processes in the education system, for example by stressing the importance of acknowledging and spreading good practice.

Afternoon program

The afternoon program started with a keynote from Professor Sten Ludvigsen, Chair of a government appointed committee called “Pupils’ Learning in the School of the Future”. Professor Ludvigsen presented the main findings in an interim report from the committee, and reflected on some issues connected to the challenges of implementing change.



After the contribution from prof. Ludvigsen, we moved on to the break up session. For this session, the participants were divided into groups and were given the following suggested topics for discussion:

- Could you name one discussion or perspective in the plenary session that has been particularly relevant or interesting for you?
- How effectively does your system understand and promote the “change process”? Do you have some kind of “national improvement/change framework”? If so, how well defined and promoted is it?
- How does your system create the conditions for innovation and supporting the development of teachers and other professionals working in and with schools?
- Can you say something about the changes being made/planned when it comes to implementation strategies? What is the “trend” in your country the way you see it?



In the plenary closing session, the groups answered these questions, and they also posted some new questions for the conference to address.

Social part

The social part of the program consisted of a guided tour to the Holmenkollen Ski Museum and a conference dinner in the evening. Our impression was that both events were much appreciated by the participants.



Thank you!

We would like to direct a special thanks to CIDREE for the professional and cheerful cooperation in planning and executing the conference. We would also like to thank all the participants for their active involvement and enthusiasm throughout the day. This was important for the overall outcome.