

Meeting Report

5th and Final Meeting of the Grundtvig Partnership „Mind the Gap“ Berlin, Germany, 14th-17th April 2010

The Partners arrived in the course of the day on **Wednesday the 14th of April 2010** and gathered at Restaurant near the Schildkröte headquarters for an informal dinner.



Thursday, 15th April 2010

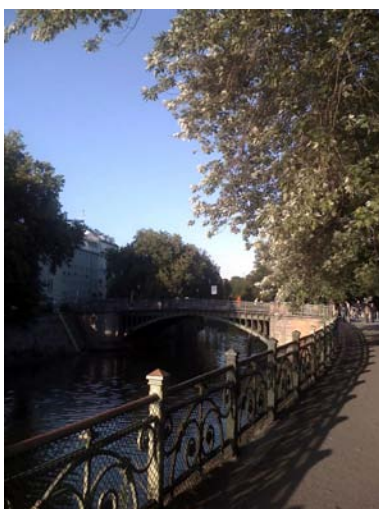
The meeting was initiated by the Managing Director of Schildkröte, Eva Lambeck, who gave a short history of the company and interesting information about Berlin. This was followed by a power point presentation given by the two students visiting from our French partner. After the reports – one about the Island Mauritius and another about an excursion to the glacier at Chamonix, the students and their escorts (teacher and psychologist) were off to the Schildkröte Hairdressers in the Stromstraße.



The group continued with details about the final product, the methodological guide, and schedule of the meeting.



A delicious 3 course meal in the Boppstraße Restaurant was followed by a short walk along the canal and sightseeing in the area near the company office.



Landwehrkanal



Fränkelufer



Admiralbrücke

After the break the partners held their reports on intercultural learning.

This was followed by a discourse about the German school system.

The Education System in Germany



Responsibility for the German education system lies primarily with the states (Bundesländer) while the federal government only has a minor role.

School attendance is compulsory and applies to pupils of German citizenship, pupils of foreign citizenship residing in Germany, and stateless pupils residing in Germany.

Nursery school (Kindergarten education) is optional, but you have to pay, and is provided for all children until six years.

Elementary School (Grundschule) is compulsory and free of charge (State schools). In most of the states the pupils attend Elementary School from age six to ten or twelve. From grade 3 the pupils definitely get formal grades but normally they go on to the next grade.

The secondary education includes four types of schools and starts at grade 5 or 7, as different states have a different opinion of the right age for this choice:

- the Gymnasium (Grammar School) is designed to prepare students for university education and finishes with the final examination “Abitur” after grade 12 or 13
- the Realschule has a broader range of emphasis for intermediary students and finishes with the final examination “Mittlere Reife” after grade 10

- the Hauptschule is the least academic school and prepares pupils for vocational education and finishes with the final examination Hauptschulabschluss after grade 9 or 10
- other than this there is the Gesamtschule (comprehensive school) which combines the three approaches and where the pupils can reach each of the mentioned final examinations

There are also Förderschulen / Sonderschulen which can also lead, in special circumstances, to a Hauptschulabschluss.

A special system of apprenticeship called Duale Ausbildung allows pupils in vocational training to learn in a company as well as in a state-run school:

After finishing the school, graduates can start a professional career with an apprenticeship in the Berufsschule (vocational school). The *Berufsschule* is normally attended twice a week during a two, three, or three-and-a-half year apprenticeship; the other days are spent working at a company. This should bring the students knowledge of theory and practice. The company must accept the apprentice to start the apprenticeship. After this, the student is registered on a list at the Industrie- und Handelskammer *IHK* (board of trade). During the apprenticeship(s), he/she is a part-time employee of the company and receives a salary from the company. After successful passing of the *Berufsschule* and the exit exams of the *IHK*, he/she receives a certificate and is ready for a professional career up to a low management level.

Higher education: You need to pass the Abitur to go to the University.

Adult education: Private or working related further education after school.

Friday, 16th April 2010

Friday morning began with a tour of the offices in Spandau, “Spreeschanze” where career orientation is held in the following occupations:

- Health care
- Handy crafts
- Gastronomy
- Hairdressing
- And More



This was followed by a lively discussion about the use of Hijab in France.



In the afternoon we were off to the headquarters of “Greens” in Charlottenburg where the apprentices cooked a nice meal. Afterwards we took a tour of the Olympia Park and went up the tower for a view of the area. We continued our sight seeing with a ride on the circle line to Treptower Park and walked to and through the Görlitzer Park.



Olympiastadion



Sculpture of "Molecule Man" from Jonathan Borofsky

It symbolized the reunion of the Berlin Departments of Kreuzberg, Friedrichshain and Treptow.



Recreation Park

"Görlitzer Park"

The meeting ended with dinner at a typical Berlin Restaurant at the old Marketplace, "Markthalle Eisenbahnstraße".



The Partners all eventually made it home despite the air flight disruptions due to volcanic ash coming from Island. The last partners arrived with a delay of one week.