



## Case Study template

### A) General Part

<b>General</b>	
Case Study Title	Research based Guidance
DIALOGUE thematic group	Learning and Guidance
Date of the case study	05.09.11
<b>Contact Information</b>	
Name of the institution	Universität Potsdam
Location/country	Potsdam/Germany
Size of the organisation/ Number of academic/research and non-academic/administrative staff	2000
Website	<a href="http://www.uni-potsdam.de/erwachsenenbildungsmidien">http://www.uni-potsdam.de/erwachsenenbildungsmidien</a>
<b>Abstract</b>	
Key words	
Please provide a short abstract of the case study	The case study involves a proceeding to analyze and solve problems in organisational development projects. The proceeding is characterised by three workshops, where researchers analyze and reconstruct organisational conflicts documented in a case study and where consultants transfer the findings into the practice of the development project. This proceeding is a bridge between research and practice. ULLL organisations are enabled to consult companies and organisations for successful organisational development.



## B) Specific Part

The following part depends on each thematic group, outlining strengths and weaknesses of the chosen situations.

### 1. Context:

Please present the general background (“landscape of experience”) of the activity and in which institutions, organisations, units or sectors the case took place.

Many organisational development projects have an ongoing issue with undiscovered social conflicts and structural problems in their organisation. Mostly the change agents are too near by the organisation for discovering the problems. External consultants are often unable to cope with the development stagnation because they are dealing with their individual point of view and are unable to analyse the complexity of the organisation in a multi-perspective way from several disciplinary points of view.

Interdisciplinary perspectives on the social conflicts and structural problems uncover new findings about the development process. Interdisciplinary perspectives are focusing different aspects of development and uncover so much more complexity of the development project. ULLL institutions provide the best opportunities for organizing such interdisciplinary views because they are able to assemble scientists from several disciplines at their university and even consultants. For other consulting institutions it is very difficult to assemble interdisciplinary teams.

The problem is that scientific findings need a translation for transfer to the practice. Change agents in companies usually are dealing with the matters of practice but not with the transfer problem of scientific findings. Their competence is practice but not the transfer between science and practice. Even consultants often have problems with the transfer of theory to practice (this is the reason why consultants often use their pet subject – even if the pet subject doesn't fit), because on the one hand a special transformation competence is necessary for switching between the concreteness of practice-situations and the generality of theory. On the other hand theories rarely are closed to the practical objectives. They include often a very general view which has a large distance to the practical situation. Therefore the transfer between theory and practice is very difficult.

The proceeding “research based guidance” copes successfully with both transfer problems. The proceeding includes three workshops:

1. The Problem Definition Workshop which identifies the conflicts and development problems.
2. The Interdisciplinary Interpretation Workshop which offers new theoretical explanations.
3. The Guidance Workshop which transfers the findings in the practice of the organisational development project in the company.

First of all the proceeding offers theoretical explanations which are very close to the concrete problems of the development project. Secondly the consultants have transformation



competence because they are members of the interpretation workshop where the explanations were found.

After the interpretation workshop the consultants of the ULLL institution are equipped with interdisciplinary theoretical explanations which are very close to the company problems and therefore they have best circumstances for successfully guidance. A special guidance concept is part of the Guidance Workshop. The new insights in the practical change problems allow a new range of actions for the change agents and the employees in the company.

## 2. What are the objectives and purposes of the concrete action?

The objectives are

1. Building a bridge between research and the practice of companies which enhance the range of action for change agents in the company
2. Enhancing the profiled research based offer of ULLL institutions

## 3. How does this activity combine insights from research and practical hands-on experience?

The proceeding with his three workshops (see the map below) combines the perspectives of practitioners and researchers.

1. In the Problem Definition Workshop the practitioners of the company are defining their problems and describing their point of view. The ULLL consultants form these contributions to a case study for the researchers in the interpretation workshop
2. The researchers in the Interpretation Workshop interpret the material first of all from their disciplinary point of view. Secondly they combine their perspectives with the purpose to find new theoretical explanations. In this mode the researchers work for new theoretical insights **and** for explaining the practical problems of the case study.
3. The consultants transfer the theoretical explanations by advising the change agents and the staff in the company. The objective of her guidance is not teaching the new theoretical explanations to the change agents. The consultants use these explanations as a theoretical instrument for interpreting and advising the conflicts/problems of the change agents/staff.



4. Does the institution/sector/unit provide instruments (e.g. ICT or human resources) for the implementation of the concrete action? Which tools were applied?

A handbook is offered to install and running the three workshops ( see below Ludwig 2008)

**5. Best practice/ Bad practice:**

What kind of results were obtained? What do you consider to be the innovative or interesting part of this concrete action?

What are the barriers (potential and effective) to the full implementation of this action and what are its benefits?

In which sense can this action be useful for DIALOGUE?

Results:

In a research project the proceeding “research based guidance” was evaluated. Five organisational development projects were involved in this evaluation. The chance agents report that the research based guidance has enhanced their activity range in the organisational development project.

The framework for successful interdisciplinary work and for successful guidance was analysed.

Barriers: see Nr. 8

Research based guidance is an example how to connect research and practice for better practical options and for enhancing theory.

6. Are researchers and practitioners directly linked in this activity?

- If yes, how are they linked and what are the communication and interaction processes?
- If they do not communicate directly, how are findings from research connected to practical activities and vice versa?

Yes, they are directly linked by the case study which combines the three workshops.



**7. Which elements would you identify as easily transferable to other institutions in different regional and national contexts?**

The whole proceeding for research based guidance is transferable. The proceeding contains 3 work-shops:

1. Problem Definition WS;
2. Interdisciplinary Interpretation WS;
3. Transfer und Guidance WS.

**8. Recommendations for dissemination:**

Briefly identify the most important points in the case study for other ULLL managers and practitioners – these may include risks as well as benefits.

Please formulate some recommendations for the dissemination on the basis of the case study addressed to the working group and other partners.

**1. Different time-tables:**

Companies and researchers are working in different time-tables. This makes cooperation difficult. Companies are interested in „quick and dirty“-results, researchers need time for their research and reconstruction work. Recommendation: Exchange the result-expectations in a very early phase of cooperation and keep the communication flow to the company during the research-phase.

**2. Different self-concepts:**

Researchers have different self-concepts about the purpose of research and the scientific methodology. It is very important, that only such researchers become members of the interpretation-workshop, who are competent to reconstruct and to interpret the company-case-study-material. Researchers who have already understood what happens in the company at the starting point of the interpretation-workshop are not able to interpret but only to examine.

**3. Competent consultants**

The consultants have to work with the achievements of the interpretation-workshop when consulting the company. This demands a deep understanding of the theoretical results of the workshop. Recommendation: the consultants have to participate in the interpretation workshop

**9. Additional information. E.g. bibliography, website, publications, reports**



Ludwig, Joachim (Hg.) (2008): Interdisziplinarität als Chance. Wissenschaftstransfer und Beratung im Lernenden Forschungszusammenhang. Bielefeld: wbv.

Ludwig, Joachim (2007): Forschungsnahe Praxisberatung. In: Klaus, J.; Vogt Helmut (Hg.): Wissensmanagement und wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung. Hamburg .

We are intending to put your case study on the website.

Please tick here  if you do **not** wish to see your case study published on the project's website

ANNEX I

