

Energising an exchange network between trainers in health promotion in the long term

by

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Ongoing training initiatives relating to health promotion sometimes struggle to adapt to the realities faced by professionals in the field. Based on this claim, a group of trainers came together using two modalities: (a) a wide network of around 25 people (18 organisations), existing over the long-term and incorporating a smaller network which is more limited in time (12-18 months); (b) intensive, inductive work by this restricted group, drawing out questions, followed by avenues for exchange with the wider network at the end of the 12 to 18 months.

According to Lemieux's typology (Lemieux Vincent, *Les réseaux d'acteurs sociaux*, collection sociologie, PUF, 1999), the restricted network appears to be a support network and the enlarged network appears to be a mobilisation network. The involvement of participants in the network's activities can be encouraged by exchanges, but above all by drawing out the questions and, ultimately, formalisation of common denominators.

Within the restricted group, drawing out questioning is supported by the use of reading grids to exchange experiences: 13 circumstantial and structural variables, reading grids specific to the evaluation questions (Goudet Bernard, *Pôle Formation DIREPS GSO, Paradoxes de la formation et convictions d'un formateur, 1989-1999: Itinéraires pluriels de formation dans le champ de l'éducation pour la santé et la promotion de la santé*). Meetings thus enable specific concerns to be developed and analysis of them to be refined, as well as encouraging the emergence of shared problems and exchanging practices and resources.

The formalisation of reports, questions and recommendations with a view to communication, however, remains a difficult step to accomplish: use of internet forums with this aim has not, to date, been particularly in-depth.

In addition, work with a two-level investment network requires the accumulation of contributions from one year to the next as well as

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maintaining motivation of the various participants. This requires not only acknowledgement of others' views but also investing time in following them up.

How can progress be retained, how can links and effects be made permanent, and how can the various challenges encountered by the network be achieved? The competitive context for financing training initiatives, as well as the existence of different and often divergent practices also represent two pitfalls which constantly need to be addressed.
