

## 1. Illiteracy in Germany?

30 years ago, illiteracy seemed to be overcome in Germany. But in the meantime it is known that approx. 4 million adults are classified as functional illiterates as they do not possess enough reading and writing skills. Some of them know the alphabetic characters, but cannot read. Others understand easy texts, albeit with trouble, but have a lot of problems with writing. However, all of them can neither use writing in their private nor in their professional life. Despite compulsory education, these people left the educational system without basic knowledge of reading, writing and calculating - due to particular biographic, academic and social circumstances. People with bad literacy skills often hide their difficulties, living with the constant worry their problem could be recognised. They fear to be compromised or to lose their job. It is difficult for them to begin a literacy course to overcome these problems.

So far approx. 30,000 relevant people use the possibility of learning reading and writing in courses - mostly in adult education centres.

## 2. Further Qualification of the trainers

There is no specific schooling for the 800-1000 trainers. They are skilled in different kinds of professional education (e.g. social work, pedagogics or psychology). The largest group of them are teachers on primary or secondary level. Since 1980 short term introductory courses are provided by the German Federal Literacy Association (<http://www.alphabetisierung.de>). But there is no possibility to complete a university degree on the special subject of literacy work.

## 3. The project PROFESS

The project "PROFESS" is funded by the German Ministry of Education and Research. It started in November 2007 and will run until September 2011.

The main objective of the project "PROFESS" is to develop a program for studies at university level (master degree) for teachers/trainers in the field of functional illiteracy and basic education. It is also intended to offer single modules for professional training (weekend-courses).

Six partners are involved in the consortium - the German Federal Association for Literacy and five universities. The German Federal Association for Literacy is responsible for the project-management.

In 2008 the main activity will be basic research. This includes qualitative interviews with experts in Belgium, the Netherlands, England and Austria. In Germany we are also conducting a delphi-study. This is working with a panel of 140 experts (scientific experts and practitioners). The experts are asked to give their expertise on the content of the study program within three survey steps. At the end of 2008 the university-partners will devise the content of the education program and in winter 2009 the first partner (University of Education Weingarten) will start with a testing phase.

If you have any further questions concerning the project please visit our homepage <http://www.profess-projekt.de> (content in german) or send us an e-mail: [profess@alphabetisierung.de](mailto:profess@alphabetisierung.de) (phone: +49(0)251.490996-11, Frank Drecolli).

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für Bildung und Forschung

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