

Against Exclusion (2012 / 2014)

Life Learning Programme - Grundtvig

SUMMARY

This unique project "Against Exclusion" brings together a Learning Partnership who will work closely to activate socially and culturally excluded groups; the project will work with Teachers/Trainers and disadvantaged Adult Learners and provide a real platform to engage these adult learners through various forms of art, drama, film, photography, theatre, drawing, music, dance and crafts. Through non-formal learning we hope to help provide adults with pathways to improve their knowledge and competencies, and provide basic skills, social skills and social integration.

The idea behind the project is to use the various forms of art, drama, dance and crafts to explore the culture across the individual partners and encourage Teachers and Learners to examine methods of engagement and motivation. To accomplish this, the involved project partners will work together to perform art, drama, dance and craft exhibitions which will be their training object in dealing with effective social integration. The project partners and learners will become acquainted with each other within the scope of the learning partnership, both through personal exchanges during their visits to the partners (mobility) as well as the exchange in virtual rooms. Moreover, the teaching and learning methods will be exchanged by teachers and learners.

The result will be made accessible to the public on a project homepage as well as at a final professional show and exhibition performed by Teachers/Trainers and Learners.

The learning partnership 'Against Exclusion' makes a contribution to the exchange of experience and to the acquisition of alternative learning and engagement methods, especially with older teachers and learners.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGY

The aims and subject-matter of the project determined by the partners are the following:

1. Wording the problems concerning disadvantaged people and groups. Defining the scope of exclusion as: non-adaptation, addiction, disability, old age seclusion, poverty, social seclusion, ethnic distinctiveness.
2. Discussion over concepts and practical solutions to be used at work with and for marginalised environments: presentation of partners' methods of work in spheres of socialization, social welfare, education, and therapy through creativity.
3. Working out new ways of activating the excluded people, groups, and volunteers, and incorporating them into the everyday life of the organisations:
 - a) making use of good, European practices from the fields of psychology, social pedagogy and art, and applying them in one's own environment;
 - b) including supporters in integration processes, creating voluntary movement around those environments in need of aid;
 - c) improving one's own methods, tools and conditions of influencing the secluded groups, as well as ranking them appropriately to the importance of the problem.
4. Boosting social interest towards initiatives which enrich the excluded people's and groups' world of experiences through public presentation of their artistic abilities: shaping social awareness towards displaying respect for their creative efforts.
5. Starting a campaign for changing stereotypes in perceiving and treating people with deficiencies, getting local media and opinion-forming institutions interested in the message of the project.

This implementing strategy has been accepted: each partner will obligatorily prepare one partnership visit and, at their option, study visits during which they will present the work of their organization, taking into account social, and economic context, and the social and educational politics of the given region or country. Each partner will also define their priorities, and will demonstrate possibly the widest spectrum of work methods in marginalised environments.

Methodology of work/workplan for all events:

- 1) art-therapy workshops: art, theatre, speech training, counselling
- 2) drama: a method of engaging the participants and a form of personal expression
- 3) lectures, presentations in public event

- 4) exhibitions of works of disadvantaged people in festivals
- 5) interviews with the participants and volunteers

- 6) discussions and consultations ('face-2-face' and web)
- 7) making DVDs and taking photos of all events.

EUROPEAN ADDED VALUE

The transnational dimension of the project is the main reason why it can offer benefits and a real impact to the work of the involved institutions and participants. The contexts in which the involved institutions operate particularly need a continuous effort to improve methods and to engage innovative ways of handling education and support to the “disadvantaged” categories whom the project is targeted to. The practices and methods each one of the participating organisation has experimented and developed through its own experience and work may become a good practice still unknown to other organisations in other countries, and provide a chance to look at one's own environment with a new perspective. Through exchange and comparison, practices can be evaluated from the outside, being advised and gain in quality through the opinions, ideas, studies of experts working in the same field. This is even more true within activities and projects using arts as instruments of exploring new paths and processes, and through which non-formal and unexpected results can be reached. Another important consideration concerns the increased possibilities for the learners not only to improve their capabilities and competencies but also – which is almost as crucial – to live new experiences through a diverse socialization, facing new encounters, visiting places they might never had the chance to visit, experiencing new languages and forms of communication. Infact, we must not forget that for most of the “disadvantages” adult learners that the project wants to involve, this is way far from being an irrelevant aspect.

Finally, the project can promote the constitution of new European networks on the model of some other experiences developed locally.

For example, the coordinator has just contributed to the establishment of a regional network in Tuscany that links many theatre companies and organisations working with immigrants and mentally-impaired people called Teatri delle Differenze, with the aim of finding new possibilities of further development on a national and transnational basis. Also, it is possible to enrich the project perspectives and contents by the connection to other projects at an European level that deal with similar fields, as it is, for example, with a IP Programme “Playing Identities: Acting, The Self and Society”, a multidisciplinary course on the work and role of the Actor in contemporary European Societis, in which the coordinator is involved.

IMPACT

If we analyse the project in the context of its influence on the participants and institutions, without a doubt, its first positive effect is the decision to take part in it. It is a moment of essential introspection over the degree of competency of each organization in the subject-matter of the project, a time to analyse one's own programmes and readiness to modify and improve methods of work. In other word, the auspice is that the working approach and methodology of each partner of the network may be subjected to a process of "creolization", that is, a dynamics where the starting positions are well known, but the results are the outcome of a creative and positive hybridization. The creolization of practice will thus generate a general improvement of any involved organisation in dealing with colleagues and learners (its staff, but also its "human environment").

This syncretism may turn into an opportunity to mobilise the workers and to stimulate them to shape the project. Indeed, it is a responsible task to find such partners able to inspire others with refreshing impulses.

The delicate subject-matter of "AG.E." requires a professional preparation for establishing a contact with people suffering of what we consider as social pathologies, or perhaps temporarily or permanently suffering from mental disorders. These contacts have to be positive and free from any prejudices, and this effort concerns mainly the workers and volunteers working in the project.

Apart from providing them with new skills and competences (not a secondary result, however),the impact on the project audience (mainly, adult learners) will consist of a form of widening the horizons of their own lives, opening up to people, situations and experiences which may greatly influence the perception of oneself in the surrounding world. An enriched and more aware subjectivity is to be the outcome of the process of project activities, exchanges and mobilities. All actions taken around the project signify a transitional stage between the present phase (of concepts and practical solutions), and between those values and benefits the project may bring to partnership organizations and local environments, and their later practices in an enhanced form.

As a result, a new social and cultural perception of disadvantaged adults may be fostered.The social contexts involved in the partnership will begin to think differently at these people and groups. The latter's potentialities in them should be made public.

RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT IN REGIONAL/NATIONAL CONTEXT AND IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

This project is by all means a real opportunity to strengthen, enrich and increase the value of the activities of such organisations that have been carrying out activities in contexts of "exclusion".

We think that one of the major difficulty within these particular areas of adult education – not only at a transnational level but also at a local level – is the exchange of practices and

methodologies.

These are not “institutionalized” activities, which are automatically connected through standard networks of organisations alike. On the contrary, each organisation has found its own way to operate and it is usually hard to get the chance to compare these different ways of proceeding. In some cases, as they feel the need for this comparison and for the encounter with other realities, organisations try themselves to put together their experiences and achievements through the realisation of thematic events or conferences, or by constituting local networks claiming for the attention of local political institutions. However, it is never easy and often it doesn't produce further planning or developments.

Conceiving projects such as "Against exclusion" on a transnational basis can for sure help to cover this gap by helping the participating organisations to explore critically their “individual” perspective, by transferring patterns, cast away schemes, open themselves to new tendencies and advance their work.

We aim to contribute to the improving of the quality and accessibility of mobility throughout Europe of people involved in adult education and to increase its volume through 12 mobilities for each of the 6 Partners. Thanks to the mobilities and to the workshops that each partner will hold in its own country – and through a constant communication, promotion and dissemination of activities and results – we will concur in improving the quality and increasing the volume of co-operation between organisations involved in adult education throughout Europe.

People from vulnerable social groups and in marginal social contexts (such as women, children, older people, immigrants, mentally-impaired and disabled people) represents the addressed target of our project. The use of innovative practices and pedagogical approaches pertain in particular to the kind of non-formal education the project will focus on, using the arts and especially theatre as the main tools to carry on its activities.

PARTNERSHIP

- laLut, Libera Università del Teatro **(IT)** - *Coordinator*
- Poleski Ośrodek Sztuki **(PL)**
- Landesarbeitsgemeinschaft TheaterPädagogik Baden-Württemberg e.V **(DE)**
- “Athina” Non Profit, Non Governmental Organization for Psychosocial Development & Psychotherapy **(EL)**
- Lothar Tschapka Training & Coaching KEG **(AT)**
- Patronatul Judetean al Femeilor de Afaceri din Intreprinderile Mici Si Mijlocii Cluj **(RO)**

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained there in.