Social Inclusion in Education and Training

October 2011

Best Practices - Lifelong Learning
The European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning (EUCIS-LLL) brings together 24 European networks working in education and training. Together, they cover all sectors of education and training including networks for higher education, vocational education and training, adult education and popular education; networks for students, school heads, parents, HRD professionals, teachers and trainers.

EUCIS-LLL was created with the purpose of involving the different actors as much as possible in the dynamics of discussing and implementing the policies and actions of the European Union. It acts as a resource centre and a space for knowledge exchange, facilitating cooperation between institutions and civil society organisations. It wishes to offer the possibility for the European citizen’s voice to be heard on educational issues and, drawing on the expertise of the networks that make up the platform, to bring concrete solutions for potential ways in which the decisions made by the European Institutions can be implemented. It is in a unique position to support European networks in education and training to work collectively at all levels and to contribute to a structured policy dialogue within the open method of coordination in education and training (Education and Training 2020). Such dialogue is essential for the future development of a European Union that is closer to its citizens.

Edited by EUCIS-LLL

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EUCIS-LLL MEMBERS

[Image of logos]
EUCIS-LLL is engaged in the promotion of values such as equity and social inclusion and advocates the adoption of concrete measures at national and European level. Its members recognise lifelong learning as one of the key instruments for the promotion of prosperity and wellbeing and are actively involved in the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

EUCIS-LLL members have a particular interest in exchanging practices and experiences and seeking innovative solutions in order to fight social exclusion and poverty. In 2010 a working group was established within the platform in order to work on concrete policy recommendations based on the identification of more than 30 good practices. Its added value lies in gathering experts and practitioners from different countries and from different sectors of education and training.

Indeed, learning opportunities are now offered by a variety of actors and settings whether formal, non-formal or informal. It is thus crucial to implement a coordinated plan of action to fight social exclusion and poverty. EUCIS-LLL members think it is essential to build bridges between education and training providers as well as with other stakeholders to find concrete, adapted and sustainable solutions.

EUCIS-LLL also wants to convey the concerns expressed by its member organisations. They call for a stronger political commitment from their governments in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. In times of economic constraint EUCIS-LLL sincerely hopes that European governments will stick to their policy commitments and will invest in Europe’s future. We cannot afford to further marginalise people from disadvantaged groups. If governments continue to cut budgets for adult education centres, schools, teacher training or popular education, we will suffer far-reaching consequences that will hurt Europe in the long-term.

This brochure aims to present the outcomes of the exchanges that took place in our platform in 2010-2011. It includes our policy recommendations as well as some very concrete projects that have been carried out in Europe. Indeed, there are many good initiatives taking place in Europe that ought to be better known. They can serve as inspiration for other organisations as well as for policy-makers and researchers.

This cooperation is ongoing and open to other stakeholders wishing to join our collective reflection and action plan.

We hope that reading this publication will inspire you!

Gina Ebner, EUCIS-LLL President
Why a European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion?

Poverty is a reality for more than 80 million people in the European Union

The poverty threshold is set at 60% of median national income: women, children, young and elderly people, people on precarious contracts, migrants and people from ethnic minorities are especially at risk of poverty. Today, poverty is a reality for more than 80 million people in the EU. This is why the EU institutions decided to designate 2010 as the “European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion”. The aim was to raise public awareness and renew the political commitment to increase the level of solidarity within and outside European borders.

Fighting disadvantages within education and training is one of the priorities of the Year

Lifelong learning is seen as being instrumental to fight poverty and one of the means to promote social inclusion. The Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Exclusion 2010 states that Europeans consider lack of education as one of the main sources of social exclusion.

It is also a strategic priority of European cooperation in education and training

Within the open method of coordination known as “Education and Training 2020”, EU Member States agreed to strengthen their cooperation on topics such as early school leaving or early childhood education and care as well as to make efforts to reach the headline targets in education and training. This commitment was repeated in the Council conclusions of May 2010 on the social dimension of education and training.

But the situation is still critical...

Meanwhile the economic and social crisis hits hard the most disadvantaged groups reinforcing inequalities that governments’ current budgetary cuts tend to aggravate. As pointed out during the EUCIS-LLL and SOLIDAR round table held at the European Parliament on 16th March 2011, there is an increased risk of marginalisation of the most fragile groups within our societies due to the crisis but also due to austerity measures affecting public services and notably education and training systems.

Reaching out to disadvantaged people represents a smart, inclusive and sustainable investment for Europe

Research shows the cost of not investing in education and training in terms of social, personal and economic benefits. Expanding access to lifelong learning can open up new possibilities for active inclusion and enhanced social participation, especially for the low skilled, the unemployed, people with special needs, the elderly and migrants. In order to reach these people and to improve their conditions effectively, it is important to combine both quality of education and universal accessibility to knowledge.
Preamble

Lifelong learning covers education and training across all ages and in all areas of life, be it formal, non-formal or informal. Its ambition is that individuals become “lifelong learners” aware of the knowledge, skills and competencies they acquire and who are able to use them in the different situations they are confronted with.

Lifelong learning contributes to the development of an individual’s employability as well as active citizenship, social cohesion and personal development. It represents all the learning processes that enable the emancipation of “learning citizens”. In this sense, it is seen as having the potential to empower people to exercise their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. In these times of economic crisis, lifelong learning can be an important tool for empowerment, both at a personal and societal level. It can provide a chance for re-orientation, a new challenge and ultimately social recognition.

In a smart, sustainable and inclusive society, the right to education should be extended to lifelong learning. Equitable and lifelong access to knowledge is seen as a prerequisite for a move towards learning societies. This means providing everyone with the means to learn in all contexts, be that formal, non-formal or informal, and at all levels: from early childhood education and compulsory schooling through to higher education, vocational education, training and adult learning. It is only by doing so that we can contribute towards smarter, more sustainable and more inclusive societies in Europe.

Recommendations

Poor access to lifelong learning limits people’s ability to access high-quality jobs and participate fully in society. This is why, following the European Year 2010 for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, in view of the ambitious goals set by the “Europe 2020” strategy and in the context of the current economic austerity measures, EUCIS-LLL calls on all the relevant institutions and stakeholders to take the following recommendations into consideration:

1/ Ensure access to LLL for ALL by

- Offering equal opportunities for accessing formal, non-formal and informal education and training programmes for ALL members of society with particular emphasis on participation fees;
- Targeting those that are farther away from learning, for instance, promoting innovative learning programmes which incorporate teaching methods suited to the individual learner within groups at risk of social exclusion (e.g. migrants, the elderly, the physically disadvantaged);
- Promoting national strategies to enhance learning opportunities for those at a disadvantage in the labour market due to their low level of or inappropriate qualifications;
- Implementing inclusive and comprehensive learning systems to avoid segregation effects and promoting intercultural education as a rich source of learning opportunities in societies that are or are becoming increasingly multicultural.

2/ Create synergies between LLL sub-sectors by

- Enabling the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, including voluntary activities, throughout the validation of acquired skills and competencies;
- Supporting partnerships and networks, underpinning trans-sectoral projects and exchanging good practices between complementary actors at local, regional and European level;
- Enabling transnational learning mobility for all (i.e. leave of absence for teachers), bringing EU ambitions on this topic into balance with the practical funding possibilities;
- Supporting educational organisations to implement participative governance to empower and motivate actors (i.e. parents’ or learners’ involvement).
3/ Investing in innovative and qualitative learning by

- Mainstreaming best lifelong learning practices on social cohesion based on policy evidence with a long-term perspective;
- Investing in the professional development of teachers, social or youth workers and volunteers;
- Supporting a learner-centred perspective that allows learners to set up their own educational/learning pathway as well as opportunities to acquire knowledge, skills and competences;
- Promoting the use of creative learning methods to motivate all kind of learners and encourage inter-generational learning;
- Applying the full potential of new communication and technologies (ICT) to reach vulnerable groups.

4/ Strengthening a long-term political commitment of public authorities at all levels by

- Implementing horizontal policies with concrete measures and monitoring mechanisms to address educational disadvantage and poverty at all levels;
- Addressing and prioritising the challenge of early school leaving as outlined by the Europe 2020 strategy;
- Setting ambitious targets and benchmarks for participation in LLL at both EU and national level for specific target groups (e.g. people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds or with low levels of education, low skilled men and women, migrants, etc.).

5/ Support the role of civil society organisations by

- Closely involving education and training civil society organisations in the processes of planning and implementing policies through a regular and structured dialogue;
- Adopting a European statute for European associations thus recognising their specific role and contribution to the European knowledge society;
- Promoting cooperation between educational institutions, civil society organisations, labour market agencies and social partners based on a complementary approach.

6/ Improve and foster sustainable financing/funding mechanisms by

- Funding organisations that contribute to the public interest via partnership-based and long-term agreements at national, regional and local levels;
- Granting sustainable and long-term funding for proven and successful LLL projects that contribute to social cohesion;
- Supporting the administrative and financial simplification of existing EU funds;
- Including volunteer work as a contribution in kind in EU-funded projects, acknowledging civil society’s capacity to mobilise its own resources.

In the next section you will find some concrete cases for the first three priority areas of the recommendations. Indeed, being a network of practitioners and educational experts, we decided to provide some insights on how concrete initiatives can contribute towards alleviating social exclusion and poverty. We thus asked our members to share some projects they considered as good examples for their sectors. Three examples will be given for each priority. These projects involved many partner organisations and we hope you will want to discover more about them. Most of these projects were funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme, Youth in Action Programme and by the European Social Fund. These grants are crucial in order to support innovative projects in Europe.

The last priority areas concern decision-makers whom we invite to enable these initiatives to take place by providing a sustainable environment and showing strong political will.
Erasmus is an opportunity to get to know new cultures and education systems and can be a kind of life inspiration. The aim of the SocialErasmus project is to allow international students to benefit as much as possible from their hosting local community and enrich the latter thanks to their international background. It also aims to promote a social attitude amongst international students all over Europe. The latter are invited to volunteer within the framework of the SocialErasmus project under three main areas of action: education, charity and environment. Best practices in the education field include information sessions in schools “Europe at School”, in the environmental sphere planting trees to raise awareness “Erasmus Forest” as well as ecological and cultural events and charity events based on offering foreign language classes.

The South Lanarkshire Council is committed to working to improve the quality of life for everyone in South Lanarkshire. In line with this commitment and in partnership with South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture, the council has developed a specific leisure strategy. The “Activeage” initiative is one specific example of the strategy. It allows all residents who are aged 60 or over free access to gyms, fitness classes or swimming pools at all South Lanarkshire leisure and culture facilities. Since its beginnings in 2007, the project has attracted a great number of participants and continues to grow in popularity with currently 1,400 “Activage Card” members. To facilitate access for people from migrant backgrounds, it is possible for senior citizens to call a special line where interlocutors speak Chinese, Indi or Polish. When registering, owners of the card are also invited to fill in an “equal opportunities monitoring form” on their age, gender, disability status and ethnic origin. This allows South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture to identify forms of discrimination and barriers that affect access to opportunity for disadvantaged groups and individuals.

The Social Cohesion Project (PCS) “Radis-Marolles” facilitates and strengthens the implementation of collective action for the inhabitants of Marolles, a historically poor neighbourhood of Brussels. The project is led by and for its inhabitants. It aims to support them in building projects by facilitating the involvement of other institutions in order to open up the area to the outside world. It also aims to inform and encourage access to lifelong learning for all of its inhabitants. For instance it offers after-school activities for children as well as activities for adults and seniors such as information sessions, cultural and sporting activities, language courses or cooking classes. The PCS “Radis Marolles” works with various social, health and youth organisations such as the Collective of Women, Entraide Marolles, the City of Brussels, the Belgian Federation of Youth Clubs (FMJ), the “Bureau International de la Jeunesse” (BIJ), etc. It allowed backing for many initiatives and contributes to furthering access to lifelong learning and the active participation of all in the life of the city. Contact2103 in partnership with SORELO (Company of Social Housing) developed this project with the support of the Region of Brussels.

More information:
http://socialerasmus.esn.org

More information:
www.slleisureandculture.co.uk

More information:
www.contact-2103.org
**EquNet, Measuring Equity in Access to Higher Education**

EQUINET is a three-year project with the purpose of building an evidence-based advocacy network aiming at raising awareness on the issue of equity in higher education and at increasing access to it for all marginalised and non-traditional groups. It intends to act as a thematic hub where institutions and individuals working on higher education and on equity-assurance can meet, exchange knowledge and shape a more equitable future for European universities. The EQUINET partnership began by analysing the degree and nature of barriers that arise as a result of a particular educational background, of different socioeconomic conditions and of structural problems in higher education, and their impact on individuals from five target groups, namely students, migrants, continuing learners, adult learners and post-professionals. Highlighting the best and worst practices, the partners proposed solutions, formulated as implementable recommendations. Funded under the Lifelong Learning Programme, the project brought together a consortium of renowned research organisations and stakeholder representatives that ensure a sound methodological base for the research and a wide audience among which the recommendations can be distributed.

More information: www.equnet.info

**Organising Workers in the Informal Economy**

Although the informal economy is often associated with developing countries, where up to 60% of the labour force work, all economic systems contain an informal economy in some proportion. The project “Organising Workers in the Informal Economy: A Resource Pack for Worker Educators” aims to offer worker educators resources to defend the rights of workers in the informal economy. The International Federation of Workers’ Education Association (IFWEA) produced a DVD containing various entries and formats on the informal economy such as a documentary film, educational material, photo slideshows, a library, contacts and useful links. By providing access to resources on the informal economy, it is hoped that this production will facilitate ongoing education work on organising workers in the informal economy. Indeed, all around the world, millions of workers (of whom the majority are women) are forced to survive outside what would be regarded as bare minimum basic rights and legal protection associated with work, in the so-called informal economy. In some countries it accounts for the vast majority of the workforce and this proportion is growing.

More information: www.ifwea.org

**Virtual European Prison School**

The main aim of the project is to increase the participation of prisoners in lifelong learning in order to enable their reintegration into society after release. The project is designed to reinforce the role of educational policies in prisons taking into consideration the Recommendation R(89)12 of the Council of Europe. The project seeks to find solutions to current identified needs in terms of teaching and learning in European prisons, and to develop strategic policy statements aimed at penitentiary systems’ decision-makers at European level. The project aims will be achieved by means of appropriate activities carried out by experienced professionals in this specific field. The project will help to use the best existing practices in prisons in an innovative way. There are plans to transfer, adapt and test effective models from three countries (IE, SE, NO) into four other prison systems (BG, CZ, EL, UK). The technology of that transfer will be published on the project website, which will serve as a Virtual European Prison School (VEPS) for the wide European Prison Education Association (EPEA) membership in 35 European countries, and will give a real European dimension to the project.

More information: www.epea.org

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*Targeting those that are farther away from learning, for instance, promoting innovative learning programmes which incorporate teaching methods suited to the individual learner within groups at risk of social exclusion*
In January 2010 AUSER, an Italian volunteer organisation, sought to promote active ageing and support the right of older people to continue to play an active role on a social level. Together with the Italian Confederation of Trade Unions, the Union of Retired Workers and the School and Knowledge Workers Trade Union, AUSER proposed a popular initiative bill to the President of the Italian Chamber of Deputies on lifelong learning. It proposes to guarantee the right to lifelong learning by ensuring training opportunities for everyone, to intercept weak demand and remove obstacles to the return in training, to build a national, public, integrated and decentralised lifelong learning system and to promote an integrated plan of formal and non-formal supply, able to evaluate and recognise informal learning too. Furthermore, AUSER called on the European Commission to play a key role in the drafting of national lifelong learning policies and on the European Parliament to ensure a strong link between decisions taken at the European level and European citizens’ interests and expectations. 130,000 signatures were collected and the bill is currently being presented to the Chamber of Deputies thus opening the legal proceedings.

In 2003, the Trades Union Congress (TUC) introduced Union Learning Representatives (ULRs) as a new type of union activist to encourage workers to improve their skills through lifelong learning and undertaking workplace training. All ULRs are given training for their role by either the TUC, accredited through the Open College Network, or through their own union. In 2009/10 a total of 233,458 learners were supported by the 25,341 ULRs that have been trained since 1999. UnionLearn also publishes handbooks to support unions and their ULRs in negotiating and brokering learning opportunities and to support their members in that learning. UnionLearn also undertakes research on the role of unions in developing and promoting learning and skills, identifies and shares good practice, promotes learning agreements, supports union members on learning and skills bodies, and helps to shape Sector Skills Agreements. This initiative has been instrumental in raising interest in training and development, especially among the lowest skilled workers and those with literacy and numeracy needs. More details on the project were given in the “Restructuring Tool Box” published by EVTA, the European Vocational Training Association.

The Adult Education Initiative (1997-2002) is a five-year programme that represents the largest ever investment in adult education in Sweden. The initiative followed four vital perspectives: the renewal of labour market and education policies, more equitable distribution and increased economic growth. The aim was to provide those in greatest need with an opportunity to gain new skills and knowledge and was primarily targeted at unemployed people who completely or partly lacked three-year upper secondary school qualifications. It also aimed to reform and develop the adult education sector in Sweden. Around 800,000 people raised their educational level to an average level corresponding to one year of upper secondary level. The initiative was mainly applied to municipal adult education, but folk high schools were also involved. During the years of the AEI, the government annually financed an average of 100,000 places in municipal adult education and 10,000 places at folk high schools. The Swedish Government and Parliament made it possible for a number of new folk high schools to get up and running. The same was true for municipal adult education to a somewhat lower extent.
Discovering Diversity, a methodology to explore the history of migrants

Discovering Diversity is an educational project on the history of migrants in the Euro-Mediterranean area. The main objective is the development of a methodology that helps teachers of history and civic studies to connect the individual history of students to the local and larger history of migration in the Euro-Med region. Exploring the different layers of community history will lead to the discovery of multiple facets of identity, will empower communities and provide tools to history and civics educators to teach complex issues through a process of personal discovery and reflection. The case studies and teaching and learning ideas developed within the Discovering Diversity project are the first modules for the People on the Move theme on the Historiana website, a EUROCLIO initiative under development which offers access to a multitude of historical sources and well-developed teaching and learning ideas on European history and heritage.

More information:
www.euroclio.eu

Freie Interkulturelle Waldorfschule, an intercultural school concept

This is a living example of a school directly aimed at achieving the social integration of students from migrant backgrounds since it was founded with an innovative pedagogical idea for tackling this challenge. There is a good balance among children’s and teaching staff’s origins: pupils are half natives and half from a migrant background and 50% of the teachers come from a migrant background. This is very positive and allows for real diversity of cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, it is a comprehensive (a child can choose different grades) and an all-day school: this allows children with a migrant background to speak German in everyday situations. Besides, in all-day schools social integration can succeed much better, because pupils get a lot of opportunities “to get to know and respect each other”. Festivities also take place on the school grounds, involving the parents and highlighting certain aspects of cultural diversities to promote cultural dialogue and understanding. From 2004 to 2006 an evaluation carried out by an independent institute for social research verified that the school’s concept offered better opportunities of educational success to socio-economically disadvantaged migrants.

More information:
www.interkulturelle-waldorfschule.de

Diversonopoly, a tool to deal with culturally mixed-groups

This project has developed a generic communication tool to enable learners, teachers, trainers, social workers and intermediary professionals who work or interact with intercultural groups to welcome new arrivals from other cultural traditions and to improve their knowledge of different cultures and explore the benefits of a diverse society. The increase of cultural diversity in our society indeed makes it even more important to develop corresponding competence in dealing with culturally mixed groups of learners. The tool has the purpose of helping education practitioners increase intercultural education and reduce xenophobia and racism, emphasising the positive and beneficial effects of diversity. Trainers facing the issues of diversity occurring in their daily work with intercultural learning groups will therefore become familiar with cultural characteristics. The project involves cooperation between organisations involved in adult education and will increase the mobility of learners and trainers between project partners and will encourage the exchange of best practices in the field of intercultural learning and understanding in adult education within a European learning partnership. The principal outcome of Diversonopoly is a board game which has demonstrated its popularity and success with learners of all ages.

More information:
www.acer.ac.uk
The project has the purpose of creating a pilot methodology for recognition and validation of vocational skills gained through work experience and competencies acquired through informal and non-formal learning in services and tourism as a tool fostering integration of immigrants and mobile workers in the new EU Member States. The project goal is achieved via transferring the functioning model of the countries with developed validation systems and practice such as Denmark and Portugal to the new Member States Bulgaria and Romania and the applicant county of Turkey where, due to the conservative state dominated education systems or to language and cultural barriers, access to individual learning paths and recognition of prior competence is underdeveloped. This transfer will support the flexibility and labour market adequacy of these education systems as it is in the “old” Member States. Indeed, the full-right participation of immigrants in the European labour market is integrally linked to the recognition of their vocational skills and upgrading of their professional performance. The added value of this model is its transferability to other economic sectors.

More information: www.valeu.org

“Volunteering and skills”, a portfolio for students

This initiative launched by Animafac, the French students’ organisations network, has the purpose of helping students to identify and value skills that have been acquired and developed thanks to volunteering experience in view of their future professional integration. It developed a portfolio of competences to enable students to describe their volunteering experiences and translate the competences, skills and knowledge they acquired into a skills language understandable by employers. Animafac organises tutoring sessions for volunteers consisting of group work sessions in which each participant fills in his/her portfolio with the help of the others and writes an extract of his/her resume in which they point out the skills developed thanks to their volunteering experiences. After that they meet human resources professionals who give them advice on how to make them stand out on a resume, a letter of intent or during a job interview. This process allows students to take stock of what they have learnt and helps them to redefine or clarify their professional goals and see how to achieve them as workers but also as citizens. The portfolio and methodology are available online for those interested.

More information: www.animafac.net

The Missing Link, recognising experts by experience on social inclusion

“The Missing Link – increasing social inclusion by engaging experts by experience” aims at developing tools to improve training and employment of the “Experts by Experience” (EE). The project is based on the belief that everybody who has experienced an exclusion situation can improve the inclusion of the socially excluded thanks to acquired attitudes and skills. Therefore, the EE’s contribution must be regarded as equally important as the contribution of experts by training. The final purpose of this project is to compensate for a missing link between the people who suffer from exclusion and the non-excluded. The project is the result of a European cooperation between four partners with backgrounds in psychiatry (FOKUS-Bremen, IGBP-Amsterdam, Fontys Hogeschool-Eindhoven and GIP-SoFla) and two partners with poverty and migration backgrounds (De Link-Brussels and Moinho-Lisbon) and it is funded with the support of the Lifelong Learning Programme (2009-2011). In the framework of the project a European Charter of “The Missing Link” was drafted in order to demand Europe to acknowledge, disseminate and support methodology of this project, including the innovative role of the EE.

More information: www.themissinglinkeurope.eu

Enabling the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, including voluntary activities, throughout the validation of acquired skills and competencies
Supporting partnerships and networks, underpinning trans-sectoral projects and exchanging good practices between complementary actors at local, regional and European level

Volunteering and lifelong learning in Universities

The overall aim of the VALUE network is both to facilitate and stimulate the development of cooperation between universities and the volunteering sector in the delivery of University Lifelong Learning (ULLL) to volunteers and staff in volunteering organisations. VALUE is a project supported by Grundtvig and brings together 20 organisations representing universities and the volunteering sector from 13 European countries. They share a belief that volunteers’ development can play a key role in the development of European society as a whole. This large-scale partnership has been instrumental in sharing ideas and models of working together, and in exploring the potential for developing new university lifelong learning opportunities for both volunteers and staff in volunteering organisations. Investigations focus on volunteers and the sophisticated learning, both formal and informal, that they experience in their volunteering work. VALUE is also developing a resource database which includes materials such as reports, case studies and bibliographic references and which will be of interest to organisations in both sectors.

More information: www.valuenetwork.org.uk

ID² Project, partnerships to support local educative policies

ID² “Innovation, diagnostic et développement éducatif territorial” aims to create an association in order to observe, reflect and intervene on territorial education policies. The members of ID², CEMEA, Francas et Ligue de l’enseignement, want to promote synergy among education stakeholders (local authorities, associations, schools, citizens) and assist them in setting up better integrated and more efficient local education policies. With the support of ID², territorial branches of the three movements can amplify their response capabilities in analysing and developing public education policies on early childhood, childhood and youth. ID² develops a monitoring system and provides information for local elected officials, professionals from different institutions, as well as activists, who are able to better analyse policy issues and educational initiatives at all levels. To this end, the association encourages in particular researchers to generate new knowledge in the field of education policies based on the practices used by actors directly involved in these policies.

More information: http://dev.id2-innovation.org

“Everybody’s library, libraries for everybody”, access to culture for all

The Municipality of Genoa has considerable experience with digitalisation of cultural heritage. The project “Everybody’s library, libraries for everybody” aims at making library services accessible thanks to new technologies in order to improve the autonomy and the participation in lifelong learning of adults with communication problems. It comprises a range of different services that can facilitate access to culture for people with auditory or visual impairments and contribute to their lifelong learning. Thanks to this initiative, which has the support of civil society, there has been an increase in library visits by the visual and auditory impaired. The initiative began in 1996 in the Berio municipal library and later was extended to other libraries in the Urban Library System and finally to other libraries in the city. In 2009, the construction of a network of agents, cultural institutions and disabled people’s associations began, with the objective of coordinating existing initiatives and promoting the lessening of architectural barriers, the training of staff and the gathering of best practices on access to cultural events and services for the disabled.

More information: www.edcities.org
"Key to mobility", equipping VET students with key competences for mobility

The purpose of this project is to equip teachers and trainers with the necessary skills and knowledge to support vocational education and training (VET) students in the acquisition of key competences for mobility. The objective is to create the right circumstances for young people from disadvantaged groups to access mobility programmes since the acquisition and use of mobility competences enable personal development of VET participants at risk. The project makes the achievement of all competences acquired during vocational training visible to both students and teachers and ultimately to their future employers. Teachers are also provided with the necessary training and knowledge linked to the mobility of their students thanks to courses and a toolbox. The project partners are the IBVerbund Württemberg (Germany), ISQ (Portugal), SREP (Romania), KCH (Netherlands) and EVTA. They will pilot their participants’ newly acquired competences for accessing mobility programme by complementary project bids within the framework of Leonardo Da Vinci programme of the European Union.

ExchangeAbility, mobility of students with disabilities

The project, carried out by Erasmus Student Network (ESN), Youth Agora and European Disability Forum, aims at involving students with disabilities in the activities of ESN as well as to provide internationalisation at home and better opportunities for students with disabilities to be mobile in Europe. Through participation and involvement in these activities, students with disabilities were given an opportunity to experience the international and intercultural atmosphere associated with exchange programmes and therefore to benefit from them at their home universities. A handout was made for the local sections of ESN to guide them in the process of organising accessible activities and, therefore, making ESN a more accessible association. The long-term goal of the project is to foster the mobility of students with disabilities, which is currently particularly low in the EU (only 0.17% in 2008-2009), to go on an exchange and to provide them with the best possible conditions, preparing the International Relations Offices as well as the local ESN sections for receiving students that have special needs during the exchange.

Seven Project, senior volunteering in Europe

The project consists of building an international network of 29 organisations promoting senior volunteers’ exchanges. SEVEN’s member organisations include NGOs, local governments, universities and research centres. The idea was to set up a platform where all the organisations can easily exchange information and take part in a common project. More than 300 volunteers have taken part so far in a volunteer exchange abroad thanks to European projects but also to local governments’ programmes. On the educational side, the partners remarked that a period of voluntary service abroad represents a relevant learning experience and this has been proven. It is a truly mutual educational process; not only are the volunteers learning from the volunteers. This process addresses not only active citizenship and active ageing but also social cohesion and in many cases gives rise to inter-generational experiences with a potential process of changing the mentalities of young people and senior citizens, one towards the other. The exchanges are always preceded by a training period for volunteers and organisations and developing this is another aim of this network.
Supporting educational organisations to implement participative governance to empower and motivate actors

Family and involvement in Success at School

The City Council of Lyon (France) acknowledged the role of parents as a key element in their education strategy. In 2008 they launched a project aimed to bridge the digital gap by involving parents in the process. In recent years, the city council has prepared various workshops to respond better to the needs of the child and family. E-accessibility was identified as a key area to focus on. Indeed, achievement inequalities at school increase especially when ICT cannot be accessed from the child’s home, either because of the lack of equipment or because the parents do not have the necessary knowledge to use these tools. The project was implemented in four volunteer schools located in areas where there was a risk of social marginalisation and four associations were encouraged to offer school guidance using ICT with a professional counsellor. Some parents who were not working or were in a precarious social situation were asked directly to join the workshops so that they could improve their ICT competences and be involved in their children’s education.

More information:
www.edcities.org

Ville de Lyon

Good intercultural dialogue in schools

This project resulted in creating a website containing teaching materials that could be used to improve the dialogue between schools and ethnic minority parents. It was developed by a group of European organisations with the support of the European Commission to help many teachers who do not feel properly equipped to enter into such a dialogue and also many ethnic minority parents who do not know how to dialogue with the school. Institutions with expertise on teacher training developed the educative material in cooperation with parents, schools and ethnic minorities. It is aimed at initial or in-service teacher training and activities for ethnic minority parents but can also be used by teacher training institutions, by schools, by parents’ associations, and by institutions working with ethnic minorities. Several studies underlined that the academic results among ethnic minority pupils are below average due i.e. to differences in cultural backgrounds between the school and the homes of these pupils; a project that increases the dialogue between the teachers and the ethnic minority parents is thus a crucial resource in order to improve the academic results of and the parental support for ethnic minority pupils.

More information:
www.good-id-in-schools.eu

Light on the Rights Bus Tour, engaging students in defending their rights

The project carried out by OBESSU consists of organising the “Light on the Rights” Bus Tour around Europe to foster the pro-active participation of school students in working for their rights campaigning at national and European level. In spite of the diversity and variety of educational systems around the continent, secondary school students of Europe have a common stand on one thing: there should be equal rights for all students. The project was developed in the framework of the European Declaration of School Students Rights and the OBESSU campaign “Light on the Rights”. The OBESSU team spent two months touring around 15 different European countries and, together with its national members, organised diverse public activities: workshops, art performances, exhibitions, press conferences, public debates with stakeholders, etc. The “Students’ Rights Light Bulb” was carried around all the countries as a symbol of spreading the spirit of a joint European campaign. Along the way the OBESSU team filmed the activities and produced a documentary that gave a deeper insight into school students’ activism in Europe and shows different ways of improving Europe’s educational realities. The project was supported by the Europe for Citizens programme.

More information:
www.obessu.org
OBSERVAL, validation of non-formal and informal learning

OBSERVAL, the European Observatory on validation practices of non-formal and informal learning, has developed a strong network of national experts dealing with validation. The observatory promotes best practices, stimulating discussions and a bench-learning approach to existing practices and legal frameworks on the validation of non-formal and informal learning. The aim is to support further developments in the field among and beyond the network. The consortium consisted of 27 partner institutions, with representatives coming from 21 Member States and 3 EFTA countries, covering all educational sectors with close links to approximately 250 validation experts through the national working groups. The partners launched an online platform OBSERVAL that is regularly updated. It provides easy access to all materials and resources that have been produced on the validation of non-formal and informal learning in European countries. Thanks to this tool, OBSERVAL has contributed to overcoming fragmented approaches, scattered practices and deep divergences in the conception of validation in Europe.

“School Re-enrolment”, political action to fight the school dropout problem

FREREF, the Foundation of European Regions for Research, Education and Training, launched a research-action on school dropouts. The short- and medium-term objectives of the programme were to comprehend how this process of disengaging and reengaging functions and to draw up an inventory of support practices for re-engagement. The project was carried out by five European regions (Rhône-Alpes, the French Community of Belgium, Luxembourg, Francophone Switzerland and the Balearic Islands) and by Quebec. It allowed the partners to exchange good practices and to find out more about the experiences of each member of the group, in order to strengthen the modelling process which will make it possible to try out new practices and to pass them on. The regions agreed on nine common principles that should guide their political action on accompanying re-enrolment and provide a common culture on the subject, while respecting the specificity and operational framework of each member.

Improving the quality of childhood in Europe

The Quality of Childhood (QoC) project was created in 2006 by the European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education (ECSWE), the Austrian Member of the European Parliament Mrs Karin Resetarits and the Alliance for Childhood European Network Group. This project consists of collecting and publishing speeches given by a range of experts to the Working Group on the Quality of Childhood (QoC) at the European Parliament during 2009/2010. This group has been meeting every two months since 2006 in Brussels and it has involved prominent organisations and high profile keynote speakers at European level. It aims to be a think-tank for a “peer learning” reflective activity on important childhood themes, in order to offer policy recommendations to EU Institutions and Member States on how to improve the quality of childhood in the EU and how to increase the quality and effectiveness of education and training systems in the European Educational Space. The objective of this second volume is to inform policy-makers and other interested parties about current issues concerning childhood and adolescence.
**“Stop Dropout Project”, fighting early school leaving**

The objective of this project is to implement best practices with regard to teaching, training and administrative methods that can reduce school dropout rates. This project is based on the belief that youngsters who do not complete an education programme are a substantial problem in many EU countries and that initiatives to improve teachers’ competencies in involving the students and increasing quality of education programmes within vocational colleges are important components in the effort to overcome this situation. In keeping with this, the project provides tools for teachers and counsellors based on three components: a Risk Detector, the Personal Profile and the Flexible Prevention and Support System. An interactive electronic questionnaire is the first step in recognising pupils who are at risk of leaving school early and which kind of support would make sense. With the help of a conversation guide, counsellors very quickly find out the strengths, weaknesses and needs of the pupils and put together a strategy in order to be able to reach the educational objectives in a more efficient way. In addition to this, a needs-based compound network from involved relatives as well as professionals should support the young learners in reaching their aims.

More information:
www.stop-dropout.eu

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**Hattrick: Football-Learning-Integration**

The Hattrick project has the purpose of developing an innovative training approach by opening up an informal pathway to education. If sport can provide a useful function in reinforcing social inclusion, playing football in a team offers various opportunities to develop transversal competences. Young male migrants or other young disadvantaged men were engaged in lifelong learning activities by meeting on the football pitch. Thanks to this project, football coaches in seven partner countries (AT, DE, IT, FR, NL, BG, UK) were provided with courses to raise awareness among their players on how they define their role and how they can support them in their personal development. After that, the coaches were able to add to their regular training topics such as teamwork, fair play, self-management and motivation. The football approach is instrumental in delivering the necessary understanding and skills to players on how all these topics are linked to their professional life. Sport can provide a useful function in reinforcing social inclusion. The football pitch is one social location where integration seems to be successful in many cases. The activities of the Hattrick project build on to this setting.

More information:
www.hattrick-project.eu

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**European Non-Formal Education Platform**

Various non-formal education providers who actively organise holidays and leisure time activities for young people and organise trainings for youth leaders set up an exchange platform in 2007. The aim is to increase the circulation of youth leaders in Europe, to allow a fruitful exchange of experiences, methodologies and practices and to identify common pedagogical principles for youth leaders training at European level. The project does not aim to create a unique training model since the educational value of non-formal learning should be to take into account the specific history and culture of each country. Instead the partners agreed on common principles and are working on the creation of a “European passport for youth leaders”. This network involves more than ten European partners as well as associations of popular education and educational institutions at regional and national level and is supported by the Grundtvig programme. The partners are working together to improve the recognition of non-formal education and youth leaders’ training and profile. The founding members of this platform are NIDM, Ceméa Piémont, Coordinadora infantil y juvenil de tiempo libre de Vallecas and Ceméa France.

More information:
www.ficemea.org
www.eaicy.cz
In this international two-year project supported by the Grundtvig programme, a European network of seven organisations pooled their efforts to develop, implement and analyse innovative approaches in the field of non-formal adult education. Since the network considers the “Learning to Learn” competence as the most crucial key competence for lifelong learning, it aims at supporting educational staff to acquire and develop competences and methodologies needed for implementing this concept of learning. In particular the project has the purpose of maturing the skills enabling the learners to plan, organise, implement and assess their own learning. During a practice analysis phase, twenty-seven educational activities all over Europe were followed and analysed, partly by on the spot interviews and observations and partly by online questionnaires. This was followed by an evaluation seminar and the publication of a research report that set the basis for a handbook that can be used to inform and inspire facilitators to introduce these methodologies and approaches to their practices of adult education.

“Transition workshops” (Ateliers Relais) is an initiative aimed at taking care of teenagers who are at risk of dropping out of the first level of secondary education thanks to a specialised team proposing an “another way to school” approach. It is based on the idea that the quality of the teaching environment is instrumental in allowing children to feel happy at school. Early school dropouts are in fact children who are in pain, for whom school represents a hostile environment and who were never “hooked on it”. The added value of these workshops is that educators do not underestimate the capacity of these children to learn. They rather encourage them not to be afraid of the effort of learning which requires a minimum amount of self-esteem. This project tries to palliate the fact that schools are not welcoming enough for all pupils and it aims to bring these teenagers back to school, who experienced difficulties in standard education. The project was launched by the French Ministry of Education a few years ago and is run by Popular Education Movements including CEMEA or Ligue de l’enseignement.

Les visas du savoir, basic skills training for all

The French Region Centre has implemented an ambitious training policy to enable its citizens to acquire the basic skills necessary for their autonomy and social inclusion. The aim is to fight against different forms of exclusion but also to strengthen the competitiveness of the region. Its ambition is thus social and economic. Training was provided to local public services in order to offer training on 7 sets of basic skills such as reading, writing, learning to learn, digital competence (involving different uses of ICT), social competences or foreign languages. The network “Libres Savoirs” aims to allow each citizen to access, close to his/her home, a training facility that is attractive, efficient and accessible on demand. Today more than 70 training centres are implementing the 7 “Visas” dedicated to basic skills with the support of the European Social Fund.

Supporting a learner-centred perspective that allows learners to set up their own educational/learning pathway as well as opportunities to acquire knowledge, skills and competences

More information: www.learning2learn.eu

More information: www.laligue.org
www.cemea.org - www.ficemea.org


Promoting the use of creative learning methods to motivate all kind of learners and encouraging inter-generational learning

● ● ● ● ● “ADD LIFE”, Adding Quality to Life through Intergenerational Learning

The purpose of “ADD LIFE: Adding Quality to Life through Intergenerational Learning via Universities” was to explore, from the perspective of Continuing University Education, the development and implementation of inter-generational learning in a Higher Education context. It ran from 2006 to 2008 with the support of the Grundtvig programme and brought together 14 partner organisations and was widely extended through the involvement of tutors, facilitators, learners and other experts. The six taught modules created an opportunity for individuals to participate in academic learning at university level, in an inter-generational learning setting. In ADD LIFE the partner universities undertook joint developmental work with new external stakeholders; some also used this project to renew a previous collaboration. Teachers and facilitators collaborated for the first time with representatives of these stakeholders. Learners were invited to act as co-developers in the taught modules as well as in the facilitated open modules. Such inter-generational learning arrangements support the building of new social partnerships between younger and older learners beyond the course.

More information: http://add-life.uni-graz.at/

● ● ● ● ● “WARM”, promoting gender equality in Europe

The project consisted of creating an interactive tool on inter-gender communication and intercultural dialogue aimed at raising awareness on gender stereotypes and inequalities in Europe and at reflecting on women’s and men’s identities and embedded preconceptions. It was a two-year Grundtvig project, which involved non-governmental organisations from Cyprus (A.I.P.F.E), Finland (VISILI), France (La Ligue de l’Enseignement) and Greece (HAI). The WARM platform is meant to be a dynamic and open tool on which teachers, facilitators, learners or animators can find learning/teaching material on various gender issues such as key figures and dates; interviews given by women in each country and methodological guidelines for pedagogic activities. Although the tool was created with the purpose of empowering women by equipping them with means to promote gender equality at local, national and international levels it also aims to help learners, men and women, to reflect on gender through creative activities, debates and discussions and to become active citizens. The material is accessible to everyone willing to tackle this challenging issue and is easily adaptable to various service users.

More information: www.warmeurope.eu

● ● ● ● ● Lire et Faire Lire, senior volunteering for learning to read

This project aims to develop the pleasure of reading and inter-generational solidarity amongst children attending primary schools and other learning structures such as recreation centres, kindergartens or libraries. It is supported by a national association of the same name which was established in 1999 and it is implemented in each French Department by coordinators of two national associations: la Ligue de l’Enseignement and l’Union Nationale des Associations Familiales (UNAF). A committee of writers with more than 120 members have been supporting “Lire et Faire Lire” since its creation. At the request of teachers or animators and in accordance with the school educational practices, 50 year-old volunteers offer their free time to stimulate children’s interest in reading and encourage their approach to literature. Reading sessions are organised in small groups, once or several times per week. In 2009-2010 more than 800 training days were organised to train the volunteers. The number of educational structures involved in implementing the project and the number of volunteers involved is regularly increasing. More than 12,000 volunteers were active in almost 6,000 educational institutions in 2011.

More information: www.lireetfairelire.org
“VET4e-I”, e-facilitators contributing to social inclusion

“VET4e-Inclusion” is a project supported by the Leonardo Da Vinci Programme (2009-2011) and carried out by a consortium of 7 organisations from Spain, Italy, France, Germany and Bulgaria. The project aims at preparing for the recognition of the emerging professional profile of the e-facilitator for social inclusion, working with people who are at risk of exclusion. The project team believes that supporting the access to ICT enables people at risk of social exclusion and poverty to achieve digital literacy and gain access to e-services (job search, administrative applications, leisure and creativity, etc.) that are required nowadays for inclusion in a European Information Society. This is why they focused on the intermediary key player that can facilitate this process, the e-facilitator. Basing its reflections on the results of a research project on e-facilitators’ profiles, the team developed an online training curriculum adapted to meet the e-facilitators’ needs. Tested by nearly 400 participants, the pilot curriculum has been very positively evaluated and the project team is now proceeding to the final stages. The aim is to support the recognition of the professional competences of e-facilitators for social inclusion.

More information: www.efacilitator.eu

Connecting Europe through history, a history of migration

The project run by EUROCLIO, in collaboration with the Association of Ten Leading Universities and the International Students of History Association, is a transnational initiative which aims to enhance mutual understanding among Europe’s citizens, and to share and boost cultural and social diversity by tackling issues linked to movements of people as a common theme in European history. Through a series of national seminars, workshops and lectures in 10 different European countries which brought together historians, researchers, history, citizenship and social studies teachers and other civil society representatives, the project aimed to profile the different ways in which European countries deal with similar challenges, and to which extent history education is already part of this process. The large geographical spread and the variety of stakeholders involved facilitated the project’s aim to offer a good insight into the knowledge and interpretation of migration and movement bringing Europe closer to the citizens and raising awareness of the transnational idea.

More information: http://connectinghistory.weebly.com/

“Too Cool For School”, promoting diversity in schools

“Too Cool for School” was a Europe-wide campaign run by the Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU) within the framework of the Council of Europe’s campaign “All Different – All Equal” for the promotion of social inclusion and diversity in schools. For many years OBESSU has been working on the inclusion of all kinds of students in regular schools, since the association believes schools should reflect the diversity of the surrounding society and in this sense prepare students for it. Diversity, which is represented by physically impaired students, representatives of various ethnic, social, religious and sexual groups and others who are often excluded in educational institutions, can offer real possibilities for a more qualitative and respectful educational climate and it also helps us to learn from each other, to share thoughts and make us even more open to new ideas and visions. The campaign set the basis for future OBESSU’s project related to social inclusion in school, tackling various issues as gender-equality (2008), exclusion based on economic background (2010) and disabilities (2012).

More information: www.obessu.org
Education and training feature prominently in the “Europe 2020 Strategy” as a method of promoting smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Indeed poverty, exclusion and education levels are interlinked. Certain vulnerable groups are further away from learning whereas their engagement is crucial in order to improve their situation. In particular, as far as lifelong learning is understood as a lifelong occupation covering formal, non-formal and informal learning, it can become the most effective and efficient instrument for combating social exclusion by improving employability and individual empowerment. Most of the time, however, it is not only a matter of access for people who suffer from exclusion but also about providing a specific support, answering specific needs and combating segregation.

In times of social and economic crisis and constant change, it is necessary to reform our education and training systems by putting people at the centre. It is also vital to invest smartly and support initiatives that aim to correct social, economic and cultural inequalities. The austerity measures put in place by EU Member States are having an adverse effect by acting on investments in education and training. They could impede the reaching of headline targets in the Europe 2020 strategy and be a burden on people that are already disadvantaged. If we aim at the “knowledge society” we cannot risk further marginalising these groups.

Thanks to this cooperation aiming at promoting social inclusion and social cohesion within education and training, we are able to stress the action points in which EUCIS-LLL and its members hope to see developments:

- Ensure access to lifelong learning for all;
- Create synergies between lifelong learning sub-sectors;
- Invest in innovative and qualitative learning;
- Strengthen a long-term political commitment of public authorities at all levels;
- Support the role of civil society organisations;
- Improve and foster sustainable financing/funding mechanisms.

Furthermore, the purpose of this publication was to share and to support our members’ best practices. We wanted to offer a constructive analysis of their concerns, underlining that it is crucial to invest in alternative paths which can substantially improve the conditions of many excluded people. In the last section you will find the contact details of the initiators of the given examples.

Many organisations share our concerns. Together we would like to send a strong political message to our decision-makers on the need to invest in European citizens, the best capital of Europe. We would also like to remind the importance of EU programmes for education, training and youth. EUCIS-LLL members consider them as extremely important and underline that they have had very positive impacts on their work, their organizations and their countries.

Audrey Frith, EUCIS-LLL Director
# PROJECTS’ DETAILS

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**Network:** the European organisation that promoted the good practice example. Most of the time the association is a member of this network.

**Association:** the lead organisation. Most of the time the projects are involving several organisations. We invite you to check the projects’ websites for more information.

**Important notice:** most of these projects benefit from the Lifelong Learning Programme, Youth in Action or the European Social Fund. The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of EUCIS-LLL and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.
The European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning

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