

CREATE – MOTIVATE – LEARN

DECEMBER 2010

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In the 21st century, individuals should be able to cope with constant changes. Our rapidly changing world causes a large share of its population to be forced into new and challenging working environments, which call for new skills and attitudes. In many European countries, teaching has been geared towards preparing individuals to become lifelong learners by helping them develop learning skills as early as in primary school. Some EU member states' educational systems are more advanced in implementing an engag-

ing style of teaching and in supporting the development of learning skills, including in the case of adult education, while other systems lag far behind.

The implementers of the present project, a wide partnership of Eastern, Central and Western European adult education organizations, aim to identify key factors related to motivating participation and persistence in lifelong learning processes of a wide range of adult learners. Also, the project plans to compile a set of creative and critical thinking

strategies to be used by adult educators to more successfully motivate adults to participate in lifelong learning processes.

By the end of the project we will provide adult educators a collection of best practices on how adults learn, a collection of innovative strategies that motivate adults to participate in lifelong learning processes, and a Grundtvig training course to improve the availability and quality of European training courses for adult educators.

DISCLAIMER

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Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

CREATE – MOTIVATE – LEARN PROJECT IN ITS FIRST YEAR

As we look back on the first year of the CreMoLe project, we realize that we have accomplished a lot. In December 2009, some of the partners had met only virtually while preparing the application form. We knew names and had written hundreds of messages to each other but we didn't

have the faces to put to the names.

The project started on January 1, 2010. We set up the project quality assurance system and the management system of the project, created the website and have updated it constantly, we carried out a survey of adult educators and learners, and collected a set of

best practices in adult education to widely share with adult educators. Building on the existing good practices, we started to develop innovative approaches to teaching adults, relying on a constructivist framework for learning, and to pilot them in our countries.

It has been hard work but we learnt a lot together.

AN EXCELLENT START FOR A PRODUCTIVE PARTNERSHIP

The kick-off meeting of the CreMoLe project, hosted by Iberika, Berlin, brought together the project management team in 4-6 February 2010. This was the first occasion when partners met face to face, and had the opportunity to properly introduce their organizations and themselves as individuals to each other. Expectations were expressed for effective collaboration and for valuable project outputs to

emerge from the carefully planned project activities. “This project will be something to talk about even in 10 years from now”, one of the participants voiced her high expectations of the project and the partnership. Tasks and responsibilities were clarified; deadlines and communication channels agreed; evaluation models drafted; partnership contracts signed. Although this was a work-loaded

event with little time for fun, the meeting was a highly productive one. The partners were clearly happy and proud to be part of the consortium, and already looking forward to the second project meeting, and all the exciting project work in between the two.



Berlin Kick-off meeting—
Detailed planning

WHAT MOTIVATES ADULTS TO KEEP ON LEARNING?

What is it that makes some adults want to learn and engage with groups that come together with the clear purpose of learning? And what is it that makes some others steer clear of anything that may even distantly resemble a learning environment? These were the big questions we attempted to find answers to by setting up and carrying out a survey in all project countries. We looked at numerous training programmes that were recommended to us as good practices. While doing so, we wanted to see things from a double perspective: that of the trainer,

and that of the learner. We collected answers, put our heads together, analysed them, and wrote up our findings. Indeed, most adults seem to value training in which there is a lot of interaction; where there are hands-on activities, frequently carried out in co-operative groups. The trainers should act as guides or coaches (rather than as imparters of wisdom from books), prepared to offer ample guidance and mentoring for individual learners or small groups. While doing so, the trainers should make sure to build on the learners’

prior knowledge, and after facilitating contact with new content or supporting the practice of new skills, they must make sure to invite the learners to meaningful reflection on the relevance of these new contents or skills for their everyday life. To mention only the most important motivators... For more, see *Survey Report - Best practices of training methodologies and learning techniques in adult education* at <http://www.cremole.eu/home/viewpage/id/14>.

“Most adults seem to value training in which there is a lot of interaction. The trainers should act as guides or coaches.”

NOW WE KNOW WHAT WORKS—SO WHAT DO WE DO NEXT?

After having identified the core ingredients of the kinds of training programmes that keep adults engaged in learning and motivate them to search for new learning opportunities, we wanted to take a closer look at some examples of outstanding practice so as to be able to describe them in a manner that would inspire adult educators beyond our group. The challenge was to narrow down the list of programmes we had come up with earlier.

So we had to find a mechanism to make good decisions. First, we agreed on criteria for selection and a scoring scheme; then we engaged in self-evaluation; next, we paired organizations and asked them to do peer evaluation. The highest scoring programmes that resulted from this quite complex evaluation system were then written up in the form of case studies. As the training programmes would make more sense if the context in which

they were developed was also made transparent, each partner country wrote an introductory chapter to present their adult education system ... in a nutshell, highlighting those aspects that bear more relevance for the detailed description of the training programmes put forward as best practices. For the resulting publication, see <http://www.cremole.eu/home/viewpage/id/43>.



PALERMO! HERE WE COME!

September, late summer in Palermo...Sunshine, the glittering Mediterranean, cathedrals, *palazzi, piazze, fontane, teatro, corso, mercati, orto botanico*... All waiting out there for the hungry eyes and eager footsteps of tourists. Not for ours, though; we are here to do work. We came together to demonstrate snippets of very good training. "So this is how we do it, tell us what you think," we seemed to say. In addition to a firmly resisting the lure of the sights, the challenge for the trainers

from the partner organizations was to show each other and to guest trainers from organizations other than the project partners some of their practice that in 75 minutes would not only *reveal*, but also *inspire*. Teams took turns stepping into trainers' shoes, and then back into the participants' or the observers' and feedbackers' ... flip-flops. Engagement was high, as were the stakes. The topics on offer were diverse, and so were the training styles.

Though the common denominator for everyone was "adult educator", at this time all of us were also learners. Adult learners. The kind that never stops learning. And the reward for well done work was, eventually, a glimpse of the Mediterranean and of exquisite Palermo.



Palermo Workshop—Learning together

CREATE! INNOVATE!

When Sweet Summer had made her exit, and Auburn Autumn came onto the stage, we were back in the classroom with our learners, ready to try out something new. Something that we conceived, we fashioned, inspired by what we had been shown in Palermo. Something that would mellow in the classroom, with the concurrence of our learners. Sort of best practice upgraded to ... next practice. What is the agreed mechanism in place this time? So we do not grope around in

the dusk of the season and waste mind power that should be brought to fruition, we agreed that our work would be framed by *action research*. Plan it, deliver it, observe the outcome, reflect upon it, and reflect some more; call in friends to reflect with you; take it back to the drawing board, deliver again, observe again, and reflect... and remember to document carefully what you do. The outcome should be such as to justify calling what we will have created a *meaningful innovation*. Something

worth trying out in a variety of settings to improve adults' learning experiences and to increase their motivation for ceaseless learning. When we have that something, we will share it with you all. By the time Salient Spring emerges from the thick covers of White-All Winter.

"The outcome should be such as to justify calling what we will have created a *meaningful innovation*."

WHAT DOES 2011 HAVE IN STORE FOR US?

A brief preview of the project activities planned for our second year we hope will bring you back to read the next issue of our newsletter as well. In early February, we are going to meet in Riga, where each partner will be invited to share their innovative approaches. After that, we should get ready to cross pilot what partners will have developed, putting each other's innovations to the test of a different

group of learners in a different country context. When that is done, and we are ready to provide soundly grounded feedback to each other, we get together in Bratislava in August. By then, we should have the first draft of a guidebook which will include the developed and tested innovative approaches. By October, we should have a Grundtvig training course sprouting.

The final project meeting – a complex event that aims to bring together a great many adult educators – is planned for mid-November in Cluj. This is when we will be ready to share with you a two-day appetizer of the Grundtvig training course that will disseminate creative and critical thinking strategies to make lifelong learning a reality for an increasing number of people.



We are on the web!

www.cremole.eu

CREMOLE PARTNERSHIP

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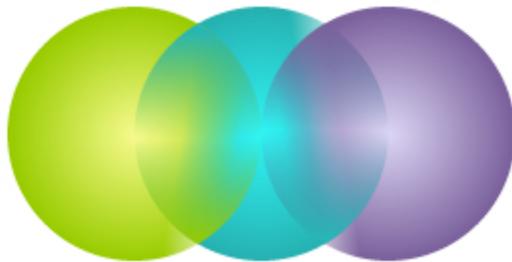
The **Create – Motivate – Learn** project aims to identify key factors related to motivating participation and persistence in lifelong learning processes of a wide range of adult learners.

The partnership consists of ten adult education organizations from nine Eastern, Central and Western European countries.

By the end of the project, we expect to make an important contribution to the more successful learning of European adults by providing adult educators with creative and critical thinking strategies to be used in a variety of adult learning contexts.



RWCT International Consortium



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THE PROJECT PARTNERS

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Thüringer Volkshochschulverband e.V., Germany



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