

Welcome to Our First Newsletter!

We're happy to present to you our Erasmus+ transnational project! This brief report is part of a multifaceted communication which will bring you updates on its progress and achievements, and will be published every six months. It will reach more than 1500 stakeholders, including training institutions, social partners and other relevant actors all over Europe, as part of the 6 partners' extended network. Ultimately, it aims to disseminate and exploit all deliverables, events and significant breakthroughs, in order to make it as useful and transferrable to the wider European public, as it hopefully is to its target groups, final beneficiaries and partners organisations. Complemented by other dissemination tools and events, we will bring you regular updates of all DISI Project stages.

DISI Project: a Brief Summary

The Context:

Illiteracy hinders work options, interaction with public bodies and, in general, everyday life. As such it inevitably leads to social exclusion. Already alarming on a EU-wide level, it reveals itself even dramatic if we consider migrants currently arriving in Europe. Further marginalisation is brought by the Digital Divide, as ICT in adult education is underdeveloped for both teachers and practitioners. It only emphasises the risks arising from growing illiteracy among adult population.

The Needs Addressed:

The Partnership aims to facilitate literacy courses in L2 (a person's second language) at national levels, providing a wider reflection on current learning and teaching models at EU level. A practical objective of the DISI approach is to embed ICT in educational plans (and social policies).

Target Groups and Final Beneficiaries:

TG: Adult and VET teachers, researchers, national decision makers.

FB: Adult immigrants and refugees with low/no education (learning L2 at levels A2-B1).

Naturally, all approaches and tools developed should be extendable to wider user groups and contexts, which is one of the long-term sustainability goals of DISI. However, the above are the basic requirements for achieving a measurable degree of success in evaluating all methodological and practical innovations implemented.

Specific Objectives and Expected Results

- Compare experiences & case studies of partner countries on ICT-supported L2 teaching methodologies with illiterate or low-educated young migrants and people at risk of social exclusion
- Develop an Analytical Gridwork: innovation elements, similarities & differences, SWOTs, methodologies and technological platforms (tools, channels)
- Pilot the resulting Methodological model & Guidelines in 5 countries
- Develop a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) for teachers to facilitate training on ICT use in language classes with the target groups

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After a comprehensive dissemination of the above Results during a European Conference and respective National events, hopefully the Partnership will be able to highlight elements to be further developed (e.g. *dedicated software applications, integrated system or urban policies, etc.*) to ensure maximum transferability and sustainability of the DISI results.

Kick-Off Meeting in Turin

On November 27–28, 2017 we had our first Transnational Partner Meeting (TPM) in Turin under the competent guidance and hospitality of the Lead Partner, Associazione Formazione 80. In the presence of 12 representatives of the 6 DISI partners, the consortium gathered at the conference facilities of Hotel Genova to outline the first steps of this challenging project. The encounter gave each partner the chance to present their organisation and emphasise their expertise, foreseen contribution and professional perspective. What we accomplished can be summarised in the following procedural elements:



Turin – the location of our first project meeting



- We agreed on a detailed work plan (for each Intellectual Output and activity phase of the project), with key roles and responsibilities assigned and justified.
- We established a management and communications mechanisms to support our strategy to resolve any problems or difficulties encountered.
- The Lead Partner shared administration and financial rules and discussed potential issues, supporting documents and upcoming procedural requirements.
- The consortium defined Quality Assurance parameters and actions – both in terms of internal functioning and external perception of Output produced.
- KWb, the Partner responsible for Output 1 shared criteria and activities to perform during Output 1 development.
- CNR-ITD shared their initial proposals on the MOOC development, ICT requirements and meeting theoretical and practical needs of the target groups and final beneficiaries.
- We outlined the overall Dissemination activities and ensured initial local and national visibility through concurrent Newspaper publications and a first Video.
- The Partnership agreed on upcoming steps, tasks and deadlines.

After specific theoretic and functional arguments were presented and considered for each point, lengthy discussions among partners were carried out towards the latter stages of each of the two working days.

What the Partners Bring to the Table

Why these partners? Our organisations' topical involvement with social inclusion (involving migrants, disadvantaged groups) and the application of learning techniques and inclusive practices is the overarching common element which put us all on the same platform and made us agree that sufficient progress could be made namely in the desired direction as is defined in the DISI goals and preliminary impact assessments. Partners will actively participate in all stages and activities of the project. However, for the most part they will stand out for their involvement with specific roles and responsibilities.



Associazione Formazione 80 (F80) acts as a Coordinator, will lead Intellectual Output 2 (IO2) and will have overall responsibilities of Management and Evaluation. **Merseyside Expanding Horizons** (MEH) is responsible specifically for the Impact Assessment Reports. **Adamastor** oversees the Exploitation and Sustainability efforts. **KWB** leads IO1. **Istituto per le Tecnologie Didattiche** (CNR-ITD) is the Leader of IO3, coordinates overall Dissemination efforts and shares responsibility on Evaluation activities (with F80). **Asmoune** will preside over the highly visible Final Conference in France. Most essentially, however, all partners will produce their National Surveys (detailed below), will organise their local Focus Groups and Seminars, assemble National Impact Reports, produce periodic publications, provide translations and adequate versions of the instructional YouTube videos in their own language.

Mapping the Playing Field

The DISI approach as detailed in initial documents approved under the Erasmus+ programme contains four distinctive functional phases which outline temporarily the necessary activities to produce the IOs.

Phase 1 is a “Bottom Up Analytical Methodology” which includes the definition of 2-3 best practices in each partner country and which will form the basis for our Analytical Gridwork, Methodology (IO1) and Guidelines (IO2).

During **Phase 2**, the “Consultation and Testing” will involve target teachers and trainers through informal focus groups, mailing lists and meetings in each partner country, in order to verify the validity of the methodological recommendations proposed in the Draft version of the guidelines. The process will provide important feedback needed to integrate or correct this draft. The resulting final guidelines will be then piloted in 5 partner countries with the end beneficiaries (50 per country involved).

Subsequently, in **Phase 3**, the “Development of Methodological Guidelines” will benefit namely from the focus group and piloting feedback to re-elaborate and finalise the Methodological guidelines for adult teachers and trainers (IO2). The Guide will provide structured information on ICT use in literacy and L2 teaching to migrants with low or no education.

Finally, **Phase 4** is the development of a MOOC course. Before final launch, it will be tested on 20 teachers in 5 countries (for a total of 100 teachers) and will cover the main aspects related to ICT in language teaching to Target Beneficiaries. The course will be integrated with slides, videos and other interactive materials.



Next Steps

Before our next TPM on **June 25-26 in Viseu** (Portugal), we will concentrate our activities on providing IO1 with the necessary intensive territorial events and back-office elaborations. At KWB's written instructions (discussed and approved in detail by the Partners), the IO1 will need to:

- Highlight Methodologies, Educational environment, Target groups, ICT tools and applications currently used, results and actual impact
- Provide analogies and differences, strong points and weaknesses, possibilities of integration and transferability of all current and potential approaches and practical tools.

DISI Project's **IO1 (Analytical Gridwork and Methodology Setting)** will develop common criteria for collecting and interpreting country data and its transferrability to a wider EU context. We need to be able to draw conclusions and elaborate common proposals.

Therefore, among the defining tasks of the next few months, the partners will need to compile their National Reports, including legal, theoretical and practical aspects in approaching illiteracy as we have defined and targeted it in our Project. Most importantly, it will include three actual „best practices“ for every participant country with a description of its rationale, methods and existing tools (ICT or other). Such best practices will be based on: Quality, Usefulness, EU Added value and Transferrability. Finally, a follow-up synthetic analysis analysis will be provided by the Leading Partner (KWB).

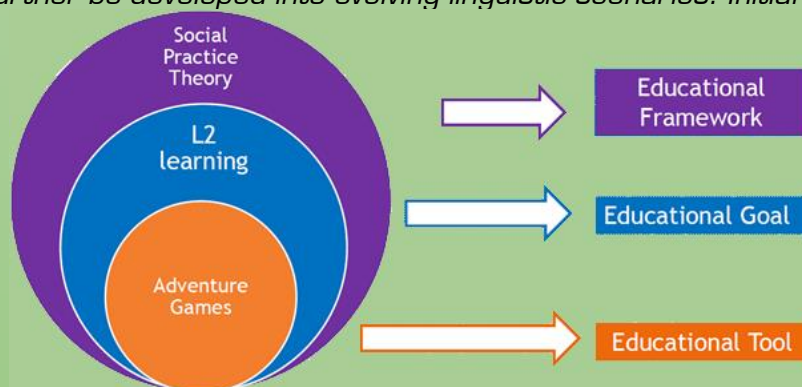
One of our most important tasks will be to involve in one way or another (functionally or during a consultation phase) representatives of VET service providers, related public entities, researchers, employment services and the like. Before even reaching out to them, however, we need to provide a bottom-up perspective on the needs and solutions that currently exist and define our target groups (the teachers) and final beneficiaries (low-literacy L2 learners). Apposite **Focus Groups** will be held in all partner countries during the month of February, with initial feedback and recommendations to be shared with KWB in March and April.

What the Educational Specialists Said

Our partner ITD is a research institute, part of the National Research Council of Italy, and their particular expertise is centered around Educational Technologies, as their name suggests. As their experience (and the thick books!) suggest, practical social tools and their real-life applications do not occur apart from actual situational contexts. At this early stage, one of the exemplary tools proposed for discussion by ITD-CNR was a set of interactive Adventure Games (to avoid calling them "Serious" Games). They would be able to provide final beneficiaries with actual means to facilitate apprehending situational dynamics when dealing with L2 challenges. The goal of such tools (or whichever we ultimately select) will be to help final beneficiaries gain effective interaction abilities.

The need to adapt wider situational coverage (and operational flexibility) to practical usability of the tools suggests our work should concentrate on theoretically and technically support several main social and linguistic categories which will further be developed into evolving linguistic scenarios. Initial partner suggestions included the following broad contexts:

- Producing (work-related context)
- Consuming (shopping/services)
- Administration (public services)
- Medical care situations
- Social situations.



Naturally, however, our primary and secondary research will justify or substantially modify such expectations before proceeding to the next steps in our actual tool creation.

Our Video Greeting!

Kick-Off Meeting participants representing the different partners wanted to say a few words about them and the DISI project. Take a look [here](#)! Keep an eye on this YouTube Channel for visual updates 😊

Let's Stay in Touch!

You can always reach out to us for more info or simply share experiences here:

disiproject.eu/en/
facebook.com/disiproject/



Digital Innovation
for Social Inclusion



Merseyside
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