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DEEPER

**Developing Innovative and Integrate Program
Language for Refugees and Asylum Seeker**

LLP-LDV-TOI-09-IT-0447

**WP 2 – results
Focus group report**

d e e p e r



INDEX

1. INTRODUCTION

2. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP

3. FOCUS GROUP REPORTS

a. SPAIN

b. ITALY

4. CONCLUSIONS



1. INTRODUCTION

DEEPER project is intended to design an integrated and EU-based innovative program for refugees through: research activities carried on by a transnational group; transfer of innovative methodologies, results and practices; implementation and evaluation in the national context to monitor better all variables involved in setting an effective training program.

Consortium is made up of experienced partners coming from institutions(CIR; CIRE and local adm), ONG (CREA) and training and research (Dida, LComm, INCOMA). Other partners are involved in the dissemination phase in order to enhance the results. Associated Partners will sustain pilot in other local area (Caserta) and assure project' valorization and sustainability (ANCI).

The main objectives of the project are:

- To support participants in training and further training activities in the acquisition and the use of knowledge, skills and qualifications to facilitate personal development.
- To support improvements in quality and innovation in vocational education and training systems, institutions and practices.
- To improve the quality and to increase the volume of co-operation between institutions or organisations providing learning opportunities, enterprises, social partners and other relevant bodies throughout Europe.

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- To facilitate the development of innovative practices in the field of vocational education and training other than at tertiary level, and their transfer, including from one participating country to others
- To encourage the learning of modern foreign languages
- To support the development of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practice for lifelong learning

The project activities and outcomes are divided according to different work packages.

Work Package 2 (WP2) has covered the Need analysis and research phase that has helped the Consortium define the Pilot framework to be tested.

WP2 has taken place from April to August 2010. It has been led by International Consulting and Mobility Agency (INCOMA), one of the Spanish partners.

In order to collect the data, the WP leader has created the following tools:

- **Questionnaires:** They have been addressed to both Trainers of Teachers and the training institutions directly dealing with refugees' educational pathways.
- **Interviews:** They have been prepared to complete and clear out the information taken in the questionnaires. It was mainly addressed to those more relevant projects identified through the questionnaires and general research.

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- **Focus Groups:** They have been developed in Spain and Italy. They aimed to gather a group of experts from different organizations that would deepen into the issues arisen during the research.

The specific objectives established for the focus groups were:

- o To find out which are the critical key points among:
 - The Refugees' Training system.
 - The trainers involved in this specific training system.
 - ICT tools that are already implemented in the formal and informal training pathway.
- o To define the main features of the final beneficiary of the training process: Refugees and asylum seekers.
- o To analyze the reaction of the key actors involved in the system to the main questions we identified in the research:
 - Is the training offer an answer to a previous needs analysis?
 - What should be improved in the offer according to the final beneficiaries needs?
 - Which are the trainers' needs? Which are the special policies addressed to cover the trainers' needs?
 - Is it profitable to establish collaboration networks among the trainers?
 - Is there ICT resources that would be especially required to improve the training system?



2. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP

According to the objectives we have previously mentioned, the group leader with the special contribution of DIDA NETWORK as project leader, and DG Coordinación de Políticas Migratorias (Andalusian Regional Government), has developed common guidelines to be followed during the Focus Groups. Thus, the consortium could assure homogeneous and relevant information from both focus groups organized.

The guide was previously made in English and then translated into Italian and Spanish.

The Focus group would be also used as a dissemination instrument to introduce some key local actors the peer to peer learning and the virtual platform as training tool.

The focus group would be divided into 4 main topics that would be discussed for one hour each. The discussion group would be moderated by a representative from DIDA NETWORK in Italy and INCOMA in Spain.

The guide was finally stated as followed:

- **General Dimensions:**
 - o *Training system for refugees:* An overview about positive and negative aspects. In case there will not be a specific system for refugees, the overview would be opened to the migrant population.
 - o How is the training system adapting its offer to the training demand (needs) of the refugees?

d e e p e r



- Are there any policies aiming at using ICT in either training of refugee teachers or the final beneficiaries (refugees)? If so, please specify.
- **Definition of the clients/users of the training activities(In terms of Final beneficiaries):**
 - Refugees' needs in relation to:
 - Social aspects.
 - Language competences.
 - Labour Market competences requested.
 - Strategies to reinforce and spread the social capital: knowledge of the socio-cultural environment, Social abilities, Formal and non-formal social networks.
- **Training for trainers:** Link between Trainers competences and Final beneficiaries' needs.
 - How is the offer structured according to the refugees needs (In methodological and technological terms)?
 - Is there any specific training for trainers dealing with refugees?
 - Do you think a previous and/or a permanently in job training are needed to those trainers working with refugees?
 - Professional recognition:
 - Professionalism vs Volunteers: what do you think about the profile of the trainers?
 - Which would be the competences required in the specific training for refugees (if relevant, for migrants)?

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- Are those particular competences recognized for the trainers?
- How may trainers acquire other transversal competences (ICT, Cultural mediation...)? Please tell us concrete experiences of formal and non-formal learning.
- **ICT involvement in the training system:**
 - Describe the current situation: Are you using any ICT resources in the training system? Please describe any relevant experience.
 - Could you please describe strengths and weak points in the ICT usage?
 - How may trainers share their competences? Do you think an online network would facilitate the exchange of information and the teachers training?
 - How could the online platform work? How could it be sustainable in a long-term basis?
- **How to improve the current system:**
 - Resources:
 - Technological.
 - Financial.
 - Training.
 - Trainers network.
 - Dissemination strategies to reach new clients.
 - Impact in the user / society.
 - Collaboration systems between trainers and organizations.



3. FOCUS GROUP REPORTS:

a. SPAIN:

The focus group session was organized by INCOMA, the 14th July 2010. Several representatives from different local institutions were invited as well as technicians from the Spanish partnership (Junta de Andalucía and INCOMA).

Find below the list of participants:

- Mercedes Alconada – Spanish Council for Refugees (CEAR).
- Cristóbal Bohórquez – Centro de Acogida de Refugiados – Labour Market Authority and Migration issues – Spanish Government.
- Rebeca Martín – MPDL (NGO)
- Ismael Sánchez – Responsible “Yo sí puedo” programme from Fundación de Sevilla.
- María Teresa Maqueda – Director of the Migration Policies Department – Municipality of Seville.
- Reyes Aguilar – YES – Spanish language school that give the language courses funded by the municipality of Seville to refugees and asylum seekers.
- Giuseppe Beluschi – DG Coordinación Políticas Migratorias – Junta de Andalucía.
- Juan Guerrero – INCOMA – He performed the role of moderator.



All participants had a long experience in training programmes with migrants and, especially, with asylum seekers and refugees. Most of them, had also participated in the LdV – VETPRO project “MERCURIO” that aims to seek and share innovative experiences in the vocational training and placement strategies addressed to migrants.

The group followed the guidelines for the interview but the discussions led to skip and/or focus on some concrete issues. The group analyzed the situation in a regional context.

Some of the main topics that arose during the discussions were:

- GENERAL DIMENSIONS:

- o The training needs of the refugees do not usually match with the training offer addressed to enter the Labour market.
- o The trainers usually have a lack of transversal knowledge (language, intercultural connection...) to face with foreign participants in regular courses for unemployed people. There is also a lack of supporting material for those trainers.
- o Even though there are enough resources to offer a quality service for refugees, a stronger link among the organizations is needed. The networks are not conveniently developed.

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- REFUGEES' NEEDS:

They used to come with their families but this has changed in last years. Thus, the needs are also different since the profile of the refugee is different as well as the goals they have once they arrive.

In Andalusia, asylum seekers may work after the first six months of stay. Nevertheless, during those first months they have to learn the language and may be involved in Public training pathways addressed to enter the Labour market.

The vocational training is not adapted to foreign users and the trainers have to face with big difficulties to adapt the contents and material. The trainers would need tools that allowed them to work with this group in a multicultural context.

- TRAINERS' PROFILE:

We identified several experiences where the work was developed by volunteers. For instance, in the "Yo sí puedo" programme (<http://yosipuedosevilla.wordpress.com/>) the contents have been developed by professionals but the lessons are coordinated by community mediators with no specialization in the language learning.

Nevertheless, the professionalism is very recommendable and needed to program the

Some of the competences needed by the trainers would be:

- o Pedagogical competences: In Spain, there is a University degree in Spanish teaching as a second language. The group believes it is very useful for the professionals.

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- Good communication skills. It is also important to have an updated information and material. The group thinks is very interesting to share information through professional networks.
- Transversal competences:
 - Conflict resolution in a multicultural context: Some of the participants mentioned that sometimes there are refugees from both sides of the same conflict.
 - Intercultural mediation in general terms: Cultural knowledge.
 - Gender: The teachers has to deal with different cultures and the national acquis.

We have identified several projects/initiatives that are particularly interesting for a non-formal learning and share experiences between experts:

- REDES INTERCULTURALES (http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/empleo/redesinterculturales/?q=es/redes_publica): It is a virtual platform managed by the Regional Government. All Third sector key actors can register to get information from the Public authorities and to share experiences and materials with other users. It is not only focused in teaching issues but it is also used for it.
- FORINTER2(<http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/empleo/www/pmigratorias/forinter2.php?nav=1&valnav=28&idreg=260>): It is a programme to train public servants in intercultural and migrations issues.

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One of the main questions is how to identify those training needs of the trainers according to refugees' background: Motivations to come over to Spain, educational level, possible acknowledgment of competences or studies, legal situation, psychological information...

The trainer should know all this information to tailor the training pathway for the refugee or asylum seeker in order to help them as much as possible.

The Regional Government has a tool that helps to recognize the concrete features of the migration flows in Andalusia. The Permanent Observatory for migrations in Andalusia (OPAM : <http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/empleo/opam/>) is a useful tool identified to help the understanding of different characteristics of the migration and refugee phenomenon.



b. Italy

It took place in Rome, the 5th of July 2010. The focus group was made up of 11 participants from different institutions, some of them belonging to DEEPER partnership.

The list of participants was:

- Maria Giovanna Fidone: CIR Onlus.
- Laura Vettraino: Learning Community s.r.l.
- Augusto Venanzetti: Rete Scuole Migranti.
- Maria Silvia Oliveri: Servizio Centrale SPRAR.
- Daniela di Capua: Servizio Centrale SPRAR.
- Paola Berbeglia: CREA
- Anna Feliziani: Learning Community s.r.l.
- Laura Capitta: Comune di Roma.
- Valentina Castello: DIDA Network
- Davide Pucillo: DIDA Network
- Vincenzo Nocera: DIDA Network

Valentina Castello, started with a brief description of the Project. She also explained how the research was structured and which the goals of the Focus Group were.

After that, every partner introduced themselves and the institutions they represented.

Laura Vettraino from Learning Community was in charge of moderating the discussions. The structured followed was similar to the one carried out in Spain according to the guidelines.

d e e p e r



One of the goals of the discussion was to think about the connections between the Refugee National System and the needs of those professionals involved in the training process of the refugees and asylum seekers.

Some ideas came out during the discussions:

- The language knowledge is a primary need for the refugees but this should be contextualized according to different characteristics of the refugees: Cultural level, background...Nevertheless, they need to create a new identity, to be more independent and this should be taken in account by the trainers.
- It is difficult to come up with a common definition of "refugees" since the circumstances for all of them are really different. Thus, the training pathways and methodologies of teaching should be adapted a such circumstances. In the traditional vocational training system, this is not taken in consideration quite often.
- Trainers should be prepared to face with a multicultural environment and to adapt their programs according to the multidimensional refugees' profile.
- The vocational training pathway is not the most effective system to increase employability for migrant people since their previous knowledge could be more focused in a practical background. The creation of a complete balance of competences is very difficult.

d e e p e r



- The networking might be a useful way to acquire all the capacities to face with different profiles. By using ICT technologies this network could reach people from different areas that have had different previous experiences.
- The promotion of the intercultural exchange should be included in the training methodology for refugees.
- Some people pointed out the need to involve professional trainers although there were some examples of good experience undertaken by volunteers.
- Two type of users of the network have been recognized: Hosting operators, that may also be in charge of language learning and Professional trainers.

Several collaboration networks were identified by Mr.Venanzetti but they were not only focused on Italian language teachers.

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4. CONCLUSIONS

Admitting the language knowledge is really important for the refugee, this should be a tool to make them freer in the new society. Hence, they will need the support of trainers with a global knowledge about historical background, minimum legal knowledge and with multicultural management skills. Thus, that information should be available for both volunteers and professional trainers since they would have to adapt themselves to the different circumstances.

The creation of a collaborative learning system that will permit trainers have a feedback from other experts, exchanging experiences, material and good practices, will be a key point for a successful non-formal training pathway in transversal and regular subjects needed for the trainers who deal with refugees and asylum seekers.

In Spain, several good practices to transfer were identified where the Third sector and the Public institutions collaborate in the exchange of information and material.