Project name

eScouts – Intergenerational Learning Circle for Community Service

Lead organisation

DYNAMIC ORGANIZATION THINKING (D-O-T)

Contact details

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Brief Summary (max 150 words/section)

eScouts is aimed to develop an innovative intergenerational learning exchange between elderly and youth volunteers, centred on the development of the digital competences of the eldest and on the guidance to the youngest to better face their upcoming adult life challenges. This intergenerational experience will take place through a variety of local stakeholder organisations (LSO, e.g. public internet centres, youth and elderly associations, etc) with a view to produce a transversal impact over the communities they are serving. The challenge is to build a comprehensive multi-target inter-generational blended learning/mentoring path to put in dialogue two social groups at risk of exclusion: the Youth and the Elderly. Hence, the fragmentation of contemporary societies and communities too often make it difficult to reach a satisfying intergenerational dialogue and creates separation and alienation from the history and the memory of the locations where people live and from the larger societies of belonging.
3/4 keywords:
- Intergenerational dialogue
- E-Inclusion Promotion
- Learning Path
- Learning exchange

Case Study information (* applicable for both completed and current practices)

**Location/ venue** (Who was the managing institution? What country/countries were involved? Where did the learning activities take place?)

**Partner involved and Managing Institution:**

**Spain:** Fundacion ESPLAI [www.esplai.org](http://www.esplai.org)

**Project Implementation Place:** Madrid Spain

Fundación Balia: [http://www.fundacionbalia.org](http://www.fundacionbalia.org)

La Rueca Asociación: [http://www.larueca.info](http://www.larueca.info)

**Italy:** ASSOCIAZIONE ARCI [www.arci.it](http://www.arci.it)

**Project Implementation Place:**

Pistoia Italy “Centro Poliedro” [centropoliedro@gmail.com](mailto:centropoliedro@gmail.com) [www.centropoliedro.it](http://www.centropoliedro.it)

Pontedera Italy “Circolo Arci Il Botteghino” [ilbotteghino2005@yahoo.it](mailto:ilbotteghino2005@yahoo.it) [www.arcivaldera.it](http://www.arcivaldera.it)

**UK:** Reflective Learning [www.reflectivepractices.co.uk](http://www.reflectivepractices.co.uk/)

**Project Implementation Place:**

**Bulgaria:** ICT Development Bulgaria [www.ictdbg.eu](http://www.ictdbg.eu)

**Project Implementation Place:**

**Poland:** PCYF [www.pcyf.org.pl](http://www.pcyf.org.pl)

**Project Implementation Place:** Warsaw Poland


**Duration** (Start & end dates, if applicable?)

Starting date: **01/01/2011** Ending date: **31/12/2012**

**Evidence of need** *(Why was it important to run? Why was it important for it to be intergenerational?)*

With the Riga Declaration (11 June 2006), "ICT for an inclusive society", the European Ministers set themselves the goal of making all public websites accessible by 2008. The aim
was to halve, by 2010, the difference in the percentage that exists between the general use of the Internet and its use by disadvantaged groups. This Declaration re-affirms some fundamental concepts regarding access to and use of new technologies. Indeed, ICT influences GDP growth and productivity, helping to improve the quality of life and social participation. It is, therefore, necessary and important to give special attention to making it accessible to all groups of people, in particular the disabled and elderly people, who, for various reasons, are unable to take advantage of such resources. Policies for e-Inclusion, reiterated in Riga, have as their primary purpose, the use of ICT, aimed at greater social inclusion.

The Declaration expresses specific recommendations regarding the various issues related to e-Accessibility:

**Workers and the elderly:** potential benefit of the internal market for ICT products and services, improve employment opportunities and working conditions of older workers, increasing productivity through the use of ICT solutions and training on new project technologies, encouraging their active participation in society, improving the quality of life, autonomy and security. **Promote the inclusion of different cultures:** to strengthen pluralism, cultural identity and linguistic diversity in the digital space, to promote the digitization, the creation of electronic archives accessible and trans-national access to digital information and cultural heritage in support European integration.

The Riga Declaration concludes with an invitation to any other authority, civil society and industry to respond to the suggested recommendations by increased attention to the needs of the older population, reducing the spatial heterogeneity and adhering to the principles of e-Accessibility. The "eScouts" project is well within the guidelines of Riga and in the main objectives of the LLP (Lifelong Learning Programme) implemented by the European Union, with particular attention to the identification and development of innovative practices for the use of ICT, with a specific interest to groups at risk of exclusion. The overall aim is to make these groups self-reliant by providing them the opportunity to increase the knowledge base of ICT systems, thus reducing the Digital Divide. The central objective of the project is to build and implement innovative educational methodologies, which includes the teaching of ICT, implementing the long-term promotion of education and pedagogical strategies, based on an active educational process and capable of being adapted and transferred.

This is a complex initiative, as it has chosen to address a number of social, civic, employment, and educational interrelated issues using ICT as a catalyst for both the learning and the community empowering actions to be put in place.

At the same time, it promotes key-European values and lifelong learning skills: civic and social, digital, learning to learn, cultural awareness and expression, entrepreneurial (in the sense of the spirit of initiative). In general terms, the project is seen as highly innovatory and necessary, given the specific problems that both youth and the elderly experience in nowadays societies and considering the scarcity of educational/dialoguing activities addressed to both of them at the same time and due to forming in them key ICT and social and civic skills for their own sake and for the one of the communities they belong to. Skills that the project conceive as part of the larger curriculum of the "facilitator", “eFacilitators for social inclusion”, an emerging profile Europe-wide around which the core group of the consortium already started to work on in other LLP joint projects. Then, the values/skills are promoted by and through a consortium of partners who are, in practical all the cases, social actors and/or private or public bodies with a clear social/cultural/educational mission: large NGOs like ARCI; foundations, Fundación Esplai, and associations, ICTDB, that are networks of
telecentres and are member of larger European networks – telecentre.europe; SMEs, social (L’A.P.I.S./RL) or not (D-O-T), oriented towards the social corporate responsibility, a public university (sfs/TU-DO) working with third sector bodies and telecentres. An experienced consortium of partners that have cooperated together (in subgroups) in former LLP and Equal projects.

**Purpose** *(What did you hope to achieve or change? Were you trying to meet specific problems and/or needs within a community? What were the intended aims and objectives?)*

Based on an analysis of the trans-national context, the eScouts project partners will develop an innovative training solution, aimed at supporting the participating European countries in the common challenge for e-Inclusion. The partners will implement a certifiable training curriculum aimed at different groups (young, old and the facilitators promoting e-Inclusion), focusing on developing the skills of key users, at risk of social exclusion, aiming to empower the latter in the information society. This curriculum will be based on an innovative blended learning environment inspired by Web 2.0 and teaching methods focused on and driven by end users. The project will thus meet a growing demand, already identified within organizations, to promote the skills and training of ICT. The challenge is to build a comprehensive multi-target inter-generational blended learning/mentoring path to put in dialogue two social groups at risk of exclusion: the Youth and the Elderly. Hence, the fragmentation of contemporary societies and communities too often make it difficult to reach a satisfying intergenerational dialogue and creates separation and alienation from the history and the memory of the locations where people live and from the larger societies of belonging.

The last few years have seen a growing interest in eInclusion policies (2010, Riga Declaration 2006, the EU Ministerial eInclusion Conference in Vienna 2008, the Roadmap for Digital Inclusion: a Hub For Social Innovation in Gdansk 2011) considering information and communication technologies (ICT) as a vehicle for social inclusion, ageing well, youth employability and social innovation (see Howaldt, Kopp, Schwarz 2009). The term “eInclusion” is addressed by two perspectives: Firstly, eInclusion is understood as the challenge to guide people to the digital world. Secondly, eInclusion can be understood as the approach to link disconnected people to society by digital means. In the following, we will refer to the term in both meanings: We will describe an approach to link elderly people and youth with an intergenerational learning circle to the digital and non-digital society by a combination of online and offline instruments. Especially social media – that may be characterized by their easy usage and the way they allow users to create content and participate in online activities – are seen as good means for including people with low ICT skills into the digital world (Pelka/Kaletka 2010). But as Kluzer/Rissola (2009) described, the use of digital media in eInclusion approaches has to be aided by offline support structures.

The need for eInclusion is evident on a regional as well as a national level. Regions and countries still face the challenge of a broadening gap between people that have access and – more important – the skills to use ICT and those who are excluded from the “digital world” – either by lack of ICT means, skills or motivation. This gap is crucial for social cohesion and economic development on a regional as well as European level, as a lack of digital participation will affect social cohesion, individual chances and the development of local labour markets and communities. Communities (e.g. regional/local communities, migrant communities) or target groups (e.g. senior people, unemployed youth, women in family phase) that lose touch with the development of the digital society are at risk of exclusion.
from the world of employment, education and participation. In the project “eScouts - Intergenerational Learning Circle for Community Service”, funded by the EU Lifelong Learning Programme in 2011 and 2012, the methodology for an intergenerational learning approach between the youth and senior people was developed and is currently being implemented. The project aim is threefold: to facilitate the socio-digital inclusion of elderly and the youth joining to the labour market and adult life, while improving local community life by means of the intergenerational dialogue and mutual support. For this aim, the project built a learning circle in which the youth supports senior people in ICT usage and, in return, seniors mentor youth in their efforts to access the labour market and to face the challenges of adult life, completing in this way a circle of learning, exchange and conviviality. The teaching and mentoring was mediated by ICT means (social web applications) and Blended Environments and Spaces. This ambitious eScouts project had to provide a training methodology that supports the learning circle between elderly and youth. For this reason the training design was based on two methodologies which both contributed essential ingredients to an intergenerational and ICT supported learning. We refer to the Community Service Learning (CSL) methodology implemented by Fundación Esplai in its “Conecta Joven” network in Spain, and the Participatory and Appreciative Action and Reflection (PAAR) developed by Reflective Learning in the UK. Community Service Learning (CSL) is aimed to maximize the development of the individuals’ potential and their active participation in society. At the roots of CSL there it is the work of William James and John Dewey. CSL is an educational initiative combining learning with community service in a single well-articulated project. The participants are trained while working on real needs in their community. CSL is, firstly, an activity that is well known as it should assume the definition of a problem, its study by various ways, the development of proposed solution and finally, implementation and evaluation of proposals. Secondly, an associated activity, what it mean is that it’s made collectively and not as a result of the action of an isolated person. Individual efforts must be added to carry out participatory projects, civic and effective. Finally, an activity for a social benefit, therefore intended to increase welfare community and in consequence open to solidarity. Participatory and Appreciative Action and Reflection (PAAR) was first used by Ghaye (2005, 2008, 2010). It describes the development from more conventional forms of action research (AR) and from participatory action research (PAR) to a more explicitly “appreciative” research style. PAAR synthesizes the best practices of action research (AR) and participatory action research (PAR) by adding a third and new dimension called appreciative intelligence. PAAR brings together action and reflection, with the participation of a range of stakeholders, in order to identify and amplify current achievements and to produce practical solutions in misalignments between values and actions. It could be argued that PAAR may be regarded as a kind of third generation action research. PAAR is a strengths-based methodology. It co-creates, with those involved, strength-enhancing interventions based upon an understanding of the root causes of success and achievement, rather than of problems and failures.

Participants (Who were they? How many took part? What were the age ranges? How were they recruited/involved? How were participants encouraged/motivated to participate? Were there any barriers to involving volunteers/participants? If so, how were these barriers overcome?)
Training of Facilitators: Knowledge acquired during the modules by 12 Facilitators – 12 Facilitators as Learners (Two per Member State). Facilitators are been selected from an age range between 18 and 30 years old. They are been selected with the organization partners.

Facilitators to Youth: Skills and competences practiced by 12 Facilitators and Knowledge acquired during the modules by 84 young people (Learners, 14 per Member State)

Youth to Elderly: Skills and competences practiced by 84 young Facilitators and Knowledge acquired during the modules by 420 Seniors (Learners). 84 young Facilitators as Teachers to 420 elderly (7 pair of two youth each per Member State by 10 Seniors each/70 member state) – Learners.

Facilitators to Elderly: Skills and competences practiced by 12 Facilitators and Knowledge acquired during the modules by the Seniors Learners. 12 Facilitators (2 per Member State) to Seniors Learners.

Elderly to Youth: Skills and competences practiced by the Seniors Mentors and Knowledge acquired during the modules by the young people learners. Seniors Mentors to Youth Learners.

Activities/ events

*What activities/events were organised?*

Follow the link below:
http://escouts.eu/news-and-events/

*What learning materials/tools and support were used?*

“Intergenerational Learning in Blended Environments and Spaces” (ILBES) is a first attempt to build a common methodological framework without forcing the two methodologies together into some kind of unhappy 'marriage'. Both methodologies aim to empower individuals to improve themselves and the community where they live. However, each one proceeds in a different way. The main divergence was found in the initial questions each methodology asks:

- CSL starts from a problem previously identified by training designers (e.g. “There is a lack of engagement of the Youth: how can we solve this problem?”); its approach is rather reactive and problem-solving oriented.

- PAAR does not start from a pre-conceived problem but from the appreciation of the strengths of a situation and builds on that (e.g. “How can we increase and sustain social participation by the Youth?”).

In order to design an learning methodology for a leaning circle between elderly and youth, the CSL approach can be considered the project layer while PAAR can offer means to find solutions, as it is focused on the positive elements: the strengths of participants. In other words, while starting from a problem could lead to become locked into problem-finding and problem-solving as the only strategies to begin any change, betterment or improvement process (which is deficit-based thinking), PAAR”s strengths-based thinking could help to start focusing on engaging in a conversation about what people can do and wish to do, by identifying, using and developing their strengths, gifts and talents.

The harmonized methodologies will have to address and amplify both the individual and collective strengths. However, change and improvement with regard to the objectives defined at the start of the intervention will most probably be achieved and sustained if they...
represent collective rather than individual actions and views. For this reason, group reflection (done publically, rigorously and systematically) rather than solely self-reflection was promoted.

**How often did participants meet?**
The project is been implemented from January to May 2012. In this five months are been implemented five training modules, more or less 1 module for month. Each partner has adapted the modules and the modules duration to its needs.

**Who supported/facilitated sessions?**
The key actors of the project are eFacilitators. They are been selected within the project partners, following specific attitudes, and they are been trained in more training sessions to become eFacilitators. They have followed all the project implementation and training courses.

The e-Facilitators have a crucial task, not only as teachers of ICT, but also as socio-cultural mediators. The project partnership "eScouts" will conduct a comparison study of these profiles and about the available educational opportunities in their respective countries. The goal will be to create a common professional profile in Europe.

**Evaluation**

- **Was the ‘case/practice’ evaluated? Who was involved in the evaluation?**
- **Outcome evaluation: What were the outcomes for all generations involved, and the community?**

The first results and outcomes from the ongoing pilot testing can be summarized in the following way:

1. A group of community-based social innovation and eInclusion centres is carrying out the ILBES modular blended learning circle in six EU MS (Bulgaria; Germany; Italy; Poland; Spain; UK).
2. Given the high experimental character of the intergenerational blended learning circle, each partner of the consortium selected two core facilitators, forming a group of fourteen facilitators who have already acted as trainers and (except one) facilitators inside of former initiatives. Moreover, a number of them has taken care of youth and/or dealt with seniors. As a result, in every pair of facilitators there is constantly one who has dealt in the past with the seniors, the other not. Secondly, there is a perfect gender balance; however, the women tend to be younger, with a higher educational profile, whereas the men have a stronger field experience.
3. Transferred by the two core trainers of the two base learning methods (CSL and PAAR), the ILBES methodology has been well transmitted in the first module, where the fourteen facilitators who are accompanying the entire blended learning path have known and learnt about the aims of the project, the main features of the two groups of end users (expected to account for 84 youth and 420 seniors), the two main methodologies and their merging into a new one (ILBES). At the same time, they have acquired the fundamental skills required by the ILBES: 1) the projects Ethical Code (subdivided into main parts: be honest, act responsibly); 2) Facilitation skills that strengthen intergenerational dialogue (the six Mobius qualities: mutual understanding; possibility; commitment; capability; responsibility; acknowledgement); 3) the eScouts Trust Wheel (achieve an outcome; raise awareness; identify concern; encourage discussion); 4) the eScouts Trust Wheel Observe Behaviors (observe behaviors; listen actively; ask open questions; end ethically).
4. The whole eScouts intergenerational learning circle is subjected to two complementary quality and evaluation systems: a) self-evaluation on location; b) at-a-distance ongoing monitoring and
evaluation through an articulated quality plan that encompasses a comprehensive set of indicators: Profile (educational, civic, professional); Participation (n. of hours attended; interest to take part to the following module/s; self-evaluation of the participation during the module); Satisfaction (evaluation of: list of contents/methods/tools/evaluation-assessment/facilitators; means of communication); outputs (n. of facilitators/mentors/trainees; n./type of learning materials produced; type of evaluation/assessment methods-tools applied); Learning Outcomes (Knowledge; Skills; Competences). The quality system aims to provide a first description of the knowledge/skills/competences formed in a way to facilitate their recognition, this is why the ECVET main concepts and terminology is extensively applied.

On this basis, we propose a twofold strategy for the further development of telecentres -and other kind of community and educational centres offering digital services and training- as “eInclusion catalysts for intergenerational learning”: On the one hand, it is highly important to further professionalize their staff and supply them with methods and practical know how on how to address intergenerational learning. This includes more elaborated job profiles and recognized sets of competences, local and regional competences for identifying eInclusion needs, more and systematic good practice exchange and international models of reference in the Telecentre development for an increased European added value, the promotion of funding opportunities for telecentres, especially by creating awareness for their mission and eInclusion potential, and the mobilization of the civil society.

But apart from this “internal professionalization perspective”, we think that we also have to take the next step. The next step is to integrate eInclusion as a transversal field of activities into lifelong learning policies and thereby promote digital literacy on the European and regional policy agenda as a means to strengthen social cohesion.

This means:

- Extend the use of intergenerational learning and digital competence training as tools for the empowerment of citizens and their active participation in society
- Better promote and integrate blended and web 2.0 based learning opportunities in “traditional” adult education
- Further develop eFacilitator profiles, but also communicate the need to provide “traditional” adult educators with digital teaching and facilitating skills
- Increase participation in adult education in general by professionalizing eInclusion opportunities
- Become a part of all adult education initiatives in European regions by offering digital and European added value
- Promote telecentres as transversal actors and competence centres for the digital advancement of lifelong learning

If we truly want individuals to shape their own education and vital biographies building over their strengths and the legacy of other generations, with an ethical and community sense, this means that not only the necessary resources and access rights must be afforded, but also – and above all – the skills to shape their biographies on their own responsibility. This includes, more than ever, digital skills enabling them to find better employment opportunities and to participate meaningfully in society. Intergenerational learning – facilitated by community-based social innovation and eInclusion centres and supported by ICT means – seems to be a worthy approach to reach this aim.

What did and did not work, and what was the evidence?

Based on the high expertise of the consortium members, with their shared awareness of the importance of devising and testing intergenerational blended learning circle for community service,
as well as with their great interest and motivation to exchange ideas and good practices, it is supporting fully the implementation of the learning action.
Thus, the two critical issues identified on occasion of the initial quality evaluation report have been positively overcome and/or are being successfully worked out. They were: 1. the complexity of the project and of its concrete design, with the harmonisation of the two main methods of CSL and PAAR; 2. The implementation of the blended learning in six European different localities after having adapted it to the different partners’ cultures and local end users needs/expectations/requirements, according to a participatory interchange.

**Outputs (e.g. leaflets, photographs, DVDs, toolkits, training resources, policies)**

The project’s partners are developing a response to the need to build up an educational system that, through the use of **new technologies**, provides essential tools for reducing the gap between generations. This goal is based on a European survey and on a e-learning approach and guided by a **quality assurance system**.

**The main products, results and outcomes of the project are or will be:**

- **Learning Management System (Moodle)**
  All the content is being developed to be implemented by an eLearning platform, allowing people from different regions to join the training. The content and the platform are designed by Esplai, organization that has contributed in many other online training courses and has assessed organizations to implement similar services.

- **Recognition Model**
  The University of Dortmund are experienced in assessing certifiable paths to orientate the content to a recognition process for further steps.

- **Quality Assurance Plan**
  From the expertise that Lapis has gathered over projects, an overall quality plan we set from the beginning of the project. It provides monitoring not only from a quantitative approach measurement but from a qualitative approach.

- **Project’s website (and other collateral resources such flyers, FB Fun Page...)**
  All the events and activity we are producing are published in our website to provide visibility and transparency to the public. It is one of the main dissemination tools so that we make an effort to keep it updated with the latest news. Associazione Arci is leading this work.

- **Learning Outcomes**
  Five Learning Modules are been implemented.

**Training of Facilitators:** Knowledge acquired during the modules by 12 Facilitators – 12 Facilitators as Learners (Two per Member State).
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- Studies on eInclusion Facilitator Professional Profile and on their Competences Gaps Relevant conclusions have raised to set the basis for the curriculum development work packages and the later phase. A multicounty analysis will be published in the project website and a summary will be translated into all partners’ languages.

- Sustainability plan and End user support
It is relevant for the real goal of the project, that the products of the project are being used not only during its implementation. Identify the proper stakeholders would be determinant.

Other applicable information (e.g. any other relevant information you wish to share)
**Funding** (e.g. public, private, public-private partnership, no funding)

The project is supported by:

![EACEA](image1.png)  ![EU](image2.png)  ![LLP](image3.png)  ![Training](image4.png)

**Date of case study:**

25/06/2012