

PROSPER-ASE LANGUAGE CENTRE

IMPROVEMENT PLAN DEVELOPED DURING THE NELLIP WORKSHOP - 21 FEBRUARY 2014

Authors of the plan

This improvement plan was conceived by the participants in the 2nd NELLIP workshop co-organised by PROSPER-ASE Language Centre together with The Public Service Language Centre, Lithuania, on 21 February 2014, in Bucharest, Romania and Vilnius, Lithuania – parallel group discussions and Skype connection. The discussions in the work groups focused on Adult Education and on *how the Guidelines produced by the NELLIP partnership could help project promoters create a new project proposal* related to the theme of “social inclusion”.

The participants were teachers in higher education institutions, psychologists and social workers, with different levels of experience in terms of European projects in the field of language education.

Description of the Initiative

We chose to develop a new initiative together with a partner from Lithuania, Public Service Language Centre. The organisers in both countries discussed before the workshop in order to identify a common need and interest in both countries and thus we decided to work on language learning for Adults related to the theme of social inclusion. Then we contacted potential partners – in Romania: the Faculty of Psychology, The University of Bucharest and some associations involved in social working activities; in Lithuania: The Prison State Department.

The aim of our workshop was to *explain some principles of quality included in the NELLIP Guidelines* and to try to translate them into ideas for a new initiative.

Development of an improvement plan

During the NELLIP workshop, *drawing on the information in the NELLIP Guidelines, especially in the chapter on Quality*, the workshop participants brainstormed possible solution to create a useful and innovative initiative.

Objectives of the new initiative

General objective of the project: to increase specific and transversal skills for those (social workers, family members, employers, co-workers etc.) who cater for people in need for social inclusion, in order to increase their chances to form an international support network.

Specific objectives:

1. to design innovative techniques helping to deal with 'psychosocial' issues and to facilitate people to be empowered. These techniques are to be used by the beneficiaries (i.e. those forming the support network of the socially excluded people) with the end users (i.e. socially excluded people);
2. to design an online course aimed at developing the language and communication skills of social workers (i.e. for social inclusion);
3. to create modules on intercultural awareness concerning the countries involved in the project.

The 1st objective aims at creating a problem solving tool based on communication, attitudes, skills, knowledge, positive personal values, etc.; the „support techniques” are expressive-creative tools, involving body language, emotional and cognitive elements, which facilitate people to be empowered.

The 2nd objective aims at designing language learning modules within a more rounded approach where languages are studied as a competence that enhances integration for all the parties involved - hence adaptation and flexibility within contexts of innovation.

The 3rd objective aims at describing the situation in each partner country concerning general information about the country, how they deal with social exclusion, some best practice examples, such as prevention of clashes because of intercultural misunderstanding.

Target groups of the new initiative

Our target groups are social assistants working with associations, family members, employers, co-workers, NGOs, institutions and other people involved in the support network of and who cater for people in need for social inclusion, who can contribute to motivate and help the end-users (socially excluded people) to better know and use and improve their personal resources, to manage their psycho-social vulnerabilities in order better adapt to social and professional environment.

Expected results of the new initiative

Our project aims at forming an international support network for people in need for social inclusion – the end users. Our target group needs foreign languages and intercultural communication skills in order to participate in international training sessions, workshops, conferences etc. and in order to be in contact with fellows from other countries with more experience in this field. In this way, they could share their experience, issues, learn about case studies and best practice examples and improve their activities, communication and relations with those in need for social inclusion, resulting in better helping them with their exclusion issues.

Reason why this initiative was proposed

We focused on language learning as both Prosper-ASE Language Centre and Public Service Language Centre are institutions with experience in teaching languages for specific purposes. We have chosen Adult Education both because we are specialized in this field and because in our respective countries there is a need for formal and informal education at this level. “Social inclusion” was chosen because it is an EU priority and a big need in Romania and Lithuania, the country with which we connected via Skype)

Expected impact

Based on the ideas developed during the workshop, we starting writing a new project proposal under Ka2 – Strategic Partnership – Adult Education. We succeeded in finding other partners, discussing with them and other stakeholders all the details and finishing the proposal in due time. The application was submitted under the name of “Workplace: Society”, Submission ID: 1090097.

All the main points of the new initiative were discussed starting from the Nellip Guidelines, with examples from the Nellip Portal for the participants with no experience in European projects.

Here is a summary of the new initiative:

The Workplace: Society Project aims at improving chances of social inclusion for different categories of end-users concerned (ex-convicts, migrants, single mothers unable to support their families, people with disabilities, migrants etc.). We will contribute to this objective by creating and implementing innovative support techniques, designed mainly for social workers, but also families and people who are part of the support network of these disadvantaged categories. We will organize 4 transnational workshops in order to train professionals to use these techniques and to share them with other categories needing them. During the project, a transnational network of professionals working on social inclusion will be created, as a base to exchange of good practice and further collaboration.

Our target group, social workers and people in the support network of those in need for social inclusion, will receive, before the workshops mentioned above, linguistic and intercultural support in order to improve their intercultural communication competences linked to their domain (ie. social inclusion and disadvantaged categories). By designing online language and intercultural training, we will make sure that they will reach the A2+/B1 (CEFR) language level, in order to be able to make international professional contacts, to participate in international training sessions, conferences etc. related to their domain of expertise. Their competences will be assessed before, during and at the end of the training course and of the workshops.

We will involve different stakeholders, such as public bodies, NGOs, associations etc. which will facilitate our contact with the participants, will assure local, regional, national, European and international visibility and dissemination of our activities and products.

The deliverables of our project will be: an online teaching / learning material on languages and intercultural communication for specific purposes on social inclusion – free of use; an online brochure describing the innovative support techniques we create – free of use; 4 transnational workshops aiming to train target group participants on these techniques, to share good practice and to form a transnational professional network; a learning event on sharing best practice and networking; on the project website there will be a virtual place allowing our target group participants to communicate, establish professional networks, sharing good practice examples.

The project will take 2 years and will involve as partners: from Romania, The Bucharest University of Economic Studies (experts in teaching languages for specific purposes and intercultural communication) and SC GENERAL DATA CONSULT SRL, a counseling association with expertise in dealing with social inclusion (experts in forming professionals in psychological assistance); from Lithuania, Public Service Language Centre (experts in teaching languages for specific purposes and intercultural communication) and the Prison Department under the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania (with expertise in working with socially excluded people); from Ireland: Universal Learning Systems, with expertise in innovative learning interventions in social inclusion, intercultural training, research on labor market outcomes for ethnic minorities, etc.

Presentation of the Coordinator of the Initiative

Academia de Studii Economice din Bucuresti / The Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies, The Department for Modern Languages and Communication :

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Founded in 1913, Academia de Studii Economice din Bucureşti (ASE) (Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies) is the leading economic and public administration university in Romania, consisting of 11 schools and many research centres. It is a state university which has been granted a high confidence rating by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. ASE has around 22.000 students across the undergraduate, masters and doctoral programmes which comply with the educational guidelines of the Bologna process. ASE's mission focuses on advanced research and education, thus aims at developing, consolidating and disseminating essential values for a modern society, developing general, specialised and transversal competencies for a better integration in the modern society, high quality education and high quality research, the integration of the research centres functioning within the university in highly-valued national and international research networks, etc.

ASE participates in this project through the Department of Modern Languages and Business Communication, which specialises in teaching various languages for specific purposes (English, German, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Romanian, Turkish and others). The Department employs about 80 teaching staff - professors, associate professors, lecturers and assistants -, with teaching and research experience ranging from 35 to 5 years. The mission of the Department of Modern Languages and Business Communication is to teach foreign languages to undergraduate and graduate students, to conduct research in the area of foreign languages, develop teaching materials and apply quality assurance standards in language teaching and learning. The teaching staff have expertise in areas such as: materials writing, CERF-based language assessment, quality assurance, adult education etc. and are actively involved in national and international projects, including LifeLong Learning projects.

Strategy to submit the project to the ELL

Analysis of the project potential for its successful submission in the framework of the ELL

Analysis of the consistency of the project as in the Improvement Plan with the ELL European and national priorities.

If the proposal is successful, we will definitely apply for the ELL, as the project was conceived from the beginning having in mind the ELL principles, *the Nellip Project suggestions to enhance chances to get the ELL* and the European and national priorities.