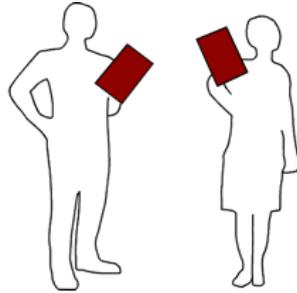


blinc



blended learning institutions' cooperative

Newsletter 2, December 2006

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Greetings from the editors

This **blinc** newsletter deals with the topic **European networking** because networks play an increasingly important role in European lifelong learning policies.

Three projects working in the field of learning in non-formal and informal contexts have come to an end in 2006 with large and successful events and shall be “transformed” from a project into a network stage in 2007. All of them reached a large public.

New contacts and relationships have been established both on the local and on the transnational level. Following the Commissions’ valorisation strategy also stakeholders from educational ministries and other decisive administrative bodies were taking part in the conferences and events.

This newsletter is a kind of “appetizer” to learn more about those projects and their outcomes, their actions concerning dissemination and valorisation. As far as sustainability is concerned the blinc community will try to keep alive those projects and their networks by providing long term structures and perspectives after the funding period.

We are grateful that the starting article of this newsletter was contributed by an expert in European networking, Holger Bienzle, who has been coordinating a project called **EUROWEAVING**. As we learnt in EUROWEAVING’s “Art of Networking” workshop, conducted in the wonderful castle of Alden Biesen, Belgium on December 1st, there is a growing consciousness that setting up and maintaining networks is a tremendous challenge to both coordinators and partners. For all those of us working in European networks there is a large potential to learn about good practice, scientific approaches and experiences from the field.

Partners from 6 countries collaborated in the framework of the project **INTEGRATION** in approaches to improve intercultural competencies of educational staff members applying among others videographic learning materials. Follow-up networking activities will be developed and coordinated by Sabine Wiemann and Leena Freitag.

Urszula Hadrych reports about a large conference in Sopot, Poland about actions against domestic violence in the framework of the project **Climbing Up**. The follow-up project “Background” will also be disseminated and valorised from 2007 onwards by blinc.

In the framework of the project “**JEM!**” - Joint Environmental Management - funded by the SOCRATES Joint Actions programme partners from 5 countries applied an eCoaching-System for the introduction of environmental management in European schools. The content of the system consists of full fledged courses, training materials and accompanying guidelines for teachers, trainers or consultants. The applied system used in JEM! was developed in the framework of the project “IEM in hospitals” that was awarded as one of the best 5 projects out of 2.500 since 1992. In the framework of **JEM!** the IEM-approach was transferred to European schools. **blinc** will open a special Environmental sector early in 2007 for projects related to environmental management and protection. The environmental section will be coordinated by Karl-Ludwig Kratz and the colleagues from the region of Kassel.

With our best wishes for a successful networking year 2007 - and many enjoyable learning experiences

Your blinc Team

P.S.: A DVD about the awarded Blended Learning project “IEM in hospitals” in EN, FR, ES, DE was produced by the EC and distributed to us in December 2006 and can be ordered.

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With our best wishes for a successful year 2007 and many enjoyable learning experiences!

The Art of Networking and the Teutonic Knights



What has networking to do with the German Order? Of course the Order itself could be regarded as a network, but this is not the reason for associating the two here.

The splendid castle Landkommanderij Alden Biesen (www.alden-biesen.be), in medieval times used by the Teutonic knights and now a cultural centre of the Flemish Community in Belgium, was the venue of the international workshop *The Art of Networking* on 1 December 2006.

Around 45 representatives of educational institutions from 16 European countries came together to discuss the benefits of transnational networking among educators in general and,

more specifically, the structural framework of networks offered by the European funding programmes Grundtvig and Comenius. The organisers' main aims were:

1. to contribute to a clearer view of the network concept in the European funding programmes in education;
2. to promote networking among adult education practitioners in Europe and participation in future Grundtvig and Comenius networks;
3. to help potential network coordinators and partners prepare for network creation and implementation.

This workshop comprised a varied mixture of presentations, plenary and group discussions, and, as can be seen below, very practical applications of the network concept:



The event is part of the project *Euroweaving* (www.euroweaving.com) which is implemented by die Berater (Austria), European Cultural Interactions (Greece), Landkommanderij Alden Biesen (Belgium) and NIACE (United Kingdom).

Euroweaving is a Grundtvig Accompanying Measures project which aims at developing practice-oriented guidance and training materials for Grundtvig and Comenius network actors on how to design, plan and manage successful European networks in education.

The project was conceived against the background that networks play an increasingly important role in European lifelong learning policies. In contrast to this growing importance it appears that the

results of some of the funded networks are below expectations in terms of contribution to the educational field concerned. One of the reasons for this seems that many network coordinators and partners do not have a sufficiently clear picture of the concept of a network as a specific cooperation structure and of the most suitable activities and management processes.

The *Euroweaving* project attracted considerable attention: The project team was asked by the European Commission to produce recommendations how European networks in the new Lifelong Learning Programme can be optimized. In spring 2007 the project will publish a guidance publication on planning and implementing European networks in the funding programmes for adult and school education.

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Report on the Final Conference in Poland in the framework of the project Climbing Up – violence is our common affair – European review

CLIMBING UP is a European project, supported by the SOCRATES PROGRAMME Grundtvig 1, the main aim of which is the support of women victims of violence within an informal learning perspective.

The three year work of six partners from Greece, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Poland was crowned with the European Seminar in Sopot, Poland in September 2006.

The aim of the project, coordinated by the Association of Women against Violence, Lisbon PT, was to:

1. To strengthen women victims of violence by the support and sharing of their common experiences.
2. To promote European cooperation in informal learning for women victims of violence through a survey of good practice.
3. To create, test and implement an innovative educational “product” for women victims of violence.
4. To disseminate this European educational “product” at a European level.

The project will be continued in an extended project network with additional partners from MT, IT, LT and DE in the framework of a Grundtvig 1.1 project named “Background” from 2007 onwards.

The final European Conference in Poland of “Climbing Up” was designed for the thematic discussion and presentation of the main project results with participation of all the partners.

The seminar had powerful impact on the almost 100 participants from all over Poland and partner countries. Among the participants of the conference were major stakeholders like representatives of justice, police, welfare centres, NGOs etc. The most surprising fact was that the beneficiaries (survivors of domestic violence) themselves volunteered to express their opinion on the necessity and the impact of such projects.

One of the beneficiaries said: *‘Knowledge gained during the experimental training brought me out onto the higher regions of my consciousness, let me look into myself, increased my self respect and dignity. ...I am standing in front of you and I am a happy, believing in myself and free of violence, woman. Remember that it is you who open the doors for us and our children to the better world and happier reality’.*



To my opinion such a statement is the best reward for us, the people who write and implement projects. It says that the European funds are very well used and achieved the projects goals and have a strong impact on the beneficiaries. Even several months after the conference the meeting is still vivid in the remembrance of the participants and people from all over Poland are still asking for materials and advice in this field.

The project contributed greatly towards drawing attention to the importance of non-formal and informal learning and its contribution to the life long learning among hard to reach groups in the society.

Products and outcomes of the conference are available on the website: www.cku.sopot.pl

Information on Climbing up is available on www.blinc-eu.org/1059/

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INTEGRATION - Intercultural Dialogue for a Multicultural Society in Europe

Integration is a priority on the European agenda. How do associations, local authorities, help organisations or training institutes tackle concretely the topic?

In the framework of the 2-year project INTEGRATION 9 European partner organisations from 6 countries (DE, SE, IT, UK, FR, LV) have collaborated to develop transferable approaches for intercultural training and learning.

INTEGRATION is a Grundtvig 1 project which aims at improving the intercultural competencies of pedagogical staff and teachers in different institutional environments in Europe and their target groups to sustainably affect sensitisation of societies and politics. An intercultural training course for staff members has been developed aiming at enabling staff members to be more proficient in interacting with people from different cultures and to be able to activate migrants in taking part and in organising intercultural events themselves. The course is based on the 20 instructional design models according to the Goettinger Catalogue of Didactic Models focussing relevant models on multiethnic learning groups and combines different learning methodologies such as eLearning and face-to-face learning.

The partners have been testing all different elements themselves for feedback in order to eventually improve the course elements. They have become multipliers within their teams and with their newly acquired competencies have identified training needs and developed specific training material which meets the special needs of their target groups. One focus was the development and production of web-based learning sequences and films which were based on reported critical incidents. By introducing the new technologies as training and communication instrument, the project promotes innovative ways of training and facilitates the access to intercultural learning.



On December 8th, 2006, the project promoter BUPNET, DE invited both the 8 transnational partners and its local partners to celebrate the final conference in Göttingen. In the focus of the conference was not only the presentation of the project results but also the sharing of experiences with an international audience. Each partner presented the focus of the project activities to the audience of about 60 participants and illustrated the results in an exhibition. Among the visitors were representatives of local associations working in the field of integration, the Municipality of Goettingen, the Ministry of Culture of Lower Saxony, the StadtRadio Göttingen, the local radio station, training institutes and the Georg-August University. The highlight of the conference was a multicultural European evening with music and lots of European discussions.

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JEM! Blended learning in formal and non-formal learning: Introduction of Environmental Management in European schools

The project **JEM!** (Joint Environmental Management) aims at the sustainable development of the environment awareness of young people in 5 regional European school networks.

The regional government of Kassel, Germany has coordinated the project with partners from Szigetszentmiklos (Budapest, Hungary), Vienna (Austria), Cagliari (Sardinia, Italy), Boleslawowo (Gdansk, Poland) and partner schools and other locally committed institutions from the region of Kassel.

The core of the model project has been the development of a new and more attractive presentation of schools and education by focussing on an extracurricular environmental topic.

The participating schools have introduced an environmental management system, supported by the co-ordinators of the regional network (environmental administration) as well as by professional environmental consultants and other participating stakeholders (e.g. the supervisory school authority). The coaching regarding the introduction of an environmental management system has been done via an internet-based learning and consulting instrument.

Introduction of an Environmental Management System

An environmental management system (EMS) is a professional management instrument which systematically aligns the organisation of the school as well as its processes and activities with an environmentally friendly behaviour. Basing on this system all environmental media and material flows become transparent which leads to a higher degree of environmental awareness.

Students, as environmental management specialists, develop and establish the EMS with a specially trained teacher (environmental management representative) in their schools.

Working Structure of the Project

The project was placed on 3 pillars:

1. Introduction of environmental management systems in the partner schools
2. Development of blended learning units for both teachers and students
3. Technological and organisational development to achieve sustainability in a European networking process.



Outputs and results:

A comprehensive course with more than 30 subchapters relating to the introduction of EMS was established in German and Italian language and shall be translated in other languages in future. The whole system consists of a complete set of 15 development steps for the introduction of an EMS in a school with various online materials and a parallel instructional online-guide for teachers and instructors.

12 teachers from 4 countries participated in training courses on environmental management.

In the course of the project the project team set up collaboration with the Austrian Environmental Label (Österreichisches Umweltzeichen) to transfer and adapt a good and feasible accreditation system and to avoid the re-invention of the wheel.

Apart from the environmental and IT-related aspects the development of good and feasible approaches for instructional designs was in the centre of the project. In this context training concepts and learning materials have been developed and teachers (the environmental representatives) were trained in the framework of a workshop on the European level.

Again it was revealed that not the technical development is the limiting factor to introduce new learning methodologies and instruments (blended learning) but missing didactic competencies by teachers, trainers and consultants.

In order to achieve the widest European dissemination of the model project possible a multi-lingual internet portal was developed for the **JEM!** network with interactive instruments like an

online self-assessment tool to inquire about the status of the school concerning environmental management.

The project ended in a big transnational event in Vienna in November 2006 bringing together 30 committed students from 10 European countries and another 30 stakeholders from schools, educational institutes and other institutions and associations.

The first so called JEMAS award for students from 12 selected European schools was developed and organised in Vienna.

Mixed transnational student teams participated in a “Games without frontiers-parcours” in the Vienna Business Academy. Previous to the event more than 3.000 schools all over Europe had been invited to apply for participation.



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