

Adult Learners' Environmental Resources & Training project (ALERT)

Reference: 71271-CP-1-1999-1-UK-ADULT EDUC-ADU

Idea and Objectives

The aims and objectives for the first year of ALERT project were to develop a unique approach to constructing learning strategies with adults within disadvantaged communities in the cities of our partnership. The core aim was to devise a process of interactive learning to include the socially excluded in the learning society, integrating this aim into an increased knowledge of Agenda 21 within a local, national and European context.

The main objective was to develop and promote a unique approach to environmental education with adult learners by developing an innovative environmental education curriculum together with them. The common environmental, social and economic themes identified by project partners form the context for the project to develop these aims and objectives in the first year and to pilot an innovative curriculum in the second. This procedure also intends to widen the participation amongst non-traditional learners.

Target groups for the project are adults living in rural areas, non-traditional learners and adults who may be socially excluded from the learning society.

Project Outcomes

Innovative environmental education curriculum

- ◆ Events, courses and activities piloted during the project duration
- ◆ Range of materials, tools and products to share and disseminate
- ◆ A project web-site
- ◆ Hosting an international Symposium, including participants from the ascension countries
- ◆ Organisational development for participating partners
- ◆ Sharing of good practice with both partners and a wide and extensive network of formal and informal partner organisations at the regional, national and European level

Remarkable Aspects or Unexpected Sideeffects

- ◆ the breadth and scope of the project outcomes
- ◆ the capacity developed and built upon by partners and participants
- ◆ interest in the project from external organisations
- ◆ sharing and working at the European level has had an even greater multiplier effect than anticipated

Comments on Process

It was necessary to adjust the pace of the project at times, in order to respect the different approaches and characteristics of each partner's working methods.

Comments on Sustainability

Participating organisations have developed sufficiently during the process to enable resources to be available for sustaining and further developing the project outcomes.

Problems or Limitations

Some partners were more experienced in working at the European level than others, and for some it was a new area of work which involved a steep learning curve. To a certain extent, these factors slowed down the development of the project in the first instance, but was largely addressed by the start of the second year.

Important Experiences Within the Project

- ◆ Sharing expertise with partners to enable them to explore techniques of consultation with potential adult learners
- ◆ Hosting and organising an international Symposium to disseminate the results of the ALERT project, and to explore and discuss the forming of networks at the European level with participants, with particular reference to Grundtvig

Partners within the ALERT project were diverse in organisational structure, working methods and in their capacity to work at this level. Actual 'physical' meetings with partners in each of the participating countries of the project was essential in building an understanding of this diversity.

The opportunity to work at the European level; development of partnerships at the regional, national, European and international level has brought and continues to bring benefits to the partner organisations involved in the ALERT project.

- ◆ the opportunity to develop a project idea

This was crucial to the development and sustainability of the project: few outlets for funding development work open to the co-ordinating partner at the time of initiating the project and building the partnership.

- ◆ Opportunity to pilot activities, course and events

Experiences of Dissemination

- ◆ The hosting and organisation of an international Symposium has had an exponential impact on the level of dissemination of project results. There has been evidence of a significant multiplier effect in the evaluation and feedback from the event, parti-

cularly from participants in Eastern European countries.

- ◆ The partners chose to develop a project web-site as an important part of fulfilling the project's dissemination strategy.
- ◆ The skills, knowledge and experience gained from this experience has benefitted the organisations involved in the project in the further development of multi-media.
- ◆ The networks and informal partnerships, contacts and sharing which the project enabled has had a direct impact on the dissemination of project results to a wide ranging audience.

Open Questions

How can we network effectively to maximise the sharing of good practice on a regular basis, to maximise on the opportunities presented by events such as this international Adult Learning Fair?

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