

Intercultural Life  
Hundested Skole  
Stichting Schoolclash  
interkulturelles netzwerk e.V.



# Another education

Formal and non-formal learning in Europe



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## 1. Introduction

Constant changes in the European societies require a review of our understanding of education and learning. Scientists and educators require an adaptation of the structure and content of education, which take into consideration the latest outcomes of research in the field of learning theory in the context of changing social structures and globalization. As early as 1997, the Delors Commission of UNESCO defines the importance of a learning community in which four pillars stand next to each other: learning to gain knowledge, learning to live together, learning to act, and learning to be.

The commission stresses the importance of self-responsibility in lifelong learning. Using education as a seed to create a new humanism is crucial for us to survive as humanity. Based on these appeals, considerations were developed to create an “education of sustainable development”, the principles of which should be anchored in all educational systems. The OECD has also described core competencies, which have to be acquired in all educational systems in order to master the collective challenges. The core of these key competences is forming the capability to think independently as an expression of moral and intellectual maturity, as well as taking over responsibility for one’s own learning and acting. We assume that for the implementation of these educational concepts, an extensive change is needed in non-formal and more so in the formal educational sector, which will enable a culture of development of potential, as the German initiative “Schulen im Aufbruch” calls for.

In the frame of the discussion of a new learning culture in the educational field, the focus has shifted to give higher regard to non-formal and informal learning and experience. It is increasingly assumed that education is occurring not only in formal settings, but also (and even more so) in non-formal and informal processes, without regard to place or age (lifelong learning).

The four partner organizations work within their national and educational contexts on the intersection between formal and non-formal education. The Hundested School from Denmark is implementing new, non-formal education methods in an everyday school situation.

Schoolclash from Venlo, the Netherlands, is working especially with VET-students in the non-formal area by organizing trainings for Dutch VET-school in which the students acquire professional skills, but also linguistic and intercultural competences. Both Intercultural Life from Spain and Interkulturelles Netzwerk from Germany are working in the field of adult education. They carry out trainings and seminars outside the regular in-service trainings.

All the partners cooperate with schools and universities and with partners working with non-formal education. They are working at the intersection of these two, often distinct, educational fields. They leave behind the classic, regular methods and approaches in order to adapt their educational offers to the changing requirements of our societies. The goal of the strategic learning partnership was to understand and get to know the educational area in our countries. Subsequently, we got to know the specific educational offers of the different partners.

During the mobilities we were able to discover educational organizations, which were in the process of change. To achieve this goal, our teams were responsible for training the multipliers of the four European organisations who participated in this project which lasted in total 24 months. Local workers of adult education organisations, schools, and universities met with the workers of the four partner organisations in order to learn from each other. Between the project meetings, the results of the mobilities regarding the potential of innovation were discussed and demonstrated.

Together, we were able to define success factors. Our core question was: which factors can predict the success of education? These factors function on different levels: the financial resources and the learning environment play an important role, but so do the applied learning methods and concepts. It appears also that the education and motivation of the educational staff has a crucial role.

The project meetings always functioned in the same way. Initially, we focused on making an inventory of the learning field of the four structures and their local partners: which classic educational concepts exist in their environment, and which alternative concepts and methods were developed over the past years? In this case, it seems important to stress the reality of the formal and non-formal educational situations. Afterwards, we visited partner organizations, which were located at the intersection between formal and non-formal education. The regional partners were mostly schools, which carry out alternative educational concepts, but also universities and organisations for adult education.

## 2. Educational Goals

In this research, European professionals in the field of formal education and non-formal education will cooperate to investigate non-formal methods, which can be implemented in formal education contexts. Furthermore, they will research “best practices” in formal education, where non-formal methods are successfully implemented, and they will research and identify the success factors, which predict this success.

### 2.1. What is a success?

In order to search for the success factors of the “best practices”, we have to define in more concrete terms what is meant by “success”. Which competences, knowledge, and abilities must the learner gain in order to be a good worker and citizen in this new, changing society? We will focus on the competences brought up by the Partnership for 21st century skills (P21). This American organization was founded as a non-profit organization by a coalition that included members of the national business community, education leaders and policy-makers.<sup>1</sup>

This coalition of experts defined a range of skills and knowledge, which are needed in the new service-based economy. First of all, they define content knowledge of core subjects and interdisciplinary themes, which are important in the 21st century. Furthermore, they define in greater depth the learning skills, like learning and innovation skills, digital literacy skills and career and life skills.

### 2.2. Content knowledge of core subjects and interdisciplinary themes

Except for the content knowledge of core subjects such as English (in the case of other countries, of the national language), reading or language arts, foreign languages, arts, mathematics, economics, science, geography, history, government and civics, the P21 believe schools must move beyond a focus on basic competence to promote the

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<sup>1</sup> [www.p21.org/aboutus/history](http://www.p21.org/aboutus/history)

understanding of academic content at much higher levels by weaving 21st century, interdisciplinary themes into their curricula.

- Global awareness
- Financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy
- Civic literacy
- Health literacy
- Environmental literacy

### 2.3. Learning and innovation skills

P21 also defined learning and innovation skills, which are essential in order to prepare learners for the future, in the 21st century. These skills are also known as the four C.

- ***Creativity and innovation***
  - Think Creatively
  - Work Creatively with Others
  - Implement Innovations
- ***Critical thinking and problem solving***
  - Reason Effectively
  - Use Systems Thinking
  - Make Judgements and Decisions
  - Solve Problems
- ***Communication***
  - Articulate thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, written and non-verbal communication skills in a variety of forms and contexts
  - Listen effectively to decipher meaning, including knowledge, values, attitudes and intentions
  - Use communication for a range of purposes (e.g. to inform, instruct, motivate and persuade)

- Utilize multiple media and technologies, and know how to judge their effectiveness a priori as well as assess their impact
- Communicate effectively in diverse environments (including multi-lingual ones)
- **Collaboration skills**
  - Demonstrate ability to work effectively and respectfully with diverse teams
  - Exercise flexibility and willingness to be helpful in making necessary compromises to accomplish a common goal
  - Assume shared responsibility for collaborative work, and value the individual contributions made by each team member

## 2.4. Information, media and technology skills

In a technological and media-suffused environment, the P21 states that to be effective in the 21st century, citizens and workers must be able to create, evaluate, and effectively utilize information, media, and technology. They define three sorts of literacy, which are important in order to learn:

- Information literacy
- Media literacy
- ICT literacy

## 2.5. Life and career skills

Furthermore, the P21 states that, alongside content knowledge and thinking skills, learners also have to acquire social and emotional competences to navigate complex life and work environments. The essential life and career skills include:

- Initiative & Self Direction
- Social & Cross-Cultural Skills
- Productivity & Accountability
- Leadership & Responsibility
- Flexibility & Adaptability



### 3. Presentation of the partner

#### 3.1. Hundested Skole

Hundested Skole is a public primary and secondary school in Hundested (Denmark). The school counts 800 pupils aged 6 to 15, and approximately 80 teachers and educators. The school day goes from 8am until 3pm. The subjects are Danish, Mathematics, Art, English, German, French, Christianity, History, Sport, and Natural Sciences. After the 9th grade the students have to pass exams in different subjects to continue their school career.

During the academic year 2015/2016, the school will start a new course from the 7th to the 9th grade (pupils aged 13 to 15) called “From local to global”. The intention is to re-think the school system. By experiencing the local environment and visiting local businesses, we want our pupils to take responsibility for themselves in their local environment. With a solid knowledge of their own background, it will be easier for them to navigate the world.

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#### 3.2. Intercultural life

The Spanish partner of the “Another Education” project is Intercultural life from Trasmulas, a village near Granada.

Intercultural life is an association, which is active in the field of non-formal education. With our projects and seminars, we offer a frame for creative and permanent learning experiences, which allow the participants to develop their interaction, reflection and social action abilities. Our main aim is to foster key competences, which are important to live in a modern, globalised world, such as intercultural competence, communication skills, and critical thinking.

We promote intercultural learning, participation and democratic citizenship, gender justice, environmental awareness, and inclusion of marginal groups (ethnic minorities, migrants, young people with fewer opportunities, persons with special needs, etc.).

Our main target groups are young people and other social groups with fewer opportunities, as well as social workers, youth workers and teachers. In our projects we cooperate with schools, vocational training centres, universities, NGOs and public bodies on a local, regional, but also on an international level in order to promote youth exchanges, local and international training courses, networking projects, and the European Voluntary Service.

Our work is based on the principles of active education, an educational approach, which defines the individual as the actor of its own educational process. Our methods facilitate cooperation and participation, and offer opportunities to discover other social and cultural realities, to act, to communicate, to reflect and thus to learn. The learning process unites the cognitive, the affective, and the action-oriented levels. In our activities we use creative methods such as video, photo, theatre, and music.

We usually cooperate with formal education organizations, which are open to new educational concepts and methods, in order to develop common strategies with a holistic approach and to create new opportunities for our learners. This learning partnership was a special opportunity for us to learn from other innovative educational concepts and experiences in the interface of non-formal and formal learning.

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### 3.3. interkulturelles netzwerk e.V.

interkulturelles netzwerk is a German organisation, which was founded in 1996 in order to enable the personal exchange of different people, cultures, and religions, with the aim to encourage international understanding and solidarity. We offer persons the opportunity to get to know other persons, countries, and ways of living in the context of international meetings, as well as to exchange experiences with each other about their own situation. The aim of our work is to support intercultural learning and to improve the participants' social skills and competences. By questioning common concepts such as *foreigners* and *foreignness*, participants can get to know themselves and others better, and then begin to question themselves. In this process we see an opportunity to recognize and work on rigid perceptions and prejudices in order to lay the foundations for mutual understanding. One of the goals of the meetings is to accept being different as one form of being equal. Due to language being an essential element in exchanges, we offer linguistic animation training. Youth exchanges can have different types of content. Programmes can include sports or activities such as canoeing and climbing, as well as media-based activities or product-orientated projects related to art or cultural topics such as theatre, photography, and video. The range of topics also includes thematic programmes, such as looking for historical traces, anti-racist work, or ecological issues.

Besides the youth exchanges we also offer trainings for adults in the context of life-long learning, where we approach issues such as intercultural or political topics and methods. We have offered intercultural basic trainings for more than 20 years.

Our work is adapted to the needs of each different group and we are always open to develop new methods and ideas. We work with partners in almost all EU countries and with East and South-East Europe as well as the Mediterranean region. We are an umbrella organisation for 6 associations in Germany.

Our motivation to participate in this strategic partnership arises from a deep frustration with the formal educational system in Germany and in Europe. Unfortunately, our experience is that the natural curiosity of the unknown and the fun of learning are withdrawn by formal education. In the course of our educational programme, we often work with participants, which are traumatized by formal education. This is very clear in the case of our language programme: adults, who had several years of language lessons at school, are not able to create the most simple sentences in a foreign language. In our opinion, this is not due to the weak competences of the learner or their incapability, but

rather because of an educational system developed in the 19th century, which is not adapted to current needs and demands.

This is why our approach to adult education follows a concrete model: we offer seminars and trainings for people from the most difficult cultures, linguistic backgrounds, and experiences. Participating in our projects is always voluntary, and because of this we can always expect higher motivation. We offer the participants good working conditions. We provide a nice workspace, which supports a pleasant work atmosphere. The team is competent. In a multilingual context, we always offer translation, in order to give every participant the chance to express him or herself in his/her mother tongue.

It is important to stress that learning takes place everywhere and in every situation: in formal learning situations, as well as in non-formal and informal moments. A change in the hierarchy of knowledge is taking place. Everyone is learning and educating. This is only possible in a less hierarchical, more respectful learning environment. The methods we propose are also specific: we offer methods, which stimulate strong experiences. This experience is then evaluated and structured theoretically.

We often promote education opportunities for intercultural education professionals and teachers.

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### 3.4. Stichting Schoolclash

Stichting Schoolclash offers innovative non-formal methods in the field of community building, inclusion, anti-bias education, intercultural learning and diversity, and aims to stimulate participants in the search, discussion, and recognition of common opinions, ideas, and solutions regarding these themes. Our goal is to promote the interaction between students, by using games and tasks from the fields of intercultural learning, social inclusion, and diversity.

Schoolclash build upon a structural collaboration with several schools (on a national and international level) and therefore has a long-term experience in hosting and guidance of students from secondary schools and vocational schools. Furthermore, Schoolclash uses their expertise and experience in non-formal education to educate teachers, youth trainers, and other professionals in the social-cultural working field around these themes.

Stichting Schoolclash takes part in this project because they believe that change is needed in the learning methods of education. In the European Union, each country is working on theirs own ideas to change the education system, and there is not enough exchange between countries. By promoting the exchange of “best practices” in Europe, we can learn from each other and create a better system.

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## 4. Research

The goal of this strategic partnership funded by Erasmus+ is to visit “best practices” of non-formal methods in formal contexts in Spain, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Germany. With a team of professionals working in formal and non-formal contexts from the different countries, we will discuss the different “best practices” and deduce the success factors, which can predict the success of these “best practices” and can be generalised to other non-formal methods in a formal context.

This process will be carried out in different phases:

### **First step: Visiting “best practices”**

During the first year of the project, we will visit different “best practices” in the different countries, which are working with non-formal methods in a formal context. The projects will be selected by each country coordinator. During the study visit, the formal and non-formal education professionals will acquire insight regarding these methods and will then evaluate them. Such an evaluation will aim to determine the factors which can predict the success of this method, but also its challenges and recommendations.

### **Second step: Deducing a taxonomy of success factors**

After the first two meetings (in Spain and Denmark), the conclusions derived of the evaluations will be organized into a taxonomy of success factors. Regarding learning theories of (non-)formal education, we will classify the different success factors into a taxonomy of terms. We will then order the terms according to relevancy that is the frequency at which they appear in the different evaluations. Afterwards, we will also deduce from the evaluations of the study visits in the Netherlands and in Germany.

### **Third step: Materialising the success factors**

After the four meetings in the different countries, we will have a taxonomy of success factors and we will prove the relevancy and value of the different success factors based on literature and theories about (non-)formal learning. We will publish these in this handbook.

## 5. Best Practices

The four organizations' staff members met six times over the course of this Erasmus+ learning partnership. Two of these meetings were held for logistic purposes: only the team leaders participated in these meetings, in order to discuss the administrative aspects of the project. During the other four meetings, the different organizations' staff members had the chance to get to know the reality of the educational systems in the different countries. First of all, the traditional educational system in the different countries was explained, and in a second phase the staff members had the opportunity to discover the partner's educational practices. It was often possible to experience the partner's actual education methods.

During the second part of the mobilities, we visited selected partner organisations, which work on the intersection between formal and non-formal education.

Each partner organization was responsible for choosing the projects to be visited in their country. We often visited schools of education, participated in trainings organized by partner organization, or we visited institutions that were significantly different from the traditional national education system.

The visited projects concepts, approaches and methods were evaluated by the whole team. We also often invited the projects' staff members to ask questions about our learning partnership, as we noticed that there was a large interest in our research project.

The goal of the project's intensive research was to extract success factors for successful education. The results will be described in the next chapters. The visited projects' descriptions and contact information are listed alphabetically in the appendix.

### 5.1. Visit to Trasmulas (Spain) from 23 to 27 January 2016

During our study stay in Spain, we visited different educational organisations in Granada and Malaga. We visited three primary schools (Colegio Padre Manjón, Colegio Luisa de Marillac, and Colegio Rectora Adelaida de la Calle), one secondary school (Instituto de Educación Secundaria Alhambra), and two educational projects working in cooperation with the universities of Granada and Malaga as well as the Delegation of Education in Granada.

The hosting organisation chose partner institutions with which they have conducted successful non-formal education projects, and which have implemented non-formal learning methods in a formal education environment.

One core element of our visits is considering learning communities as a successful concept to reduce school failure and to improve the school climate. Good practices concerning this concept are found at the Colegio Padre Manjón and the Colegio Luisa de Marillac. Daniela Padua from the Professoriate, Communication and Educative investigation group of Malaga University explained the history and the role of the university in developing this concept. Furthermore, the Colegio Luisa de Marillac is an interesting example of inclusive education in a very difficult and disadvantaged environment. Another important approach is the enquiry based project work, put into practice by the Colegio Rectora Adelaida de la Calle and the Colegio Luisa de Marillac.

We also wanted to show an example of successful cooperation between schools, university, and public administration: PIISA, a project that offers pupils the opportunity to do small researches tutored by scientists.

## 5.2. Visit to Hundested (Denmark) from 6 to 10 April 2016

Denmark has a long tradition of inclusive education. Until the age of 15, 99 percent of the students with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia are educated alongside students with no learning challenges. First of all, we visited the Hundested School. We observed the projects being carried out inside the school, which guarantee that all the students, with and without learning difficulties, receive a good education in accordance to their needs.

For instance, we visited the P-class, which is a class where the pupils might spend a shorter or longer period. They are orientated to this class by their main class's form teacher because of behavioural problems.

Furthermore, we were able to observe that during that week, the 9<sup>th</sup> grade students were working on a project that they had chosen by themselves. We also visited two projects, which focus on the children who do not fit in the regular school system.



The first one we visited is Produktionsskolen (The Production School). This project offers individual courses based on practical work and production for young people under 25 who are in an inappropriate training situation.

Last but not least, we visited Sputnik in Copenhagen. Sputnik is a private alternative to regular education. Learners who do not fit in the regular education system attend this school. We visited the department that takes in students with autism spectrum disorders and mental vulnerability, which covers for instance infantile autism, atypical autism and Asperger's syndrome, but also cross-diagnoses such as ADD, OCD, anxiety, and so on.

### 5.3. Visit to Venlo and Eindhoven (Netherlands) from 30 November to 3 December 2016

The study visit to the Netherlands took place in the region of Noord-Brabant and Noord-Limburg. This region is especially known for their innovative technological and creative industry. In this region, there is a particular need for well-educated technological employees, but a shortage of learners who are willing to study in this work field. This is why we visited some organisations in which companies, universities, schools, and other institutions are cooperating in order to promote science and technology in schools.

For example, we visited Tilburg University Junior, an organization funded by the Tilburg University, which promotes science in schools. They organise lessons in primary and secondary schools, in cooperation with scientists from the university. Furthermore, they organize events where famous scientists from different work fields talk about their scientific work in an easy, accessible way.

We also visited Code Brabant, an initiative run by Tilburg University and Bibliotheek Midden-Brabant (Library of Tilburg). This organisation's goal is to promote coding applied to video games, robots, and computer animations, for everyone.

We also visited De Ontdekfabriek, a private museum, which promotes technology in an interactive way for children and youngsters. This organisation is funded mostly by big technological companies in the region, such as ASML and Philips, and cooperates with universities as well as primary and secondary schools.

Lastly, we visited two secondary schools. The Netherlands have a tradition of educational freedom. This means that there school and state are separated and that all the schools, whether private or public, are funded by the state. This results in the establishment of many new school types in the education spectrum.

We visited a “regular” secondary school, with a traditionally Catholic background (as most schools in the south of the Netherlands). This school, het Theresialyceum, focuses on intellectual aptitude, culture, and international relations.

Additionally, we visited the Democratische School of Eindhoven (DOE040), a school for learners aged 4 to 21 working with the ideas of democratic education. This school's education methods take into account the interests and needs of the learners and each learner determines their own curriculum.

#### 5.4. Visit to Neuruppin (Germany) from 18 to 22 January 2017

In Germany, the learning phase took place in Neuruppin. interkulturelles netzwerk cooperates in Neuruppin and in Berlin with different educational organizations, which adapt their educational practice to society's demands. We visited two schools with which the hosting organization cooperates.

Some of the teachers were able to attend one of its intercultural or methodological educational offers.

Neuruppin is located in the Eastern part of Germany. Many educators in all educational fields are quite old and kept a very hierarchical educational structure. They pass this experience further onto the learners, which have to adapt to the system or drop out. Modern educational approaches are rare in this region, especially when it comes to formal education.

In contrast with the old system, the Montessorischule focuses on the individual wishes and demands of each learner. With this in mind, specific materials and methods were developed and we were able to learn about them thanks to this partnership. The Evangelische Schule Neuruppin, honoured in 2012 as best school of Germany, functions in a similar way. In this case also the focus is set on an integral development of the learners and a respectful coexistence. The school offers many working groups, also in cooperation with external

partners and uses many project-based methods. The learners are taught early on to take over responsibility for their own education.

In Berlin, we visited the German-French Youth Office, which dedicates a part of their work to the education of intercultural educators and teachers. Together, we experimented with linguistic animation, a method, which aims to lift linguistic blockades and to support simple communication.

Finally, we visited Schule im Aufbruch GmbH. This organisation monitors the transformation process of schools from a classic educational concept to an educational approach in which the focus is set on the learner's development of their potential, involving all the educational stakeholders (the management, teachers, learners, parents, and social workers).

## 6. Success factors

During the observation of “best practices” in the four phases of the project in the different countries, we collected many specific success factors. After the four phases and in order to generalize them, we strived to create a taxonomy of success factors. We found that the differences can be divided into different dimensions.

Firstly, we found methodological success factors, which correspond to the projects chosen learning method. Although each method has its own characteristics, there is also a large overlap between the different approaches.

Secondly, we observed success factors related to the teachers' attitude and characteristics. Thirdly, we found success factors, which involved the institution's organisation. Finally, we found success factors with a societal dimension.

### 6.1. Learning methods

#### **Enquiry-based learning**

In many “best practices” the project leaders mentioned different methods which imitate the thinking process in a scientific research. These methods are used mostly in the last phase of secondary education, for instance in the projects of the Wetenschapsknooppunt and in Colegio Rectora Adelaida de la Calle's PIIISA in Granada, in order to prepare the learner to the university's scientific-based working methods, but also in primary education as in Colegio Luisa de Marillac in Granada to promote critical thinking.

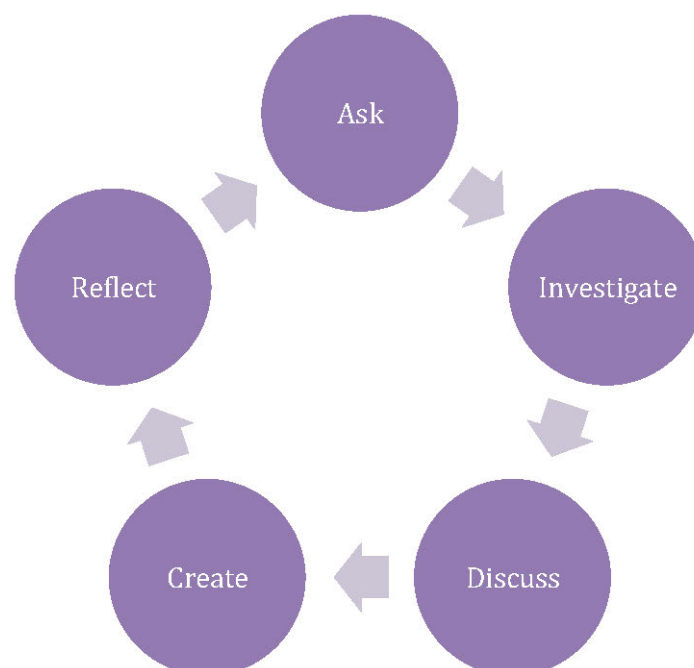
Many methods could be reduced to the theoretical principles of enquiry-based learning. Enquiry-based Learning (EBL) is used here as a broad umbrella term to describe approaches to learning that are driven by a process of enquiry. The tutor establishes the task and supports or facilitates the process, but the students pursue their own lines of enquiry, draw on their existing knowledge and identify the consequent learning needs.

The characteristics of enquiry-based learning are the following :

- Engagement with a complex problem or scenario that is sufficiently open-ended to allow a variety of responses or solutions
- Students direct the lines of enquiry and the methods employed
- The enquiry requires students to draw on existing knowledge and identify their learning needs
- Tasks stimulate curiosity in the students, encouraging them to actively explore and seek out new evidence
- Responsibility falls to the student for analysing and presenting that evidence in appropriate ways and in support of their own response to the problem

During the observation of the different best practices, we took note that the cycle of enquiry-based learning often consists in five phases: ask, investigate, create, discuss and reflect.

Enquiry-based learning model



**Problem-based learning method**

The problem-based learning is related to the enquiry-based method. Problem-based learning is an instructional method that initiates students' learning by creating a need to solve a genuine problem. In many "best practice" examples, the starting point is an actual existing problem. We noticed this in all levels of education.

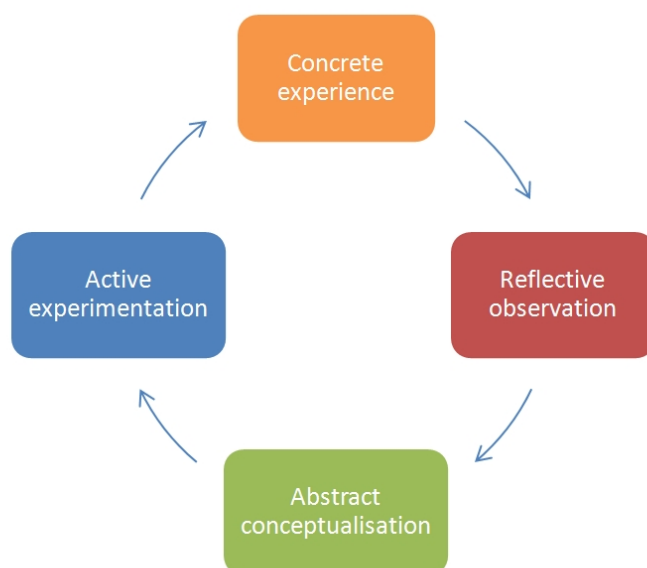
The method, taking a problem as a starting point, is used in many "best practices", but is called differently. The method is used for example at primary school Colegio Luisa de Marillac in Granada and at Code Brabant in Tilburg. We observed that this method, with an actual and real problem as starting point, increases the interest of the learners, because of the connection the task has with the real world. Furthermore, this method is connected directly with the concept of problem-solving competences, which is one of the 21st century skills' most important competences.

**Experiential learning and practice-based learning**

Experiential learning is the process of learning through experience and is more specifically defined as "learning through reflection on doing". Experiential learning follows the four phases of Kolb's learning model. Firstly, an individual or a group starts with a concrete experience. In this model, one learns by doing something, rather than by watching or reading about it. The second step is the reflective observation. The learner steps back from the activity and reflects upon what he or she has done and experienced. In the third step, abstract conceptualisation, the learner makes comparisons between what has been done, reflected upon, and what he or she already knows.

The final stage of the learning cycle (active experimentation) is when the learner considers how he or she is going to put what they have learnt into practice. Planning enables new understanding and translates it into predictions as to what will happen next, or what actions should be taken in order to refine or revise the way a task is to be handled. Practice-based learning or "hands-on learning" is related to experiential learning, but does not necessarily have to involve the students reflecting on their product.

## Reflective model according to Kolb



Different “best practices” use practice-based learning, as is the case of Produktionsskolen (Germany), Code Brabant (The Netherlands), Ontdekstation (The Netherlands) and Colegio Rectora Adelaida de la Calle (Spain). It seems that there is a large difference in the level of reflection in the different steps.

**Cooperative learning & Peer learning**

In most “best practice” projects, the enquiry-based learning method is combined with cooperative learning, which will be discussed later. In these cases, the projects will also promote competences as leadership and collaborative working.

Cooperative learning is defined as follows: students working together to "attain group goals that cannot be obtained by working alone or competitively". The purpose is to promote the learner's involvement in the learning process. As described before, cooperative learning is an important aspect in the previously mentioned learning concepts.

Ted Panitz (1996) described 50 benefits of cooperative learning, among them social and psychological benefits:

Social: the cooperative learning model promotes social interaction. The learner will learn to interact with others and this will help promote communication skills. The learner will develop skills that are important in order to function in society and in the workplace, such as leadership, decision making, trust building, communication and conflict management.

Psychological: because of the fact that the cooperative learning model promotes the learner's involvement in the learning process, the learner will develop a larger intrinsic learning motivation to learn by themselves. Johnson and Johnson claim, "cooperative learning experiences promote more positive attitudes" toward learning and instruction than other teaching methodologies.

One of the principles of cooperative learning is peer-learning. The working groups in cooperative learning can be heterogeneous or homogeneous. Especially in heterogeneous groups, which hold learners with different learning levels, the learners can learn from each other, which can have benefits for everyone in the group. This can be useful in the concept of inclusive education.

### Multiple intelligences

In 1983, Howard Gardner introduced the concept of *multiple intelligences*. His idea was that intelligence cannot be deduced from the learner's intellectual competences. He saw intelligence as the competence to solve problems and to overcome difficulties in a certain cultural environment. On this basis, Gardner developed the concept of eight different intelligences:

1. Musical-rhythmic and harmonic
2. Visual-Spatial
3. Verbal-Linguistic
4. Logical-Mathematical
5. Bodily-Kinaesthetic
6. Interpersonal
7. Intrapersonal
8. Naturalistic



We observed that several “best practices” use methods that required different intelligences and therefore also reinforce these intelligences. Examples of projects that use different intelligences are De ontdekfabriek (The Netherlands), Colegio Luisa de Marillac (Spain), Produktionsskolen (Denmark) and Montessorischule Neuruppin (Germany).

### **Creativity**

As Creativity is mentioned as one of the 21st Century skills, it is important to promote it in learning methods. In everyday life, Creativity is seen as the ability to play a music instrument or to make art. But Kaufmann and Beghetto introduced the “Four C” model, which makes a distinction between “thinking outside the box” on the one hand (mini-C and little-C), and the ability to create art on the other hand. During our observation, we noticed that some projects use art to enforce creativity (Produktionsskolen, De ontdekfabriek), but in most cases they strive to enforce “thinking outside the box”. Thinking outside the box is often already an aspect in previously mentioned learning methods (inquiry-based learning and problem-based learning).

### **Empowerment**

In our opinion, one of the most important goals in education is to empower the learner and to create an intrinsic motivation within them. According to Frymier et al., to be an empowered learner means to be motivated to perform tasks; more specifically, an empowered person finds the tasks meaningful, feels competent to perform them, and feels their efforts have an impact on the scheme of things.

This means that these three dimensions are of great importance: meaningfulness, competence, and impact. In order to create a feeling of impact on the scheme of things to the learner, we should strive to involve him or her learner in their own learning process. This feeling of ownership is an important aspect of the learning approaches mentioned above. Furthermore, the tasks have to feel meaningful to the learner. The meaningfulness of a task will be enhanced by problem- project- and practice-based learning.

To develop and to implement these learning methods, educational organisations need to create the framework for these projects. In our observations, we also focus on this framework's elements, such as the characteristics of the educators, the organisation and the learning environment. In the next chapters, we will discuss these characteristics.

## 6.2. Characteristics of the educator

Several characteristics of the educator were mentioned during the different observations, namely: the educator as role model, the capability to create a good learner-educator relation, the attention to the learner's individual needs, trustworthiness, and an empowering educator.

### **The educator as role model**

In some of the projects, we observed the use of role models. For example, the Wetenschapsknooppunt use famous Dutch experts who lecture children and youngsters on their topic. PIISA-project in Spain also uses university professors to educate the learners about enquiry-based learning. In other best practices, we observed that an inspiring, curious, and open attitude on the teacher's part promoted this behaviour for the learners. Furthermore, we would like to stress that there is a need for role models with a cultural minority background, especially when working with cultural minorities. In this aspect we noticed a shortcoming in the most of the “best practices”.

### **Good learner-educator relation**

In the discussed learning methods, the educator's role differs from that of the formal education methods. The relation between the learner and the educator is less of a vertical relation and more of a horizontal one.

The educator is not so much the authority as a facilitator who evaluates the learning process hand-in-hand with the learner. This requires a different attitude on the educator's part, and this change in attitude sometimes shows in small aspects. A good example of this can be found in the Danish project Sputnik, where the educators are called “adults”, as opposed to “teacher”, or “sir/miss”.

**Empowering teacher**

A characteristic, which is related to the good educator-learner relationship, is the figure of the empowering educator. In order to create empowerment in the learner, the educator, on one hand has to create a trustworthy learning environment where the learners feel confident to make mistakes; while on the other hand the educator has to encourage the learner to experiment. As Johan Wolfgang Goethe wrote about parents, it is also the case for the educator, namely that there are two things children should get from their parents: roots and wings. The roots symbolise the trustworthy environment and the wings, the encouragement.

The trustworthy learning environment was often mentioned in relation to different “best practices”. Projects working with special educational needs, like Sputnik and Produktionsskolen in Denmark and Colegio Luisa de Marillac in Spain, scored especially high on this success factor. Frymier stated that there is an empirical relationship between a clear explanation of the task and the level of empowerment the learner experiences within the task. Furthermore, in the “best practices”, there is a relationship between the level of attention the individual learner needs and the trustworthy learning environment. We will discuss this further on.

We would like to stress that the encouraging educator is of great importance, especially regarding the more non-formal learning concepts. The use of positive reinforcement is a success factor. To reward learners when they act in a positive way instead of punishing them when they act in a wrong way has a strong effect on the learners' enthusiasm. In this regard, it is most important to develop the educator's intrinsic motivation. In this case, the educator has to explain properly why the task is of importance for the learner, so that the learner can internalise these reasons.

**Individual attention to the learner**

Although the learning concepts we already mentioned focused mostly on cooperative learning, the learner's need for individual attention is indeed important. Especially in the “best practice” projects working with learners with special needs (Sputnik, Produktionsskolen) and “best practices” which focus on inclusive education, the individual approach is of great importance.

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Houser, Marian L., and Ann Bainbridge Frymier. "The role of student characteristics and teacher behaviors in students' learner empowerment." *Communication Education* 58.1 (2009): 35-53.

This means that the educator needs to be conscious of the individual level of each learner's competences, and of the learner's psychological needs. In many projects, we noticed a tendency to focus on individual attention and inclusive education, yet in many cases there is a shortage of resources, such as small classrooms or the need for extra educational personnel in the class in order to achieve this. We will discuss these organisational (success) factors in the next chapter.

### 6.3. Organisational factors

#### **School environment**

Many success factors we found were related to the school environment. The use of non-formal methods requires a different approach in the organisation of the school environment than the more formal methods. As we noticed in the previously mentioned methods, many non-formal methods use cooperative learning methods, which means that the arrangement of the classroom needs to be suitable for group work. Furthermore, and especially in the case of experiential learning methods, it is necessary to have available classrooms where the learner can work in a practical manner.

An alternative would be to relocate the learning environment outside of the school. During our observations we recognised that this often causes organisational challenges; we would nevertheless recommend more use of the environment outside the school.

We observed possibilities of out-of-school-activities in the Netherlands (for example at Ontdeklab and Wetenschapsknooppunt), which were mostly possible thanks to co-creation methods. Furthermore, we observed that an inspiring school environment was a success factor for good education. We preferred school environments with a lot of sunlight and an open view to the outside.

In some schools, the learners are involved in the decoration and set up of the class, like at Colegio Padre Manjon (Spain) and Evangelische Gymnasium (Germany). This engagement increases the learner's sense of belonging.

**Learning materials**

Inspiring learning materials also have a significant importance. The materials at Produktions-skolen and Ontdeklab were especially well organised, and the Montessori Schule in Neuruppin had well produced material. Nevertheless, the materials and the school environment are related to the school's financial resources, which depend on the political and financial situation of the country.

**Implementation**

A new educational approach's successful implementation takes a long time and much effort, and depends on several aspects. On the one hand, the school head must show inspiring leadership, while on the other hand it is important to involve the school's whole team. Therefore it is necessary to have a bottom-up approach, in which the parents, the educators, and all the other employees are involved and agree in the process of change.

**Flexible curriculum**

There is also a need for freedom and flexibility in the curriculum, in order to create conditions to experiment with new methods and content. This depends especially on the education policy in the different countries. We observed that the curriculum in the Netherlands and in Denmark is not completely pre-defined, in contrast with Spain and Germany where the government defines the educational curriculum in advance.

## 6.4. Societal factors

**Systemic approach**

In a systemic approach, schools strive to involve their and the child's environment in the learning process, which includes the parents, stakeholders in the neighbourhood, and social organisations. The idea is that education is part of society, and that to involve all the stakeholders creates a bigger responsibility and loyalty towards education.

We observed that several “best practices” connect with their environment. We can take as an example the systemic approach at Colegio Padre Manjon and its attempts to involve the parents and the neighbourhood inside the school, in order to be able to have influence on the learner's whole “system”.

### Co-creation

Part of the systemic approach is also the so-called co-creation. Co-creation is a management initiative, or form of economic strategy, that brings different parties together (for instance, a company and a group of customers), in order to jointly produce a mutually valued outcome.

Schools and other educational organizations are cooperating with other institutions (universities, libraries) for specific, specialized knowledge or facilities, which the schools alone cannot arrange. Furthermore, we observed that schools are cooperating with companies for financial reasons. In this case, the distinction between co-creation and sponsoring is very thin. We observed many co-creation projects in the Netherlands, for example Ontdekstation, Tilburg University Junior and Code Brabant, as well in Spain with PIISA.

### Inclusion

Inclusion in education is an approach to educating students with special educational needs. Under the inclusion model, students with special needs spend most or all of their time with non-special needs students. This experience is very effective for students with special needs and enables them to be more successful in life. Inclusive methodology rejects the use of special schools or classrooms to separate students with disabilities from students without disabilities.

Over the last decades, we have witnessed a trend in inclusive education policies in most countries of the European Union, especially in primary schools.

Unfortunately, this often happens because of financial reasons and not necessarily because of the fact that it is better for the individual child. We observed that inclusive education works better if the school also has the financial resources to give more attention to the students with special needs' specificities.

We also observed a difference in the policies from one country to another. In Denmark for instance, 99% of students with learning disabilities such as dyslexia are placed in general education classrooms until the age of 15. In the Netherlands and in Germany, there is more segregation, especially in secondary schools.

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Prahalad, C.K.; Ramaswamy, V. (2004) "Co-Creation Experiences: The Next Practice in Value Creation". Journal of Interactive Marketing. Volume 18, Number 3.

Robert Holland (2002). "Vouchers Help the Learning Disabled: Lesson from 22 countries: Special-education students thrive in private schools". *School Reform News*. The Heartland Institute.

## 7. Applications of the results in schools

Our learning partnership was focused on non-formal education methods in a formal education context. We have seen many interesting good practices during our study visits in Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Spain, and we've deduced general success factors for education, which are valid for formal and non-formal education.

What can we learn from this learning partnership for the development of our schools?

Where do we see opportunities and how can we overcome obstacles?

Is it possible to apply the success factors in different educational systems?

Analysing the good educational practices in the four participating countries also means to reflect on different systems and organisational models of formal education in Europe.

There is for instance a big difference between secondary education in Germany and the Netherlands on the one hand and Spain and Denmark on the other.

In Germany and the Netherlands we have a differentiated lower secondary education, which means that students are required to follow distinct educational paths after completing primary education.

Meanwhile, in Denmark, the general education provided is common to all pupils, and in Spain all students follow the same general common core curriculum in lower secondary education. 2

We can find another important difference when it comes to budgets and resources. When we compare the public expenditure for education as a share of the gross domestic product, the Netherlands rank relatively high (5,5 %) and Spain relatively low (4,2 %). This difference is even higher when we look at the public expenditure for education as a share of the total public expenditure: Spain 9,3 %, Germany 10,5 % and the Netherlands 12,0 % (no data available for Denmark.) These numbers correspond to different educational resources we've found in the schools we have visited during our study visits in these countries.

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2 The structure of the European Education Systems 2014/2015: Schematic Diagrams, Eurydice – Facts and Figures, Education and Training, European Commission, November 2014

[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/Education/eurydice/documents/facts\\_and\\_figures/education\\_structures\\_EN.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/Education/eurydice/documents/facts_and_figures/education_structures_EN.pdf)

Eurostat, Statistics Explained: Public expenditure on education (excluding early childhood educational development) as a share of GDP, 2014 (%) YB17. File date 21/07/2017

[http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/index.php/File:Public\\_expenditure\\_on\\_education\(excluding\\_early\\_childhood\\_educational\\_development\)\\_as\\_a\\_share\\_of\\_GDP,\\_2014\\_\(%25\)\\_YB17.png](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/index.php/File:Public_expenditure_on_education(excluding_early_childhood_educational_development)_as_a_share_of_GDP,_2014_(%25)_YB17.png)

Eurostat, Statistics Explained: Main indicators for public expenditure on education (excluding early childhood educational development), 2014 YB17. File date 21/07/2017

Participants of our learning partnership from Spain were very impressed by the very good infrastructure, class sizes, and didactic materials that schools in the Netherlands or Denmark offered to their pupils.

According to the Global Competitiveness Report of the World Economic Forum, Dutch schools are ranked under the top 11 concerning education systems. But not only do they provide good academic results, they also have a high score concerning the well-being of their students. Dutch schools typically don't give much homework until secondary level, and students report little pressure and stress.

There are different traditions and ways of educating in European countries. Some countries are more flexible and others more rigid concerning their governmental guidelines and curricula. But this does not mean that the success factors we analysed in our research are not valuable for all the countries, as the requirements for a modern education that addresses the challenges of the 21st century are the same in all European Countries. The differences above mentioned define the framework for education and facilitate or hinder changes. There are barriers for the implementation of non-formal learning methods through national laws and regulations.

For example in Spain, no volunteers are allowed in schools during classes. We even visited a school where parents have to hide when they support the school library during school hours. In Spain the curricular guidelines in general are quite rigid, but it was still possible to develop a very dynamic, interactive, and flexible learning model in schools, the “learning communities”. This educational approach for schools was developed in the 1980s by a research group from the University of Barcelona, the Research Centre on Theories and Practices to Overcome Inequalities, *Centro de Investigación en Teorías y Prácticas Superadoras de Desigualdades* (CREA). In 1995 it was implemented in the first school and nowadays there are over 200 schools as Learning Communities in Spain. This model has also extended on an international level.

This example goes to show that it is possible to overcome barriers related to national laws and regulations and that the cooperation with the University can be an important key element in the transformation process of our educational systems.



The cooperation and co-creation between different educational institutions, especially schools, universities, associations and private educational initiatives, turned out to be a very important element concerning educational innovation.

Good practice examples were for instance the Tilburg University Junior (TUJ) in the Netherlands, a project the University carries out with primary and secondary schools and which aims at giving the pupils the chance to get in touch with science, to design, to explore, and to research. PIISA is a similar initiative but for secondary school pupils, in Spain.

Schule im Aufbruch (Schools on the move) in Germany is an interesting example of private initiatives cooperating with schools. Schule im Aufbruch is a networking project and the initiative of persons involved in education, which aims at transforming our educational structures and methods in order to allow pupils to develop their full potential.

Three of the partner organizations of our learning partnership are organizations for adult education: Interkulturelles Netzwerk in Germany, Intercultural life in Spain, and Schoolclash in the Netherlands. They cooperate with schools and offer very successful international youth exchanges, study visits for apprentices and training courses for teachers.

A basic conclusion of our learning partnership was that the best educational school model for all doesn't exist, but that we need a diversity of learning and teaching systems, because every person has got different needs, different competences and different interests. There are pupils who feel well and are able to learn well in a very free educational structure like the Democratic School Eindhoven we visited in the Netherlands, and other pupils need a very clear and structured system, for instance the pupils with special needs at the private school Sputnik, in the Netherlands.

Inclusion models are also different. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities from 2006 states that persons with disabilities should be guaranteed the right to inclusive education at all levels, regardless of age, without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity. We've seen some good practice examples where pupils with special needs are educated in the general education system in the same classroom with their classmates with adequate support (e.g. Colegio Padre Manjón or Colegio Luisa de Marillac, Spain). The Hundested Skole, a school in Denmark, created additional classes (P-classes) for students aged 10 to 12, who are disturbing the learning process in their classes. They stay in the P-classes for some hours per day, where they get special support in smaller

groups and in a more quiet environment. A third option was the private school Sputnik in the Netherlands with a department for pupils on the Autism spectrum, who were not able to follow classes in the general education system. In this school the whole environment and organisation was adapted to the needs of these pupils.

But however different, all these concepts have one element in common: the importance of the educators' attitude! For all the different educational experiences, one core element for success is an attitude that radiates confidence, esteem, good relationships and self-responsibility. The students need to feel well, valued with their different abilities, and free to take responsibility for their own learning process.

Another success factor is a welcoming school environment. We've seen many creative ideas on how to improve the school environment with a low budget and how to include "out-of-class" learning.

Educational methods centred on the person and their capacities, needs and interests, and that include different levels of learning (cognitive, emotional and behavioural) are another core element concerning our success factors. The good practices we observed focuses mainly on problem-based or enquiry-based project work, experiential education, dialogical and cooperative learning.

In some of the schools, no schoolbooks are used, and the whole learning process is built on enquiry-based project work. In other schools, the pupils had the chance to create, organize, and develop projects by themselves like challenges (organizing and realizing trips on their own), managing some areas of the school (cafeteria), music bands or solidarity projects. Others focused on developing artistic talents by giving the pupils the opportunity to do art projects (painting, photography) with the support of the school, and to present their work to the local community.

Using real life examples to teach (a local television program, producing something useful for the local community) was especially successful in vocational training with young people with learning difficulties.

Creating spaces with inspiring learning material for free learning sessions or reserving one week of the year for artistic, scientific or creative project work were some of the ideas, which are possible to implement in different educational systems.

Implementing changes in schools is difficult, but possible, and of vital importance. It is a slow process that needs to include the whole educational system: pupils, teachers, the headmaster, parents and families, and ideally also the neighbourhood. It can be useful to start with small steps, to evaluate the experience and to continue step by step.

We also can deeply recommend learning from other experiences in Europe. Our study visits have been very inspiring, and we all felt empowered and motivated to continue working on transformation processes for another education.

## 8. Application of the results on adult education

By adult education, we mean voluntary learning after school education and/or Vocational training; tertiary education after the age of 18 is also included.

In Germany, the term *Erwachsenenbildung* – adult education is often a synonym of *Weiterbildung* – in-service education. After the Second World War, the *Politische Bildung* – political education, was added. The biggest, state-financed and state-wide education formats can be divided into the following fields:

- ☐ The professional adult education, oriented on expansion of competences in the work field
- ☐ *Volkshochschulen* (adult education centre): organisations that are funded by the municipality based on the bourgeois-liberal roots of popular education
- ☐ The trade unions' education system, based on the tradition of the labour education
- ☐ The confessional adult education, especially on the part of the catholic and evangelical church

Besides these dominant options, a plurality of different organisations for adult education was developed. Many non-governmental organisations, partly restricted to specific themes, have evolved since 1970 in Germany. These organisations often work in this field, but not just on themes like cultural education, family education, political education, and intercultural and linguistic education.

On the European level, the goals of adult education are rather linked to the labour market: the focus is set on the goal to broaden the educational possibilities for adults with a low set of skills, knowledge, and competences, for instance persons without any ISCED qualification. These educational possibilities give these adults the chance to acquire a minimum level in reading, writing, mathematical and digital competences, and a broader spectrum of skills, knowledge and competences, which have an importance for the labour market and the participation in society.

We assume that, in the field of adult education, especially in the underdeveloped areas of the European Union, a change of policy happens and thus in the direction of professional adult education, because of the European Social Fund. In countries with less fixed models of adult education, the educational contents will change to the disadvantage of lifelong learning and towards the labour market. This means there will be less space for education focused on personal interests and on supporting social competences, which have great importance for the individual and the community.

In just half a sentence, the European agenda for adult education opens an action area which is important for many educational organisations: “Adult education offers persons who are affected by unemployment, reorganisation and professional transition, qualification and retraining opportunities and at the same time it contributes to social integration, to active citizenship and to personal development”.

For the organisations involved in this project, adult education implies a crucial focus on the latter. Active citizenship and personal development can hardly be learned in a formal education setting with formal methods. It needs a fundamental change in the idea of education. Maybe the Danish model of folk high schools can be an example. In this case, around 3500 adults living in a rural area can learn what they like and take the time they need in order to do you. “You can study philosophy, you can make music, you can play theatre and try to be an artist, but not with a professional perspective. It has to do with the fact that you can make your own life evolve.”

In this model, the focus is on the motivation of the participants: they are the ones responsible for their own educational process outside of the workplace and they learn because they are interested in the theme and not because of the fact that they will have better employment opportunities afterwards.

If this assumption is the central premise of learning in adult education, the education organisations must adjust their educational offers. The classic educational methods and forms, which the participants know from formal education processes, are not useful.

This evolution walks hand in hand with a new definition of the terms *education* and *learning*. *Education* implicates that the educational organisation has the knowledge, but that the information can be interpreted by the learner in a process-orientated and equal way. All the stakeholders, including the educators, are part of a common learning process.

The concept of non-formal learning that is successfully used by alternative adult education organisations implies a process-oriented approach: at its core are the learner's personal development, group-oriented learning, as well as interactive, participatory, and experience-based aspects of learning. Therefore, it is about an extension of personal and interpersonal social competences, and the development of humanistic and democratic values, attitudes and behaviours, which occur in addition to the acquisition of concrete knowledge. Personal interaction and a combination of cognitive, affective, and practical learning are essential to achieve this goal.

Non-formal adult education has to be considered as a part of the lifelong learning process. If we monitor this process in a competent way, we can manage to spark the participants' curiosity about learning once more. Learning disabilities and frustrations, which unfortunately disable the natural motivation to learn in many formal educational processes, could be broken down by this approach.

Informal learning can also be part of modern adult education, if the learning environment in which this is possible can be created by the organisations. These conditions are easier to create in the modern adult educational organisations than in old-fashioned systems such as the Folk high schools.

It is possible that the distinction between formal and non-formal learning on the one hand, and informal learning as parts of the lifelong process on the other hand, would no longer be necessary, if we could offer contents and methods in all learning phases, which comply with the needs of the learner. The ideal learning situation is one where it is possible to keep each individual in focus at all times and stimulates a higher motivation.

Unfortunately, this learning approach is (still) in stark contrast with the national and European education systems formulated by the national ministries of education, at least in the case of school education. Now is probably the time to question why people of a certain age group, in a certain region, are going through the same learning steps at the same time and with the same rhythm.

During our European learning partnership, we visited many organisations, which integrate successful concepts and methods of democratic non-formal learning in formal educational processes.

The success factors defined over the course of the learning partnership have crucial consequences on the field of adult education in Europe, because they can result in a fundamental change in learning. When we assume that the learner and his or her interest are the focus of our activities, the education organisations have to create offers for these personal interests. Classic education centres, such as the German Folk high schools, have to adopt their course system and to become learning places, where motivated educators can react to the needs of the individual learners.

During the training in the Netherlands, we visited a democratic school, which functions on these principles. The learners can come and go when they want and they learn different contents when and with whom they want. The teachers are available at all times.

A learning venue has to meet our success factors, it has to be welcoming and make learners want to stay. It has to be multifunctional and provide easy access to information. In short, the learners have to experience these places as centres for competences, which comply to their learning needs.

One aspect that needs to be discussed is if these places have to be available only for adults from certain regions. In an ideal scenario, these learning venues could be created in all of Europe and available to all the inhabitants of the continent. In this case, individual learning journeys could be made, in which foreigners from every background, age, religion, and experience could get information about the specific region, culture, and language.

The role of the educators also has to change fundamentally. We have to question the term *teacher* in the context of adult education. Contrary to certain classic ideas, there is no monopoly on knowledge in the teacher-student relationship. Learners have also acquired a high rate of cognitive knowledge, experience, and competences. The monopoly of knowledge is often obtained by the sole power of an “important” qualification.

In an adapted pedagogy, the educators' role is to monitor the learning process. They are responsible for creating an atmosphere of trust, free of hierarchy and in which a transfer of knowledge is possible. The learners must also be able to leave their comfort zone in order to make learning possible. This is only possible if the learner is getting positive feedback regarding their individual learning process. They have to understand that learning implies effort, but has positive results.

Educators do not necessarily need a university degree. Learners of all ages often have a higher rate of competences and are apt to help out in moments of knowledge deficit. In some fields, youngsters have a higher rate of knowledge than older individuals, for example in the field of information technology and social media. Older people tend to have more knowledge about regional history or classic building techniques. Learners could explain how to produce honey or how to repair a bike.

The future education professionals will have the role of facilitators. They can initiate the learning process and consult a specialist if and when needed. They are capable to transmit and support learning methods. As mentioned above, the visited organisations are very successful with projects in which learners go through problem-oriented, experiential, and cooperative processes. These are methods, which have proved their worth when used in different education fields, and upon which we were able to base our work.



## 9. Conclusion

The discussion around education in Europe shows that there is a large dissatisfaction about the existent educational systems. The offers in the field of formal education and especially in the schools of southern and central Europe don't seem to answer the needs of our complex societies, of the employers and the learners.

In our opinion, it is a big mistake to overpower the natural urge to learn with restrictions, constraints, grades, and penalties. Learning is no longer fun, and it is related to huge efforts and discipline. However, we learn every day outside of education, although not in a conscious manner nor with proper recognition.

We have to start an educational campaign aiming to change all the aspects of education. The individual, with his or her needs, has been brought back in focus. Learning only inside a classroom as well as the grade system both seem to be outdated.

We have to motivate learners, to develop new methods to acquire knowledge, competences, and skills. This seems to be the basic task for parents, schools, and adult education. Furthermore, there must be specialists to support these learning processes.

We also have to discuss the actual learning contents and goals, as well methods. As long as we work with curricula oriented on last century's standards, the learner's motivational deficit is highly understandable.

## 10. Description of the visited organizations

### Code Brabant

Code Brabant is an initiative of the University of Tilburg, the library of Tilburg, and the Jheronimus Academy of Data Science. Goal is to promote access to coding for everybody. Here everyone can learn to make a video game, to produce a computer animation or to build a robot. Code Brabant organizes Coderdojos, workshops and other events related to coding.

Coderdojo is a monthly open event, where everyone between the age of 7 and 17 can come to learn coding. Sometimes the Coderdojo event has a theme, like video games or animations. Coderdojo is promoted by a worldwide community of organizations. The computer software used during the Coderdojo is accessible to everyone and open source.

### Code Brabant

Warandelaan 2,  
5037 AB Tilburg,  
Nederland  
<https://codetilburgu.wordpress.com/>

### Colegio Luisa de Marillac

Colegio Luisa de Marillac is a private primary school, which receives public funding. It belongs to the Foundation San Juan de Ávila. It is situated in the district of Almanjayar, in the northern suburbs of Granada. The population of this neighbourhood shows significant problematics related to unemployment, poverty, and social exclusion. The school has been working in this environment for more than 30 years. Its history of surviving has been and still is a challenge for the whole educative community.

The school is a Learning Community (see “Learning Communities” explanation). Its main principles are inclusive education and attention to diversity. The classes consist mainly on enquiry-based project work. Some of the methods and materials used follow the Montessori concept.

**Colegio Luisa de Marillac**

Calle Molino Nuevo, 0 S/N

18011 Granada

<https://inmacolegioluisademarillac.wordpress.com/>

**Colegio Rectora Adelaida de la Calle**

Colegio Rectora Adelaida de la Calle is a primary school in Malaga that receives more than 300 children from preschool to secondary education. It is one of the few schools in this region that has implemented project work in classes as a whole. Instead of following textbooks, the teachers purport topics and let the pupils research – in Internet, in the classroom library's books and magazines, or at home. After this, they present what they have learned. There are also some school projects like a school garden or a comic creation project. In the CEIP Rectora Adelaida de la Calle, this concept is used from age three to twelve with success, and the parents association is deeply involved in the school development and offers different extracurricular activities.

**C.E.I.P. Rectora Adelaida de la Calle**

C/ Alicia Alonso, 1

29010 Málaga

<https://blogsaverroes.juntadeandalucia.es/ceiprectoraadelaidadelacalle/>

**Colegio Padre Manjón**

Colegio Padre Manjón School is a school in Almanjáyar, a popular and disadvantaged neighbourhood of Granada. They have been providing education from preschool until secondary education for 30 years. This school year, it has 450 pupils, 38 teachers and more than 100 volunteers.

Five years ago the school started the process to become a Learning Community. A Learning Community is a school project, which is focused on a social and educational transformation, based on the dialogical learning and the participation of the community (see "Learning Communities" explanation). In the afternoon, the school offers a large number of activities for all ages: English lessons, library, dance classes... They also have a special department who addresses diversity issues and offers support to pupils with learning difficulties.

**Colegio Padre Manjón**

Avd. de Pulianas, 42

18011 Granada

<http://www.padremanjon.net/>

**Democratische school Eindhoven (DOE040)**

DOE40 is a democratic school for learners aged 4 to 17. It follows the principles of the democratic education. Democratic education is an educational ideal in which democracy is both a goal and a method of instruction. It brings democratic values to education and can include self-determination within a community of equals, as well as values such as justice, respect, and trust. Democratic education is often specifically emancipating, with the students' voices being equal to the teacher's.

Their mission is to offer an inspiring learning environment in which young people can develop, based on equality, as self-conscious and creative world citizens, who can contribute on their own way to a changing society.

This results in a school system in which the students take responsibility in their own learning process. They are flexible to learn where and what they want. The educators facilitate this process. Furthermore, the school works on a democratic basis: the educators are equal to the learners and the decisions in the school are made in a democratic way.

**Democratische school Eindhoven**

Blaarthemseweg 83

5502 JT Veldhoven

[info@doe040.nl](mailto:info@doe040.nl)

[www.doe040.nl](http://www.doe040.nl)

**Deutsch-Französisches Jugendwerk**

The French-German Youth Office (FGYO) is an organisation, which serves to foster Franco-German cooperation. It is a centre of expertise for both countries' governments. It acts as an adviser and intermediary for local and regional authorities, as well as for the civil society

in France and Germany. The FGYO's budget for 2014 was 24.35 million Euros, originated from equal contributions from the French and German governments. With this fund, a total of 194,043 young people took part in different actions.

The FGYO addresses all young people from the age of three to thirty: kindergartners, apprentices, young unemployed persons, employees, students, or pupils. Furthermore, it confronts current issues, which concern young people in both countries and adapts its offers to the everyday life and needs of young people. It is a unique laboratory for transnational projects and European cooperation.

International exchanges are the focus of attention of the FGYO-funded programmes. Important criteria are language and reciprocity, i.e. a return meeting takes place. Priority is given to intercultural learning, which should be as intense as possible and accordingly monitored.

The FGYO wants to guarantee and trigger the quality of educational work as well as support language promotion in bi- and tri-lateral meetings.

In 2014, 145 bi- and tri-lateral trainings for special staff were funded. The topics range from intercultural education, language promotion methods and teaching, to trainings on social issues as well as specific educational concepts of intercultural learning. A total of 1,994 team leaders were trained. 20 advanced trainings for teachers were organised by the FGYO or its partners with the aim to use the potential of student exchanges in a profitable and educationally valuable manner.

Another important task for the FGYO is to support language acquisition (target group: children and young people), as well as to support multipliers. One important method, which was developed by the FGYO and some partner organisations from the civil society is "language animation". We were able to experience this method with a half day of training during our visit to Neuruppin.

#### **Deutsch-Französisches Jugendwerk**

Büro Berlin  
Molkenmarkt 1  
D – 10179 Berlin  
[www.dfjw.org](http://www.dfjw.org)

**Evangelische Schule Neuruppin**

After the “peaceful revolution” in Germany, parents, teachers, and members of the church wished to found a christian school in Neuruppin. Its concept is based on the connection between reform pedagogical ideas and christian human understanding. The concept is moulded by respect as well the uniqueness, dignity, and freedom of each individual. The school aims to stimulate the students’ confidence in their own abilities, skills, and individual thinking, as well as behaviour and feelings in order to encourage each child’s gifts and talents and to develop their own personality.

One founding principle is the conviction that children are able to learn and to unfold their own personality and skills by themselves. To achieve this, the personal learning progress will define the performance requirements. At the same time, the children learn that the differences between individuals can be enriching for the community. The school should not just pass on knowledge, but also transmit the competence to take responsibility for acquiring knowledge and skills, having regard to one’s own learning pace, but also to learn from one’s failures and recognise that something positive can be developed out of mistakes.

The diverse offer of working communities presented at the Evangelische Schule Neuruppin aims for a holistic approach. The main focus is the musical and artistic field and sports. In these working communities, the youngsters can find their centres of interest and pursue a goal with their classmates. The cooperation with organisations outside of the school is integrated in the practices.

**Evangelische Schule Neuruppin**

- Gymnasium -

Regattastr. 9

16816 Neuruppin

[www.evangelische-schule-neuruppin.de](http://www.evangelische-schule-neuruppin.de)

**Hundested Skole- P-Class**

Hundested Skole is a public primary and secondary school in Hundested (Denmark). The school has 800 pupils aged 6 to 15 and approximately 80 teachers and educators. The school day goes from 8am until 3pm. The subjects are Danish, Mathematics, Art, English, German,

French, Christianity, History, Sport, and Natural sciences. After the 9th grade the students have to pass exams in different subjects to continue their school progression.

The P-class is a class with pupils who spend a shorter or longer period in the class. They are referred to this class by their form teachers because of behaviour problems. The pupils are 10 to 12 years old. During their time in the class, the group of teachers revise the pupils and decide if the pupils can spend more or less time in their main class. There are always two adults in the class.

During the 9th grade it is compulsory to have a week in which the pupils work on a project. The teachers decide what the topic will be and the pupils decide on a sub topic. This year the topic was Opposites. The pupils work in groups in which they design and carry out the project with a presentation and a question and answer session with the rest of the class as an audience.

**Hundested Skole**

Lerbjergvej 1 B

3390 Hundested

hundestedskole@halsnaes.dk

www.hundestedskole.skoleporten.dk

**Instituto de Educación Secundaria Alhambra**

Alhambra High School has been teaching for 31 years in the popular district of Zaidín in Granada. They provide secondary education, baccalaureate and post-secondary education: a higher level of vocational training in sign language interpretation, and training to access higher levels of vocational training. They participate in a support program for students who are deaf or partially deaf.

Intercultural life has cooperated very successfully in different non-formal education projects with this school. During our visit we were interested to know more about their participation in two current extracurricular activities: the PIISA project (see description) and the Debating Challenge, a public speaking competition in which students participate during the school break.

**I.E.S. Alhambra**

Calle Beethoven, 2

18006 Granada

[www.juntadeandalucia.es/averroes/centros-tic/18010185/helvia/sitio/](http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/averroes/centros-tic/18010185/helvia/sitio/)

**Schools as learning communities**

A Learning Community is a school project, which is focused on a social and educational transformation, based on the dialogical and cooperative learning and the participation of the community. Families, volunteers, students, neighbourhood and friends participate in the learning process, not only indirectly but also by taking part in daily activities.

In the 1980s, CREA research centre of the University of Barcelona conducted a research on successful international experiences regarding how to overcome school dropout and to improve peaceful coexistence in schools. The concept of Learning Communities was built on the basis of these international practices and theories and with dialogical learning as a theoretical frame of reference. In 1995 the first school started the transformation process; nowadays there are more than 120 Learning Communities in Spain and it has also grown on an international level.

<http://comunidadesdeaprendizaje.net>

**Montessorischule Neuruppin**

The Montessorischule Neuruppin is a place for integral education for children. The primary school shows particular attention to the development of autonomy and self-responsibility, connected with the student's social competence.

The goals are:

- ☐ to impart education, which is valuable for the future;
- ☐ to encourage the children's strength and to face shortcomings effectively;
- ☐ to encourage diversity, interests, and talents;
- ☐ to offer the children a healthy environment;



- ☐ to create a concentrated, not stressed, working atmosphere for the children;
- ☐ to make school attendance as a nice life experience as possible;
- ☐ to offer an integral school, in which children and parents feel connected

In the afternoon, we offer a variety of work communities and learning possibilities that can be chosen by the children. This is an integral part of each child's personal plan and an obligation for the whole year. The children can attend after primary school, and also our secondary school until the 10th class.

The Montessori-philosophy in short:

Montessori assumes that every child has the skills to build their own personality. The child goes through different developmental phases, called sensible phases. The Montessori-educators' duty is to recognise and to enable these phases.

Two crucial ideas are the basis of our modern approach:

- ☐ To accept every child, wherever they are in their development and to bring them as far as possible
- ☐ Education to autonomy

Furthermore, we have to cope with changing demands and environmental conditions. Totally new fields of knowledge are opening and we strive to take them into account, for instance foreign languages taught in primary school, dealing with computers and social media, and the ever-expanding field of natural and political sciences.

### **Montessorischule Neuruppin**

in freier Trägerschaft der IBiS Integrative Bildungsstätten GmbH

Wichmannstraße 17

16816 Neuruppin

gs@montessori-neuruppin.de

[http://www.ibis-prignitz.de/grundschule\\_NP/index.html](http://www.ibis-prignitz.de/grundschule_NP/index.html)

**PIIISA**

PIIISA is an educational project offering Granada secondary school students a modern and innovative way of learning in the field of science. It arises from the collaboration between the Delegation of Education in Granada, the Higher Council for Scientific Research (CSIC) and the University of Granada. The main objective is to show pupils what research is exactly and how to do it properly. Therefore students are tutored by teachers and scientists working with scientific and technical instruments to understand the importance of science for social and economic development. By now more than 2000 students from 35 institutes have participated in more than 250 projects led by 400 scientists from the University of Granada and the CSIC.

<http://piiisa.es>

**Ontdekstation Tilburg**

The Ontdekstation Tilburg is an initiative of the Platform Promotie Techniek Midden-Brabant and De Ontdekkfabriek Eindhoven. It is founded by the municipality of Tilburg and different companies. The Ontdekkfabriek is an interactive museum where children and youngsters can discover technology. The goal is to prepare children and youngsters for professions of the future and to let them discover their talents, especially, 21st century talents such as problem solving, creative thinking, research, designing and technological knowledge are promoted, but also cooperation, communication and social and cultural competences.

The Ontdekkfabriek cooperates with different primary schools and offers day programmes for schools in the museum. Furthermore, they also offer lessons inside the classroom about technology and science.

**Ontdekkfabriek Tilburg**

Spoorzone Hal 79

Burgemeester Brokxlaan 20

5041 SB Tilburg

[info@ontdekstation.nl](mailto:info@ontdekstation.nl)

[www.ontdekstation.nl](http://www.ontdekstation.nl)

## **Produktionsskolen**

Produktionsskolen (in English: the Production School) offers individual courses based on practical work and production for young people under 25 who are in an inappropriate training situation. The participants have not completed basic education and do not have the qualifications to enter education programmes, but will most likely have finished the mandatory schooling minimum of nine years.

The target group can be described as persons in need of orientation, maladjusted adolescents, or persons who risk dropping out of the ordinary school system.

With individualised courses, the teaching is based on the participants' skills and needs and contributes to the development of the participants' professional, social, and personal skills in order to strengthen the opportunities for continued education or transition to sustainable employment. The classes help participants to understand what a good working environment is.

The education includes basic, cultural, and professional skills. The school is not exam-orientated and works with continuous intake and transitions of the youngsters. Most of the education takes place in workshops which include: woodwork and paint, movie and TV, IT, metal and auto, kitchen, music, office, second hand shop. The participants spend up to a year in this school.

## **Schule im Aufbruch gGmbH**

Schule im Aufbruch is an initiative, which aims to develop children's potential. We want to have schools, which obtain and encourage the innate enthusiasm and creativity of children. To enforce the development of potential in the school, we need a new learning culture, a diverse learning format and an appreciative attitude towards the children. It is important to create conditions for the children to take over responsibility for themselves, for others, and for the planet.

The important things are appreciation, relationship, trust, responsibility.

This is where a culture of potential development succeeds, where we do not instruct children, but we take them seriously as autonomous designers of their path of learning and

as creative discoverers their diverse skills and potential. From the perspective of potential development, the educators become dialogue partners, perfect tutors, and encouraging supporters.

Schule im Aufbruch monitors and supports the schools various stakeholders (teachers, parents, students, organisations, and education authorities) in their process to create more potential development in the learning process.

In this case, we offer the following:

- ☐ Inspiration: we often can't even imagine how great we can make a school. We want to transmit these examples to other schools. Presentations, books, or fresh ideas are often a good impulse to create a vision or to develop a new school.
- ☐ Encouragement: every change has to create meaning, energy, trust, and time. We want to encourage schools to develop a new learning culture. There is a lot of free space for new development ideas. We have to use them! You just have to take them and start.
- ☐ Networking: we are a networking platform for everyone who wants to engage in these constructive transformations. Change is only possible together.  
We do not pursue a certain pedagogical concept nor do we offer definite ready-made recipes. We show practices that work in different schools. Each school chooses its own approach.

### **Initiative Schule im Aufbruch gGmbH**

Wallstr. 32, Haus A

10179 Berlin

[www.schule-im-aufbruch.de](http://www.schule-im-aufbruch.de)

[dialog@schule-im-aufbruch.de](mailto:dialog@schule-im-aufbruch.de)

### **Sputnik**

Sputnik is a private alternative to regular education. Learners who do not fit in the regular education system attend this school. We visited the department that takes in students with autism spectrum disorders and mental vulnerability, which covers for instance infantile autism, atypical autism and Asperger's syndrome, but also cross-diagnoses such as ADD,

OCD, anxiety, and so on. Sputnik also receives students with mental vulnerability, socio-emotional disturbance and ADHD.

Sputnik is based on a systemic / narrative framework. Its integrated approach means the same adults who teach students are responsible for the educational treatment of their social and personal challenges. It is a conscious methodological choice; Sputnik's experience shows that working on tight, evolving relationships with well known adults facilitate learning and the pupils' development.

Sputnik Hejrevej is for students from the 7th to the 9th grade with special needs in the field of psychiatry, autism spectrum disorders, anxiety, OCD and similar issues.

The school's surface is over 1000m<sup>2</sup>. Each of two departments works with a specific student age group. In addition, we share the house with Sputnik, The transit – a 10th grade class for students with autism and mental vulnerability.

The school has classrooms that can accommodate 12 to 14 students, which are used for instruction and other functions with workshop activities, yoga, etc. There are also smaller classrooms for 2 to 4 students, common areas with table football, billiards, TV with consoles, card and board games, a kitchen where people can cook, a small music room and a room for crafts, design and creative teaching.

Classrooms are organised according to the students' class and level, and what additional needs the pupils might have, relative calm, shielding, social resources and ability to work independently.

### **Skolen Sputnik Hejrevej**

Hejrevej 43, 1. sal,  
2400 København NV  
hejrevej@skolensputnik.dk  
www.skolensputnik.dk

### **Theresia lyceum Tilburg**

The Theresia Lyceum is a catholic secondary school (HAVO-VWO) in Tilburg and has approximately 1200 students. The school's mission is to prepare the learners for university and to an independent, critical, and social attitude as young adults.

Three aspects are important:

- ☐ They consider the learner's intellectual interest as a valuable quality and challenge the learners to develop their talents.
- ☐ They strive to stimulate the student into becoming a critical and independent young adult. They focus on a reflection about the world and the student's role in it. The student has to find their balance with his or herself and with the others. That means that the focus is not just on the cognitive competences, but also on the creative, social, and sports development.
- ☐ They aim to transmit a respectful attitude to oneself (a healthy life attitude), to the others (a societal role in a pluralistic society), and to the environment. The teacher has an important role as an example.

The school has a special education program for highly gifted students. In this program, the highly gifted students skip a part of the regular lessons and work on their own projects. Furthermore, the school also offers many extra-curricular activities.

#### **Theresialyceum**

Professor Cobbenhagenlaan 5  
5037 DA Tilburg  
info@theresialyceum.nl  
www.theresialyceum.nl

#### **Tilburg University Junior**

Tilburg University Junior (TUU) is a project of the University of Tilburg. They organise activities for primary and secondary school pupils. The goal of the activities is to give the pupils the chance to explore, to research, and to design, and to get them in touch with science. The organisation supports secondary and primary school teachers for the implementation of scientific education in the classroom. Furthermore, they organise activities in the universities for children and youngsters, during which the target groups can learn about different scientific themes.

One of their initiatives is an internet platform (<http://www.juniorkennisbank.nl>) where children and parents can find more information about science-related themes.