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NEWSLETTER

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Dear Reader,

This is the first newsletter of the METIKOS-Project “**Informal Language Learning for Immigrants**”. Nine Partner organizations from 6 EU-countries have come together to promote the use of informal language learning methodologies for the training of immigrants. The aim of the project is to adapt informal learning methodologies that already exist (language café, tandem, virtual language café) to meet the specific needs of the immigrants. With this and the following three newsletters we will inform you about project activities and results as well as other relevant information. Please contact us for any comments and recommendations. You can also join us on our website www.metoikos.eu

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INFORMATION ABOUT METIKOS -PROJECT

METIKOS - Informal Language Learning for Immigrants aims to promote the use of informal language learning methodologies for the training of immigrants. The aim of the project is to adapt informal learning methodologies that already exist (language café, tandem, virtual language café) to meet the specific needs of the immigrants. More specifically, through this project we will organise:

- Learning sessions (based on discussion and dialogue) in public places (café, cultural spaces etc.) with the aid of a facilitator
- Tandem® learning sessions where the immigrant will teach his language to someone who is interested in learning it and, in return, s/he will teach the immigrant the language of his/her country
- Learning sessions through the use of social networking where learning will be based on informal discussion and exchange of experiences between immigrants, facilitators and natural speakers.

At the same time, the project aims to develop internet tools which will aim to facilitate the language training of the immigrants (virtual language café, online repository of existing language resources). The project is co-financed by the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union (Grundvig) and was approved for funding in July 2011. 9 partners from 6 countries participate in the project (Greece, Italy, France, Spain, UK and Germany). They represent all the relevant stakeholders of the sector (immigrants association, NGOs working with immigrants, language learning organizations, local partnerships, organizations experienced in ICT enabled training). The project will last for 2 years from November 2011 till October 2013.

**METIKOS - Helping Immigrants to learn
the language
of their host country**



MEETINGS

3rd METIKOS-Meeting in Donostia / San Sebastian (Spain)

Project partners from Greece, UK, France, Germany, Italy and Spain met from 10 to 12 January 2013 in the city of San Sebastian (in Basque language Donostia) to discuss the further development of METIKOS-Project. The main purpose of the workshops and meetings was discussion of the methodology for informal language learning in the 3 fields of language café, tandem® learning and cyber language café. Also questions of project administration, dissemination and evaluation were a subject of discussion. The project participants also met with teachers and students from Zuhazti Public School, where the meeting took place. During these talks and during a guided walk through the city participants learnt a lot about the Basque Country and its difficult past and present within the Spanish State.



On the last day, the project was presented to the people in a public workshop in Loiola Cultural Centre. Participants were particularly interested in the presentation from tandem learner Moona from San Sebastian, who told us about her experience of tandem learning. She took part in 3 tandems with people from Morocco; she learnt from them Moroccan Arabic and a special dialect, while the Moroccan people learnt from her Spanish or Basque language. At the end of the workshop a press conference gave space to media representatives to learn more about the project and to ask questions.

2nd METIKOS-Meeting in Mansle (France)

The Meeting in Mansle (France, 10th May – 12th May 2012) saw the completion of the first task of the partnership – the research phase. The University of Southampton, Tandem Foundation and The Hellenic Culture House had undertaken intensive desk research into the use of language cafés, the tandem method and cyber cafés across Europe to support informal language learning, while the other partners carried out field research into the needs of their target audiences.

Feedback at the meeting clearly identified that there were common results across the partnership:

- Adult language learners suffered from a lack of confidence in learning and using a new language
- There was a need to practice the language through conversation rather than or in addition to taking formal language learning classes
- Target groups in every country identified that they wished to learn a language in a non formal environment
- Target groups in every country wanted to learn the language to support both social and cultural integration to improve their quality of life, as well as help some seek and obtain employment.
- All countries identified that parents wanted to learn the language to support their children who were attending school in their host country.

Each partner produced a comprehensive report on their research tasks, which was based on a research framework discussed and agreed at the first transnational meeting of the partnership in Athens in December 2011.

The aim of our project is to adapt informal learning methodologies that already exist (language café, tandem, virtual language café) in the specific needs of the immigrants.



RESEARCH FEEDBACK FROM FRANCE

Research in France was carried through a dedicated research workshop which attracted 15 attendees, but this was supported with research questionnaires being circulated through the Mansle Tourism Office, by e mail to stakeholders and new contacts and use of a stakeholder's face book page. By the deadline for the report, 38 questionnaires had been completed but questionnaires continue to be received as the MORRIS Association is using the interest in this research to also build up the stakeholder network and continue to create awareness and interest in the METIKOS project. Although the target groups in France are mainly those speaking English as their mother tongue and in the main much older people, the needs of these audiences in regard to language learning are very just as great as the target groups in some of the other partner countries, where perhaps they have been forced to leave their own country. One of the greatest barriers in the Charente is issue of rurality and lack of a public transport infrastructure between the small towns and villages, with reliance on private car use to access any facilities and resources. It is because of this that the MORRIS Association is working with already established local associations to deliver the METIKOS project and reach the target audiences.

MIGRATION AND LANGUAGE-LEARNING IN BRANDENBURG (GERMANY)

Brandenburg is one of the 16 federal states of Germany; it surrounds the national capital and city-state Berlin. The capital of Brandenburg is Potsdam. In the Brandenburg Land there are about 6% (130.000) people with migration background (1st, 2nd or 3rd generation), between them 49.000 foreigners. The other migrants have German nationality. Most of them come from Poland (8,000), Russia and Ukraine (about 4,000 each), Vietnam (3,000) Turkey (2,000). Every year about 5,000 refugees come to the region.

People from Russia and Ukraine came for humanitarian reasons as German re-settlers or Jewish people from the former Soviet Union. They did not choose to come to this area of Germany and often change to West-Germany or Berlin as soon as they are allowed. People from Vietnam were former contract workers who came in the 1980's to GDR to work and to get professional education.

Many of the migrants have already been here for a long time, Vietnamese people mostly more than 20 years, migrants from former Soviet Union on average more than 10 years.



The actual system of language learning is based on the new German immigration law of 2005. According to it, every migrant has the right or according to its status the duty to attend Integration classes. Integration classes consist of between 600 and 945 hours of language learning, including an orientation class with facts about German History, Culture and Politics. At the end of the classes there are two examinations, a language test at B1-level and a test about the orientation classes. The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge - BAMF) is responsible for the Integration Classes, which are given by state and private organizations and have to guarantee certain standards. For example, all teachers working in the Integration classes have to have DaF-Qualification (DAF – German as second language) and have to be registered at the Federal Office (BAMF). The Classes are free of charge for migrants who have no income. If they have an income they must pay a certain fee (1,20 € per hour).

There are very few job specific language classes. Since 2010 there are first special follow up classes with language in professional sectors, paid by a ESF-program of BAMF. BBAG is accredited to BAMF for Integration classes in the cities of Potsdam and Brandenburg an der Havel.

Participating migrants with a Russian speaking background all attended language classes, offered by the government, when they came to Germany. All others had no access to these classes when they came and had to pay fees to attend adult education classes or learn by themselves. Refugees/asylum seekers are partly excluded from language learning (no funding).

PARTNERS AND LEGAL INFORMATION



PARTNERS:

-  UETP Action Link/ Action Synergy S.A. (Greece)
-  Eurocultura (Italy)
-  Hellenic Culture Centre (Greece)
-  Berlin-Brandenburgische Auslands-gesellschaft e.V. (Germany)
-  TANDEM Fundazioa (Spain)
-  Refugee Education and Training Advisory Service Leeds (United Kingdom)
-  MORRIS Association (France)
-  Cultural House of Albanian Immigrants in Greece (Greece)
-  LLAS, University of Southampton (United Kingdom)

For further information about the METIKOS project please contact the Coordinator of the project:

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