



Xploit
Learning Community Profiles *feedback*

Climbing towards a common but broad focus



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Headline summary

Key Xploit challenges and impact from profiles and feedback

Guide Training

- The need to understand the nature and relevance of European cooperation in the communities should be addressed directly
- The guide training and inspiration should follow the action phase priorities, proposed in this paper and to be further discussed among the partners online
- The training design must take into account the very different community situations
- The training activities should put a strong focus on the creation of resources in the community
- The Girona days should result in a strong, supportive and collaborative group of community guides

Partner meeting Girona

- Discuss the design of the first action phase: priorities, target groups, guide roles, methodologies.
- Offer reflections on the projects so-called meta-level: what are we learning about learning communities and lifelong learning infrastructures? How can we document this learning?
- What can we offer to European stakeholders at this stage?

Action phase 1 Guidelines

- Local community approaches for Xploit partners and local Xploit teams
- Lifelong learning guides roles and collaboration
- What kind of actions and at which levels?
- Target groups and thematic priorities
- Network outcomes
- Infrastructure outcomes
- Documentation guidance, including media guidance
- Xploit transnational resources and involvement



1) Introduction

The coordinator has been reading and analyzing the four Community Profiles received during December 2010 from Swansea UK, Salt/Catalonia ES, Udine IT and Nagykovácsi HU.

The Profiles are first drafts, according to the Xploit Progression Plan. The coordinator and the QA partners should review the Profiles, also in relation to the proposed quality and success criteria, and offer feedback to the project partners. This paper represents the coordinator feedback, which should also be considered by the QA partners.

One of the many aims of this work is to qualify the first Action Phase and the first Guide Training activity in Girona, May 2011.

As can be seen from this first feedback, the profiles will produce many useful reflections in Xploit, some of them followed by actions.

From this it can be concluded, already at this stage, that the resources used to produce the profiles have been productive.

The Xploit project is by definition oscillating between two levels: the level of lifelong learning needs and resources in the communities and the (meta-) level of the development of lifelong learning infrastructures in the communities, based on an interest in identifying, capturing and exploiting European lifelong learning resources.

The two levels are, in the Xploit perspective but also in the community perspective, mutually dependent: *no infrastructures without lifelong learning content, no sustainable lifelong learning without infrastructures. This sentence briefly presents the Xploit "dialectics"*.

It makes little sense in this paper to quote large parts of the Profiles, as all partners will be working with the profiles directly.

It does, though, make very much sense to extract elements of mutual interest, unexpected elements, as well as elements that might lead to new opportunities for the project and for the communities involved.

The profiles offer many such elements for building up the project and identifying common issues of interest.

The Community Profiles have several roles to play in the Xploit project:

- Focus the action phases and the identification, capturing and implementation of European lifelong learning resources (link the activities to focused topics, not addressing "everything" or "lifelong learning in general")
- Provide a mutual understanding among the project partners of the nature of the communities we will work in
- Help qualifying our approach to the establishment of and further development of lifelong learning infrastructures in the communities
- Provide knowledge backgrounds and work material to the training of the lifelong learning guides
- Contribute to the output of the project (including the Xploit website)

The coordinator and QA partner feedback should offer the partners guidelines and inspiration to elaborate on the profile in a focused way, slowly approaching the fields of focus in the Xploit project and in the action phase.

The partners are therefore invited to work on this material during the first months of 2011, making the project able to use the results of this work in the training activities in May, and allowing the coordinator to offer relevant guidelines for the first action phase.

The profiles present very different community models:

- many resources, but weak cooperation, communication and coordination
- few resources, serious challenges, but strong cooperation, communication and coordination
- very different challenges, due to social-economic backgrounds and positions as to globalization
- big differences as to cooperation “methodologies” and traditions: informal or formal, due to cultural background
- very different communities as to the influence of, typology of and response to immigration patterns

This should not come as a surprise and diversity should be expected, not feared. We are not trying to make different communities fit some theoretical model. In fact, these models might very well represent typical mid-sized cities across Europe and the cities’ lifelong learning agenda.



2) Comparing the communities

Let us briefly present the overall picture of the involved communities. This picture will be detailed later in the paper and in the dialogues to follow.



THE SWANSEA COMMUNITY

The community is a typical closing industry community, suffering from global competition. Many natural resources, a lot of education, many social networks, but a labor market calling for innovation and entrepreneurship. The community is a model community in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy.

Some parts of Swansea are called deprived, with more than 4000 children and young people living in poverty (as to UK and EU criteria). Dramatic public cuts are expected on top of the labor market set-backs.

The community is resourceful as to networks and partnerships, as to culture and nature, but *few resources are expected to be available for lifelong learning and educational innovation.*

Thus the community presents a very typical dilemma: *in times where innovation is badly needed, the resources are not there.*

From an Xploit point of view this situation should be a strong motivator for European interaction and exploitation of available quality lifelong learning resources.

The Swansea community is very different from the other project communities with respect to lifelong learning infrastructures. One might say that the lifelong learning infrastructures are already in place, offering large networks of multi-sector partnerships with participation of several hundred organizations. A big and complicated structure of partnerships has been developed aiming to meet the needs of the population, with a strong focus on groups of citizens with special social and educational needs. This infrastructure is treated as a special case later in this paper, and it can be foreseen that *the very “sociology” of this infrastructure should serve as a very important learning field in Xploit.*

Reading the many overall and focused community strategies, one might, though, feel the need to bring forward some open questions, quite relevant in the Xploit context:

- The Swansea challenges and initiatives are only marginally linked to European cooperation

- Even though there are great concerns and measures taken as to school attendance and performance among children and young people, very little content seems to be linked to basic innovation of the education system
- The role of entrepreneurship, creativity and technology is not clear in the many initiatives to offer and improve learning provisions for all citizens
- It is of great interest the Xploit project to dialogue with any kind of impact assessment undertaken by the different partnerships: is it possible to measure the concrete short-term and long-term impact of the large and complicated infrastructure of partnerships, organizations and initiatives?

For discussion

The role of Xploit in Swansea is definitely not to try to establish infrastructures outside the large system of already established partnerships, but rather to:

- Interact with the proper partnerships
- Learn from the functions of the large system of well-structured partnerships
- Serve as an opportunity to integrate a European dimension in these partnerships and initiatives
- Contribute to strategies of exploitation of already available resources, especially in times of poor resources for education and innovation
- Advocate for entrepreneurship, creativity and learning technology
- Serve as critical mirror to the “sociology” of the system of partnerships



THE SALT CATALONIA COMMUNITY

The Salt community near Girona in Calalonia suffers from the same industrial setbacks as in Swansea and Wales: closing industries caused by global competition from the Far East, and no emerging industries in sight...

Unemployment, social imbalances and public cuts are the results, leaving few resources to invest in Salt.

Salt is, contrary to the other Xploit communities, a genuine migrant community, facing all the challenges of a migrant community with low skills and poor educational backgrounds and opportunities.

The “sociology” of the Salt cooperation structures is very different from Swansea: cooperation across sectors and establishing partnerships are not the typical way in Catalonia, and emerging partnerships are often more spontaneous than systematic. Numerous small entities are involved in many small initiatives, but there is very little coordination and the impact of the initiatives seems weak and unsustainable. This is also caused by very insecure future perspectives for the small organizations operating in this field, many of them struggling to survive.

The Salt community might in some respect be compared to communities like Townhill in the Swansea County – a comparison that would be quite interesting in the Xploit context.

The needs of the Salt population present all the characteristics of a migrant community in Europe 2010: high unemployment, increasing criminality and drugs, few opportunities for the young people, few resources for the many highly needed empowerment initiatives for the Salt citizens; and, a general lack of resources to meet these challenges.

For discussion

The Xploit project should play very different roles in Salt compared to Swansea:

- Help coordinate already existing lifelong learning initiatives
- Help integrate a strong European dimension in Salt
- Support the establishment of sustainable cross-sector lifelong learning infrastructures addressing the social and educational needs in a systematic way
- Help the community exploit available European resources, in particular empowerment and youth resources
- Support Community Centre activities
- Support concrete initiatives linked to the Xploit focuses



THE UDINE COMMUNITY

The Udine community is quite different from the Swansea and Salt Catalonia communities. As a mid-sized Italian community, the city has not been all that dependent on heavy industry and large factories, but has lived from a rather diverse landscape of smaller and mid-sized entities.

The community has in general a high living standard and is known for its cultural activities.

The financial set-backs in Udine seem to be more related to general cuts in the education systems, and perhaps also in social welfare provision, linked to national policy making.

At the same time, Udine is facing new challenges, such as: increasing problems with young people and their educational and labor market relations, an increasing number of new migrants (Africa and Eastern Europe), an increasing number of elderly and 50+ at risk of isolation from social life and labor markets, general needs for innovation in education and social welfare, increasing problems with lifestyle diseases, etc.

So, also a community like Udine is facing the slowly dissolution of traditional Italian values like family structure, solid social networks, networking build on personal relations, etc. The global agenda puts a lot of pressure on these traditional systems.

There are no solid infrastructures for systematically addressing these challenges, and new ones to come. In this respect Udine is totally different from the systematically organized Swansea approaches: most problems are solved by personal relations and (often informal) creative initiatives, not by big organizational structures. Globalization is putting a lot of pressure on this traditional Mediterranean style...

On the other hand, Udine has many resources, including a traditional openness to Europe and to European cooperation. A special resource is the very Italian concern for quality in life, including food production, culture and art.

Recently the City Council has taken a renewed interest in developing a systematic approach to lifelong learning and to European cooperation, directly calling for sustainable infrastructures through which the city stakeholders can address educational and social needs and link these to innovation and the exploitation of European resources.

This is the strongest link to Xploit: the city officially wishes to use Xploit as an opportunity to establish new infrastructures enabling the city stakeholders to more systematically address present and future learning needs among the different traditional and new population groups.

The Udine community might also present an Xploit resource as to a traditional strong interest in entrepreneurship and innovation. Even though surrounded by the traditional Italian bureaucracy, there is a strong openness towards new solutions, as long as these solutions are linked to the Italian *quality of life*.

The Udine community is a most interesting laboratory to Xploit for the following reasons:

For discussion

- *The Udine community might present the most pure and clear opportunity to monitor, support and learn from the establishment of new lifelong learning infrastructures interacting from the very beginning with European resources in a mid-sized city*
- The community has expressed a direct interest at the highest political level in the establishment of such infrastructures, thus a will to *exploit the Xploit project*
- The community will be facing a number of globalization challenges in the near future, and it is most interesting to interact with the development of the basic approaches to these challenges
- Udine might be a special resource as to lifestyle disease prevention, as the community interest is very much linked to health issues



THE NAGYKOVÁCSI COMMUNITY

The small but growing Nagykovácsi suburb community presents a very special case in Xploit. From the beginning of the project the community was not expected to be active in Xploit, but dialogues along the initial phases in the project suggested that the project should be linked closer and more systematically to the Nagykovácsi community.

The community is, of course, to a large extent defined by its relations to the capital of Budapest, one of Europe's important capitals through decades and centuries. Most citizens work or study in Budapest, although a growing number of citizens in Nagykovácsi should be considered disadvantaged due to family structures or weak links to education and labor markets. The inclusion of these groups of citizens should be a constant concern to a lifelong learning project.

At a first glance, it might look like Nagykovácsi is a less interesting community for lifelong learning initiatives, as they are often addressing educational and labor markets issues, as well as major social and health issues. But we should perhaps be reminded that *lifelong learning takes place everywhere*: in families, in neighborhoods, in community centers, in after-school or after-work clubs, in kindergartens, etc. The EU strategies put a strong emphasis on this kind of non-formal learning and on the recognition of this learning. Especially for empowerment purposes it is commonly accepted that non-formal learning plays a significant and increasing role in society.

From the Nagykovácsi profile it can be seen that there is a great need and interest in interacting with initiatives like Xploit, as it offers the community an opportunity to address lifelong learning and European cooperation at a systematic level.

In fact, the special case of Nagykovácsi in Xploit offers a most useful opportunity to the debates on learning communities.

It is well-known that developing a big city or a capital into a learning city is a major challenge, sometimes it seems somewhat impossible: horizontally because the sectors are many and large and the city consists of innumerable stakeholders; vertically because there is a long way from the citizens to the politicians.

Learning communities seem to require some kind of *directness* and *closeness*. One way to address this problem is to focus on a sub-community in the big city, for instance a deprived community or a migrant community, and let the city government act as an umbrella for and multiplier of such initiatives. Then, at a later stage, the initiatives might be implemented in another sub-community.

Another possibility is to allow a *satellite suburb* with a relevant profile to play the role as a remote laboratory of lifelong learning to the big city, in this case Budapest. The size of the suburb allows this satellite community to develop a range of resources and initiatives, relevant to the suburb itself, but also targeting major challenges in the big city. The many relations from suburb citizens to different sectors and authorities in the big city might allow infrastructures between the small and large community to develop.

Thus the Nagykovácsi community might play several roles in the Xploit project, beside the mirroring role described in the work plan:

For discussion

- The role of a future learning community initiating a range of non-formal learning and social activities for the benefit of the citizens, and with a special attention to less fortunate citizens (mothers with many children, for example)
- Bring together some of the intellectual resources in the community to support the idea of a Community Centre, perhaps interacting with Budapest or sub-communities in Budapest
- Bring together some of the intellectual resources in the community to support the idea of internationalization of the community
- *Discuss and elaborate on the role of a satellite lifelong learning laboratory for Budapest, or linked to certain communities or challenges in Budapest*
- Develop and offer good examples of non-formal learning initiatives to the Xploit projects, in particular initiatives exploiting community relevant European lifelong learning resources
- Reflect on and discuss the possibility of establishing small entrepreneurship based labor markets in the community itself (niche production)



THE IASI COMMUNITY

Summary of the Xploit communities' strategic roles

The various strategic roles of the Xploit communities might be summarized as follows:



SWANSEA UK

Xploit interaction with established infrastructures

Reflections on the quality and impact of high-level lifelong learning infrastructures

Practical interaction with focused learning or youth partnerships

Focus on European dimension

Innovation in education, entrepreneurship and creative technology



SALT CATALONIA ES

Xploit interaction to help establish basic lifelong learning infrastructures at medium level

Focus on coordination, cooperation and sustainability

Practical interaction with some well-defined lifelong learning initiatives

Support the integration of the European dimension



UDINE IT

Xploit interaction to help establish basic lifelong learning infrastructures at high level and with strong sustainability, directly linked to European cooperation

Focus on learning from the development of such infrastructures at city level

Focus on coordination, cooperation and sustainability

Practical interaction with a few well-defined lifelong learning initiatives, based on Italian values



NAGYKOVÁCSI HU

Dialogues to help establish basic lifelong learning infrastructures linked to community profile and to non-formal initiatives directly linked to European cooperation

Dialogues on a learning community role linked to Budapest

Learning from resource coordination in a non-formal context

Mirror the development of different community models in the project



IASI RO

A common concern among the community partners

In the profiles material, we can read the following words:

The quality of public school systems is of great concern in many countries...!

- linked to great concern as to future generations.

There is a big gap between the methodologies used at school and the needs of the students. This provokes the drop out of school of many students putting in risk their social integration. The city is making an effort in order to find solutions to integrate these teenagers, but it is still not enough.

A lack of structured resources for leisure and after-school activities.

In the wake of financial crisis and closing industries, major cuts are made or planned in public spending. This causes much concern as to the quality of the primary public school systems across member states.

This target, the primary public school system, is quite different from the well-known lifelong learning targets: migrants, drop-outs, unemployed, etc.

The European primary school provisions have at large been criticized for a long time as to its quality and ability to adjust to the knowledge society, including new generations of young people not fitting in well with the old classrooms. The new public cuts will definitely work even more against the goals set out in the different lifelong learning strategies, national as well as European.

Disadvantaged children, young people and families will no doubt suffer the most from these cuts.

Innovation in primary school to support the weak learners will be delayed or even forgotten in this context.

Does it make sense to create all kinds of secondary support systems for the children, when the most important primary system is failing?

Are we doing stopgap measures only?

The coordinator wish to raise the following questions to be discussed among the partners:

- Should the Xploit project address the quality of primary school systems in general?
- Should the project put a strong focus on measures of innovation in primary school, and identify useful innovative European resources for this?
- Should the serious problems in primary schools encourage the project to make youth (aged 5-18) one of the project's focus areas in the action phases?



3) Thematic areas

TARGETS

It is indeed possible through the profiles to identify a number of key lifelong learning target groups common to all communities.

A few comments are needed, before doing so.

The Xploit project is not expected to make major contributions to solving specific lifelong learning problems in the communities. The focus of the project is lifelong learning infrastructures in the community, how to develop into a learning community, and the exploitation of European lifelong learning resources.

Having said this, we must remind ourselves that the Xploit methodologies are based on practical work in the communities during the action phases. The project will reach its goals through practical development work and interacting with and learning from the communities.

Infrastructures must be about “something”, must present challenges, justifications, as well as relevant and useful content.

So, even if it is true that the overarching goals and missions of Xploit is the establishment and study of various lifelong learning infrastructures in the communities, and these structures direct link to exploitation of European resources, the project will work in practice with lifelong learning challenges in the communities to allow this to happen.

But on the other hand, the project cannot address all sorts of challenges. It is not possible either, to identify and exploit European resources (projects, material or financial) in all sorts of lifelong learning fields. A clear focus is needed and justified as the focus fields will serve as examples of good practice.

Therefore we need to focus the practical activities, through which we will help develop or evaluate community infrastructures, on a limited number of challenges – simply to make the project and the methodologies operational.

This has already been foreseen in the application.

The communities might, though, have different priorities, and they have a right to. Therefore we propose to set up a simply set of priorities for all communities, and a set of priorities linked to different communities.

For discussion

This is our proposal for the common priorities to be addressed by all Xploit communities, resulting from an interpretation of the received profiles. The proposal consists in target groups and thematic fields.

Common community target groups for the first action phase

1) Children and young people, in-school and after-school

- Young unemployed and uneducated
- Drop-outs and abusers
- Professional ICT skills for young people
- Entrepreneurship skills
- Lifestyle disease prevention competences
- Educational innovation

2) Women with children at risk of social and labour market exclusion

- Migrant women
- Pregnancy and mothering period
- Isolated women with children
- Single-parent families
- ICT skills for all
- Entrepreneurship skills
- Lifestyle disease prevention competences

Common community thematic fields for the first action phase

A) Local lifelong learning cooperation infrastructures

B) European orientation and interaction

C) Community Centres for lifelong learning and empowerment

The sub-themes are provided to allow the communities to allow an understanding of the possible variations of practical approaches to the proposed targets. Alternative common community target groups for the first action phase, in case partners disagree with the proposal from the coordinator, might be:

Elderly inclusion

Families of disadvantaged background

Migrants in general

Adult education in general

Lifestyle diseases and learning

The different project communities can, then, add one or two target groups or target thematic within lifelong learning.

The common targets will *help*:

- Provide a mutual platform of focused interest among partners, local collaborators and lifelong learning guides
- Organize the guide training: identification of needs, identification of resources, identification of relevant European resources
- Organize the first action phase with a high quality: identifying local stakeholders, target groups and networks
- Design the monitoring, evaluation and documenting of the first action phase
- The project to produce simple criteria, work plans and community interaction for the first action phase

The set of common targets are only intended to cover the first action phase. The focus might shift in the second action phase, depending on lessons learned and community needs and interests. Still, the target might also be the same, as this allows in-depth study of the work processes and how it affects lifelong learning cooperation in the communities.

PROFILE REFLECTIONS

Some of the reflections from the Udine profile are quoted below, as these statements help giving a picture of the field, in which we are operating:

General consideration: the issue of "how to improve cooperation" may deserve a special focus group.

What emerged so far is:

- **An awareness of the importance of collaboration and networking, but so far it is more a "spontaneous practise" than a methodological way of working. People find it difficult to analyze**
- **Therefore there has been no reflections on this practise to identify challenges, strategies, tools**
- **Each actor calls for more cooperation (and also for more coordination and sharing)**
- **Cooperation seems to be weaker and more difficult between peer groups (for example between political actors, between public Institutions, between similar associations)**
- **Cooperation works better when:**
 - **a. There is a coordinating subject (ex.: when the Town Department coordinates the actions of the private subjects which operate directly in the field (normally cultural / educational associations and cooperatives)**
 - **b. the initiative is a real bottom up process involving a true participation of motivated actors (this has been experienced in some town district activities involving the entire local community)**
- **In small communities' projects/actions; it is usually a pressing local problem or an activity in favour of children's wellness that motivates collaboration**
- **So far good cooperation experience relies on "individual" engagement and sensibility more than on "institutional" practise and will. (Even though all institutional partners calls for more collaboration among them!)**
- **Another difficulty is the timing: public partners are slower than private partners in responding and acting. In general there's to a long time frame from the planning of a project to the concrete activation and realisation of it.**
- **Too many words don't become actions; it is a sort of "cultural attitude".**

From what we inquire so far, it looks like each actor is focussing on its main issue and works on a day by day basis. There's a claimed need for more time for long term planning and coordination.

Although there is a general declared interest in knowing and interacting with EU scenes, the impression is there is a lack of awareness and knowledge as to what a European dimension means. Perhaps local actors should be trained in sharing and interacting with EU peers?

There is a big gap between the methodologies used at school and the needs of the students. This provokes the drop out of school of many students putting in risk their social integration. The city is making an effort in order to find solutions to integrate these teenagers, but it is still not enough.

SPECIAL INITIATIVES POSSIBLE TO LINK TO XPLOIT ?

For discussion

Some communities are short of resources, such as Salt and Townhill / Penderry in Swansea; other communities have "unused potentials", such as Nagykovácsi and in some respects Udine.

How could we approach this challenge in a transnational perspective?



Swansea UK

Our plan is to involve all the Swansea network in organising, publicising & taking part in an activity “to digitally portray their learning community”, during the annual Swansea Learning Festival in May 2011. We will ask learners to capture their learning community, whether it’s a formal learning, as in classes, at work etc, or informal learning – from a friend, family or colleague. The resulting photos/videos could be part of a competition. The activity is intended to raise consciousness of the variety & unending nature of learning in its many forms & the huge variety of learning opportunities in adult community learning.

How could Xploit play a role? Taking into account the Xploit priorities?

The Regional Learning Partnership working on the Transformation Agenda.

How could Xploit play a role? Taking into account the Xploit priorities?

Swansea European Team (SET) has a regular meeting run by the local authority which describes which projects are available or running.

How could Xploit play a role? Taking into account the Xploit priorities?



Udine IT

How can we link Xploit to the following visions? Taking into account the Xploit priorities?

- To increase the value of public space as relations space
- To create a climate for integration and well hosting
- To give answer to economic crisis with always less money



Salt Catalonia ES

How can we link Xploit to the following fields of activity? Taking into account the Xploit priorities?

- Pre-employment training programs
- Educational resources for young people who drop out of school
- INICIA entrepreneur’s project
- SER.GI is leading a web page regarding education in SALT



Nagykovácsi

The community profile describes well the main community focus:

Nagykovácsi is characterised by a lot of unused potentials. A lot of intellectuals with knowledge of different aspects live here, but normally work in the nearby capital - taking their activities out of the city - therefore there are a lot of isolated initiatives without close cooperation among them and the local community not knowing or not directly benefiting from these.

Therefore representatives of civil groups and decision makers should find a common platform to cooperate. There should be a main topic for these and the focus could be put maintaining physical and mental health and preparing disadvantaged groups for finding and sharing knowledge to be able to reintegrate into the work market.

We have a lot of potentials unused and we need to have a common policy to harmonize the activities and to follow a work line. Communication with educational institutions civil groups and politicians is essential in achieving the goals.

So the question is:

How could Xploit play a role? Taking into account the Xploit priorities? Could Xploit be used as an “opportunity” to start this coordination?



Iasi



4) Further investigations

The coordinator's reading of the community profile drafts led to a number of possible further investigations that might be undertaken by the communities when elaborating on the community profile.

The relevance and scope of these possible further investigations should, of course, be discussed with the partners.

When discussing the suggestions, the Xploit priorities should be taken into account.



Swansea ^{UK}

- The Regional Learning Partnership working on the Transformation Agenda
Strong Xploit dialogue and material interest
- Swansea European Team
Strong Xploit dialogue and material interest
- The specific needs of the young unemployed and how they are met
Xploit would be interested in material about how it is organized, what measures, practical examples, etc., as this might be a high project priority
- The specific needs of the elderly and how they are met
Xploit would be interested in material about how it is organized, what measures, practical examples, etc., as this might be a high project priority
- New labour market perspectives in Swansea? Entrepreneurship initiatives?
Any reflections or visions are most welcome for inspiration
- How does SMAT work? How do they approach young drug-abusers? "The Place"?
It would be most interesting to learn about "The Place", how it works, the visions and aims, obstacles to success, etc.
- Impressions and knowledge about the two major deprived areas in Swansea, Townhill and Penderry – would it make sense to focus on or relate to these communities in Xploit?
Descriptions and material from these two sub-communities would be welcomed, also because it would be of interest to compare these communities to Salt Catalonia



Udine ^{IT}

- Involvement of Social Housing Cooperative, Christian Association, Association of Cultural Mediators (migrant communities)?
Xploit would welcome further information of the initiatives and practical work of these organisations – further knowledge might lead to a need for dialogue
- A laboratory of local lifelong learning cooperation? Special Xploit focus in Udine? Including documentation and material?
Are Udine and the Udine stakeholders interested in agreeing on a special Xploit mission to the community? The Udine case might well be a special case for studying the key Xploit infrastructures mission. If so, special attention would be paid to describing and documenting the development processes in Udine

aiming to set up such lifelong learning and European cooperation infrastructures...

- Horizontal peer learning (same social and age group) and vertical peer learning (different generations) – how can this work?
These are of particular interest in the Udine community, it seems. Would it be possible to describe the Udine visions and plans linked to these methodologies?
- Local Youth Centres
This initiative clearly links to the possible Xploit priorities, and it would be of great interest to learn more about it. Further knowledge might lead to a dialogue interest.
- Squares of Knowledge: Squares as cultural and educational station (in Italian "presidio" which include the meaning of a place to protect as *Slow food presidio*)
This vision is very Italian – it would be of great interest to the project and the project partners to learn more about these ideas and visions...
- Health education and care of life styles
It would be important to the project to learn more about how the community is addressing increasing lifestyle diseases among children and young people, as this might link to the children and youth priority.
- Arts languages and to appreciate beauty
How do art and beauty relate to lifelong learning and the empowerment of youth and women at risk of social and educational exclusion? Please elaborate on this, as it might contribute to the understanding of the creative dimension of lifelong learning, both formal and non-formal.
- Children and mothering
There seems to be a special attention to this in the Udine community, or among certain stakeholders. The project would benefit from learning more about this attention and any initiatives planned or taken.
- Training for trainers and for cultural-educational mediators
Again the Italian "cultural dimension", surely benefitting the project. What is meant by cultural-educational, and who are these mediators? Visions, plans, examples are most welcome.
- Professional ICT skills for young people?
Any information, plans, visions or practical examples are most welcome, as this topic is located at the intersection point of youth work, creativity and entrepreneurship!



Salt ^{ES}

- Escola Taller. Target group: young people aged 16 to 23.
Any information, plans, visions or practical examples are most welcome, as this topic is located at the intersection point of youth work, creativity and entrepreneurship!
The idea of a coordinated initiative for young people in Catalonia would be most interesting to Xploit, and the project might contribute significantly.
- Salt Municipality lifelong learning priorities
Xploit would like to follow the development of lifelong learning strategies in Salt closely and contribute.
The project would welcome more information, material and invitations to dialogue.

- Salt Lifelong Learning Centre
Xploit would like to follow this vision closely and learn more about the ideas and plans. Several communities are developing Community Centre ideas, and it is crucial to share visions on this and coordinate the efforts.
- A lot of focus on problems and needs in Salt; but what kind of resources and talents do the different groups of migrants possess? How can these be identified, exploited and used for the benefits of the community and the migrants' themselves?
*Xploit would welcome ideas, plans or examples on this most important challenge: how to identify, recognize and value "hidden" talents among the various groups of migrants, especially in connection with the Xploit priorities, migrant women and migrant youth.
This important topic is linked to entrepreneurship, creativity and new un-traditional job opportunities.
Xploit would appreciate any initiative in this direction and would contribute considerably.
In the action phases qualified European resources on this topic should be identified and captured.*



Nagykovácsi ^{HU}

- A group of women with many children; needs and perspectives? How to organize, how to fund?
Women with (many) children and their possible self-organization is of great interest to the Xploit priorities and the empowerment policies in general. The project would welcome more information about such initiatives or simply learn more about the ideas and plans. The topic might be linked to entrepreneurship initiatives.
- Targeting parents and older generations through children; how could that work? What aims, what benefits?
This inter-generational idea is quite challenging. Any further information about ideas or plans is most welcome. It might be linked to the project's children and youth priorities and it might be linked to empowerment of children and youth at risk.
- *Nagykovacs* is characterised by a lot of unused potentials. Nagykovacs as a "resource centre" or "laboratory" for Budapest? In what ways? What resources? How to link to Budapest and European cities? "Being an independent community, still part of a big city..."
*If the community initiates a debate on unused potentials, the Xploit project would most certainly like to follow this debate and contribute if possible. Especially in times when resources are scarce, the idea of self-organized resources is very powerful. It is linked to the Xploit idea of exploiting available and useful resources in new areas and new ways.
This topic might be a special Nagykovacs challenge in Xploit.*
- Innovation House
Please provide much more information about the planned Innovation House in Nagykovacs as such community centres can be of great importance to many stakeholders and citizens in relation to lifelong learning, synergy and innovation. The topic is closely linked to the much needed ideas of youth entrepreneurship and creativity.
- The Community Cultural Centre in Nagykovacs
More information about the adult learning activities in this centre, and future plans or visions, would be most welcomed.
- "Exploiting resources like ideal venues for maintaining health through nature sports, environmental protection and people's training to promote these aspects and get jobs out of it would be welcome."

This theme is at the intersection point of lifestyle disease prevention and entrepreneurship initiatives, and initiatives in this direction, also discussions, are most relevant to the Xploit project. Such initiatives might be an example of the laboratory role of the Nagykovacs community as a “learning” or “innovation” satellite for Budapest.

- *How could apparent weaknesses in the community, having no labour markets, be turned into a resource, an opportunity? A laboratory for preventing lifestyle diseases, including relevant competence development, especially among young people? Influencing youth life in the “big city” of Budapest? Reflections on this most interesting topic, directly addressing different forms of developments for learning communities, are most welcome.*



5) Xploit impact

The first drafts of the community profiles already include a number of important elements that will highly influence the Xploit work plans, priorities and progression. In this section we will try to list the most important impact elements produced by the profiles.

Swansea Learning Festival in May 2011

How can Xploit play a role? How will we plan a possible participation? How can we document and exploit the event? What possible collaborations might grow from this participation?

We would like to invite our UK partner to offer some first reflections on this within the first months of 2011.

Xploit Lifelong Learning Guides' training

The profiles and the feedback to the profiles should lead to some clear priorities for the first guide training in Girona in May 2011:

- The need to understand the nature and relevance of European cooperation in the communities should be addressed directly
- The guide training and inspiration should follow the action phase priorities, proposed in this paper and to be further discussed among the partners online: *Children and young people, in-school and after-school; Women with children at risk of social and labour market exclusion; Local lifelong learning cooperation infrastructures; European orientation and interaction; Community Centres for lifelong learning and empowerment*
- The training design must take into account the very different community situations, allowing the participants to work on their specific community challenges, instead of working on an abstract “learning community average”
- The training activities should put a strong focus on the creation of resources: in the community, through innovative use of already existing resources, through European funding, through the establishment of local social responsibility partnerships, but also through the promotion of entrepreneurship initiatives
- The Girona days should result in a strong, supportive and collaborative group of community guides

Partner meeting Girona

The partner meeting in Girona should carefully discuss the design of the first action phase: priorities, target groups, guide roles, methodologies.

At the same time, it should be the role of the partner meetings to offer reflections on the projects so-called meta-level: what are we learning about learning communities and lifelong learning infrastructures? How can we document this learning? What can we offer to European stakeholders at this stage? What initiatives should be taken in the project to qualify this learning? The partner meeting agenda should reflect these needs.

Action phases design

The initial project phases are expected to lead to a simple and efficient action phase design, based on the profiles and profiles discussions.

The action phase design, *to be discussed in Girona in May 2011*, should provide the following guide elements:

- Local community approaches for Xploit partners and local Xploit teams
- Lifelong learning guides roles and collaboration
- What kind of actions and at which levels?
- Target groups and thematic priorities
- Network outcomes
- Infrastructure outcomes
- Documentation guidance, including media guidance
- Xploit transnational resources and involvement

The action phase design must be brief, clear and flexible, and reflect the different community situations and conditions. It must be based on the knowledge provided in the community profiles.

Community Profile dialogues

As discussed earlier, elaborating on the community profiles will be an ongoing activity in Xploit. The community profiles might be developed in different directions according to the project needs.

The first step was to invite the local community partners to produce a draft version of the profile. The second step is to allow the coordinator and the QA partners to give feedback to the profiles – including reflecting on project impacts.

The third step will be to ask the community partners to comment on the feedbacks online early spring 2011, and to add to the profiles a number of focus points for the Xploit community work during the first action phase, based on the profiles, the feedback and on local decisions.

The community partners are invited to do this no later than the 1st of March 2011.

These focus points should be discussed at the partner meeting in Girona May 2011.

During the first time-out phase in 2012, a much more focused community profile should be drawn up, reflecting what was learned from the first action phase. This focused profile (the second version of the profiles) should include clear priorities and work tasks for the second action phase.

The community profiles will thus change as to structure and content along the project, reflecting the progression of the project. The new elements should not replace the first versions, but be added to the first versions, as it is important to preserve the authenticity of each step.

Xploit web

The Xploit website should allow stakeholders across Europe to follow the progression of the project. Therefore the coordinator proposes to include a number of work documents in the web material, such as the community profile drafts and the feedback. Clear information on the status of the material should accompany the work documents.

This will, though, require acceptance from the partners, as we cannot publish draft material without clear consensus.

Therefore the partners are invited to state their opinion on this proposal no later than the 15th of January 2011.

In case of no partner response the coordinator will make the decisions.

The project's media journalist should examine this feedback paper and look for media documentation and material opportunities:

- Are there themes in the feedback paper to be covered by the website?

- How can the website offer material on these themes?
- Can local activities, plans or projects be identified that should be covered by local materials on the website?
- How can the website be prepared to cover the most important Xploit themes in the communities and the upcoming action phase?
- Are there subjects or themes in the feedback paper calling for interviews with local stakeholders, in written or video form, or further investigation?

The local partners are strongly recommended to contribute to this process themselves by producing material, providing material, and by suggesting the production of material to the website.

Local cooperation focus: new infrastructures of lifelong learning cooperation and the exploitation of European resources

The profiles include many reflections and references to one of the most important topics in Xploit: how to organize, coordinate and facilitate lifelong learning infrastructures among many stakeholders in the communities? This challenge is, of course, the very core of the development of learning communities.

The local Xploit teams should give high priority to serious discussions and dialogues on this topic. The discussions should, in reference to the profiles, include:

- How can we describe the basic problems and obstacles?
- How can we help documenting this?
- What actions can the Xploit team take to support such infrastructures and cooperation? Now, in the future?
- How can key players in the community be mobilized to help this process?
- How can Xploit as a European project support the process?

Emerging sectors, entrepreneurship...

As discussed at the partner meeting in Udine (ref. *Udine Reflections*), the global market and the global competition forces Europe at large to re-consider its basic economies during the next decades: the industries will not return and there are strong limits to expanding the public sector.

Europe must find new economies, new markets, new job opportunities – perhaps even new roles in the global community.

All this is very clear in the community profiles: unemployment, new skills needed, exclusion risks, etc.

These threats will come down hardest on the less educated, as usual.

Common to the profiles produced is that there is very little information about *emerging sectors* in the communities.

As discussed in Udine, the focus on emerging sectors, entrepreneurship and creative solutions is much more pressing than foreseen in the Xploit application.

The project needs to adjust to this. The local partners and teams need to establish a clear focus on this. In this context, lifelong learning infrastructures are still more important.

Examples for reflection

- In Roses in Catalonia the City Council has decided that a brand new community plan is needed, as the old industries will not return
- The efforts to prevent drop-outs in primary school are very problematic in this context: why bring back the children and young people to schools, reflecting outdated industrial needs?
- Why promote more and more lifelong learning, if there are no jobs?
- Why sustain the illusion of the family as the core social unit, when the young people are moving towards other forms of social and collaborative relations?
- Do policy-makers and project makers (like us) represent outdated solutions, while the young people are in need of dramatically different solutions?

The little information in the profiles as to emerging sectors and entrepreneurship initiatives is perhaps symptomatic: “we” don’t know how to deal with “this”.

Therefore projects like Xploit, addressing the idea of learning communities, must ask the question what *learning* means and what learning should lead to...

A strong focus in Xploit and in the communities on the following topics is urgent and should be taken very seriously:

- Entrepreneurship and creating new job opportunities and markets, in particular niche markets, or markets based on special (natural or cultural) resources, competences or visions
- Resource innovation: exploiting resources in new ways, including young people's, old people's and migrants' hidden talents
- Educational innovation: creating new learning opportunities for young people that are dramatically different from the existing school systems
- ICT innovation: go beyond the traditional industrial based use of ICT and take ICT into creativity and entrepreneurship, building up professional competences among young people, not just mainstream user-skills
- Creativity penetrating the community: unfolding talents in problem solving, invention and art

These are big issues. Xploit do not have the capacity to move such visions.

But, Xploit can advocate such initiatives in the local communities, be a critical voice in the communities' lifelong learning strategies and practices...



6) Case: Swansea infrastructures as partnerships - first meta-level opening...

Xploit is expected to produce a number of outcomes, useful to stakeholders across Europe. Some of these outputs relate to guidelines for developing learning communities.

This task calls for progressing reflection throughout the project. Such reflections are expected to be more and more important and powerful, as we all learn through the project.

We would like to offer an early opening of such reflections in connection with the community profiles. From these profiles it can be learned that most communities do not have infrastructures for lifelong learning and European cooperation, and most communities do not know how to approach such matters.

Perhaps an international office exists, but an office is not an infrastructure.

Let us repeat briefly what *lifelong learning infrastructures* means in our context.

Lifelong learning infrastructures can be defined as:

Channels and mechanisms of communication and coordination networks and partnerships penetrating the community and involving most key stakeholders, through which the communities' lifelong learning and international capacities are constantly debated, proper initiatives are taken and resulting policies transformed into practice.

- The community infrastructures systematically monitor and analyze learning needs among its citizens and take action accordingly
- The infrastructures enable communication and coordination between the different sectors and stakeholders as to monitoring, analyzing and taking action
- The community infrastructures include dialogues with its citizens, in particular citizens with strong learning needs, and put in place measures to include the talents and resources of these citizens
- The infrastructures allow a systematic interaction with relevant and useful European resources, exploiting European lifelong learning resources, as well

as available European funding, but also contribute to the dissemination of useful resources from its practical and theoretical activities

- The infrastructures allow learning activities to interact with other European citizens, cities and cultures, building up networks of mobility and cooperation
- The community infrastructures allow on ongoing quality assurance practice and critical self-reflection, based on transparent criteria and aims

The Swansea community represents a very special case in Xploit, and perhaps also in the context of most European cities in general.

The community has established a very large network of cross-sector partnerships systematically addressing the community's present situation and future development.

The Swansea infrastructures are not limited to lifelong learning, but cover the community at large.

The Swansea infrastructures might be called a large learning community *system*, as it includes hundreds of stakeholders in the networks and partnerships.

The overall structure of this system is:

Overarching community strategy:

Shared Ambition is Critical

Swansea's Community Strategy 2010-14

↓

A number of sub-strategies for thematic areas, for example:

Strategic Plan for Children and Young People 2011 – 2014

↓

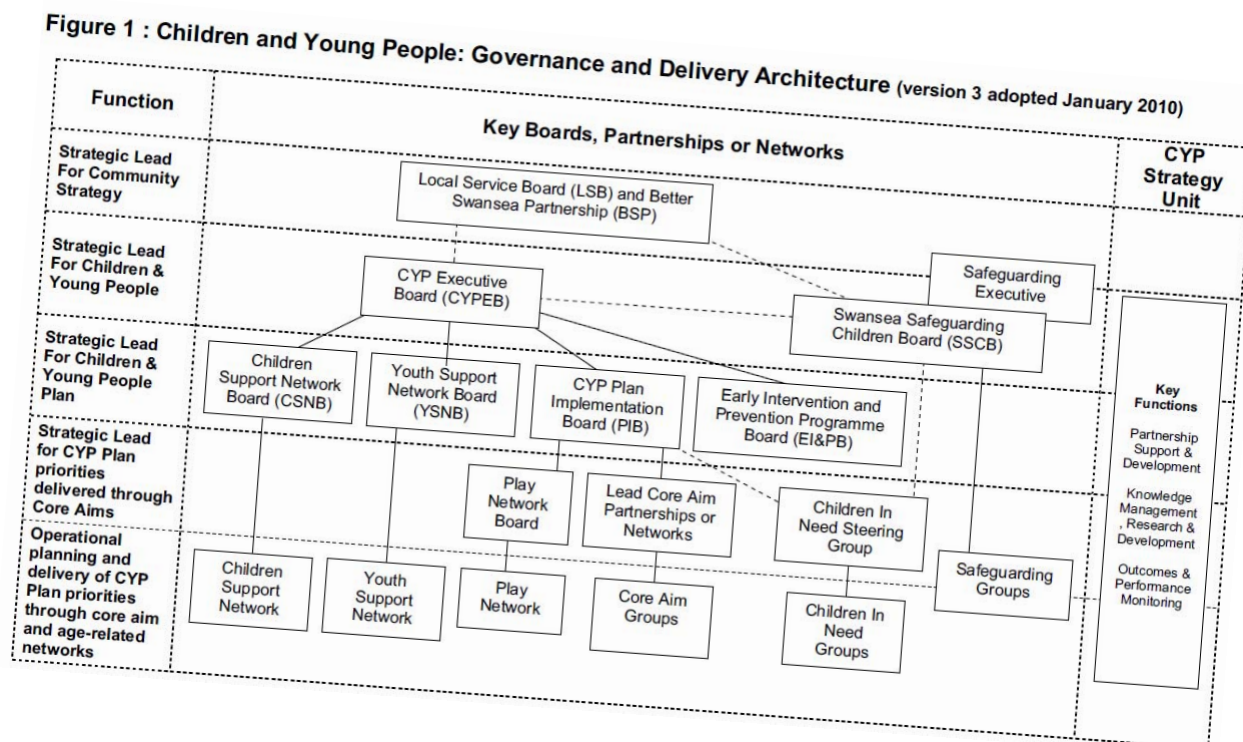
Resources operating in practice, for example:

UP TO SPEED Bulletin

Safer Swansea Partnership (youth drug abuse)

Each level in the system is composed by partnerships, representing the major community sectors and stakeholders.

As an example, let us show the structure of a sub- strategic area: *Children and Young People*:



It should be noticed that this structure only represent a small part of the total infrastructure.

The Swansea community infrastructures appear to be well-organized and well-structured. They seem to be penetrating the entire community and be able to cover most areas and challenges.

This type of infrastructures might be called: a total system of communication and coordination channels, involving all relevant stakeholders.

In fact, the system might be called a learning community *system*, even a learning city *system*.

Furthermore, it seems as the different sub-structures (like the one presented above) are directly addressing identified needs and target groups.

To Xploit this system is, of course, most interesting. It represents a very systematic and total approach to infrastructures in a learning community.

Other models of infrastructures might be much simpler and might appear very different. Learning community infrastructures might be extremely different, in fact, and it is not the mission of the Xploit project to promote or recommend specific models of infrastructures, but to promote *different approaches and models* useful to stakeholders across Europe.

It is not, at this stage, the coordinator's mission to analyze this learning community model, as the coordinator is not at all qualified to do this, but to ask a number of open questions, inviting to answers and dialogues from which we can learn more at this meta-level and create tools for further learning.

The Swansea partners are not asked to present answers or reflections to these questions within a short time-span, but are invited to reflect on the questions along the project, especially along the action phases, and to share their reflections with the Xploit partners. Perhaps a special resource from the Swansea community could be involved, who might be able to and interested in working with these questions.

10 open questions for the Swansea community infrastructure approach

1. *What is the background to the system?*
- How was it started, who initiated, what was the mission?
2. *Is the system in general a public authority initiative?*
- How was this approach decided? What was expected from this systematic approach?
3. *How do the infrastructures work in practice?*
- How do the many boards and partnership reach the practical levels? How do the practical levels influence the strategies and aims?
4. *Is there any documentation as to the efficiency of the system?*
- Any cost-benefit analysis? Who covers the costs of the many infrastructure activities? Is this being debated in the community?
5. *What is the quality of communication and coordination in such a big system?*
- Do the structures facilitate the needed communication and interaction between the necessary stakeholders? Are staff members and stakeholders being "lost" or "isolated" in the system? Can the communication be described as "communicative fluency"?
6. *Is there any evidence of the systems' or the partnerships' capturing capacity?*
- Do the structures seem to capture citizens' needs and interests? How do emerging needs and initiatives among groups of citizens make their way to decision-makers?
7. *Is there any evidence as to the benefits of the cross-sector approach, involving all important stakeholders within a specific field?*
- What benefits can be described from the coordination between public authorities, educations and enterprises? What are the possible obstacles to such coordination? How are they overcome?

8. *Do the infrastructures as such ensure innovation in systems and practices, or do they simply concern community cooperation procedures?*
 - Can innovation dynamics be identified as to the functions of the infrastructure system? Are the key stakeholders being aware of the systems' positive or missing innovation dynamics? In other words, are the systems value-based?
9. *Are general evaluations of the community infrastructures (partnership system) available?*
 - How is system evaluation set up and planned? How can outsiders follow this process and learn from it? Are the infrastructures as such being studied by researchers? What is the outcome, if so?
10. *Are measures taken to ensure the dissemination and knowledge-sharing of the Swansea community infrastructures at European level?*
 - Are European interaction of learning community models build-in the communication and coordination activities? Are the infrastructures and partnerships supporting European cooperation at the different levels, such as mobility, networking and project participation?

