



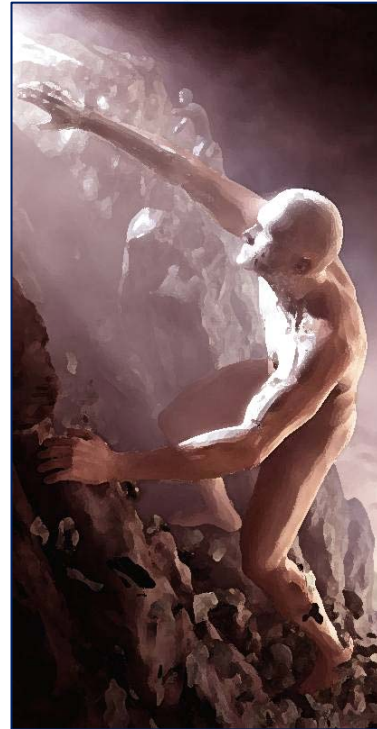
Dear Xploit Guide team !

You are very welcome to the Xploit guide team who will meet in Salt early May.

The team will meet again at least once later on in the project. Depending on the size of the team and our needs, further meetings might be arranged.

We would like to encourage you to read this first welcome mail carefully, as it is most important that the guide team builds up a mutual understanding of the things we are going to do.

This first mail to you is a bit long, but it must be like that.



This welcome mail will try to explain the idea about the Salt event as simply as possible, and how to prepare for the training in Salt. And at the same time, we would like to begin the team's online dialogues, which are very important to the preparations of the Salt days. The days in Salt will be much more constructive and creative, if we are well prepared.

You might very well be a little confused about the words "guide", "lifelong learning guide", "learning community guide", "Xploit guide team", etc. *And you might even wonder: what am I doing here; I do not know a lot about all this?* Well, don't worry. We are all new to this field. There are no such "guides" in Europe. The Xploit project is trying to find ways of using European lifelong learning resources in support of the community needs, and in support of developing into a "learning community".

So, actually, we are expected to *invent* such new ways, and to *invent* functions, roles, resources in the community, who can coordinate, support, initiate, facilitate, etc., these activities in the community.

So, we called it a "guide". A "guide" is leading the way, but not doing everything. A "guide" guides people in the community, who are involved or should be involved in using relevant learning resources to meet the community's learning needs.

So, we are all exploring new areas, new opportunities, new ways...

There is a lot of "rhetoric" in European projects. Also in Xploit. We use many words.

In the guide activities we will do our best to speak the language of the everyday life in the communities. We prefer a very practical approach. A practical approach combined with realistic visions, this is our idea.

On the other hand, we are not going to be satisfied with what the community is now and what it is doing now.

We need to try to support the communities in taking new steps. But, these steps must relate to the situation in the community, to the needs and resources of the community.

This is in fact the simplest definition of the "lifelong learning guide": to help the community take new steps, but steps that are within reach of the community and make sense to the community.



WHO ARE WE

In Xploit there are project participants from the different partner countries. And there are local community collaborators.

The Xploit guides are people close to the communities, who are expected to play a role in the project as well as in the communities - hopefully also after the termination of the project.

In the Xploit guide team there are people from the communities expected to implement the two long action phases in the project, the first one starting in summer this year. The communities are: Udine IT, Swansea UK, Iasi RO, Nagykovácsi HU and Salt (Catalonia) ES.

One or two persons from these communities will join the Xploit guide team.

The guide team includes the following colleagues:



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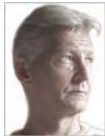
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The full mail list can be copied from the first team communication.
Three colleagues from the coordinating organization from Aarhus DK will join and work with the guide team all along the project:



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The team is relatively small, and this offers great opportunities for dialogues and reflections and for strong link to the needs and realities of the communities. In the second training session later in the project, external participants will probably be joining the team work.



GUIDE INPUT - COORDINATOR COMMENTS

In the small questionnaire we received statements of different comments, needs interests.

Let us list the comments linking to the training days in Salt:

[We prefer the anonymous approach, to allow the team to get an impression of the resources and interests in the group]

ANY EXPERIENCE IN LIFELONG LEARNING ACTIVITIES AT COMMUNITY LEVEL - OR WITH LEARNING COMMUNITIES?

- ✚ Project management in Lifelong Learning Programs, and previous volunteering experiences in different communities (mostly in developing countries)
- ✚ As I explained above, I have been very active privately, with schools and in courses organized by myself and by community municipalities teaching adults who need new knowledge and new resources to enter the working world. Most of the participants were migrants, young adults facing unemployment, or professionals who needed the knowledge of the English language to be more competitive and face the multitude of new requirements of their jobs or of new positions in new jobs
- ✚ I have a degree in Education Science and in the past I've taught both in kindergarten and primary schools. Afterward, since I'm Lifelong learner myself I've attended other vocational training, and actively participated in the European cultural networks. Thanks to these experiences I had the chance to teach in the training programs for young professionals in the arts management and to work as a facilitator in the development of artistic carrier of young performers. In the recent years, following a new training on Participatory Methodologies, I've been involved in research programs and participatory process on issues linked education (school age) and community learning, specially focused on environmental and local culture and heritage issues
- ✚ Since three year I also work as "educatrice" (can't find the right translation in English) in the children and youth center
- ✚ Not at European level. Yes, through local learning networks
- ✚ No experience. We have some resources for different needs and ages
- ✚ This project is my first experience in Lifelong Learning Activities
- ✚ I have worked full time as a Community Education Development Officer (CEDO) for the last 6 years. My experience includes setting up courses and road shows in the deprived communities (called "Communities First") in order to engage with hard to reach people. LLS provision includes many arts and crafts activities and IT classes as well as Family Learning and Basic Skills

PLEASE DESCRIBE IN A FEW WORDS WHAT YOU CONSIDER THE MOST IMPORANT LIFELONG LEARNING CHALLENGES IN YOUR CITY

- ✚ Motivating people to participate in programs, and synchronize the different ideas, and projects, to enhance and complement each other, to function together as a whole

- ✚ Integration of migrants (language barriers, lack of training, family organisational problems, health and nutritional needs of the less fortunate and housing or accommodation needs), the training of young adults for active jobs available on the market and the practical training of university graduates with no working experience, also the recognition of institutions already existing in the communities capable of giving training needed for these situations. We are a growing city faced with many small family businesses that are slowly dying due to little knowledge of how to work in teams to pull together all the resources available and face a demanding market on low finances. We also have a large number of members of the community who are 50+ and at risk of isolation due to unemployment or lack of training. Many in this group are professionals and could be incorporated into programs to give their experience and knowledge to the younger members or involved in programs which the guides could create
- ✚ Throughout this first phase of drawing the profile I wondered if I should have my personal opinion on the Community
- ✚ LLL challenges. And decide that, if my role to "facilitate" the process I should try to keep my personal opinion aside (although it is not easy). Yet I'm more and more reflecting, in general, on what should be a learning community....
- ✚ Literacy efforts, if not is impossible to work and implement a lifelong learning program
- ✚ To learn the local language as the most important step to be included in the society. Literacy.
- ✚ - To promote Lifelong Learning to become the basic instrument around which will be possible to articulate the inclusion strategy and build a learning community. "Community Centre for lifelong learning"
 - To arrange/ put in order, all the educational resources of the community in order to detect overlaps, gaps and set priorities; to locate training resources / educational programs
 (In the community there are several agents who are working in the field of adult education but, despite some efforts, many experiments are conducted independently and uncoordinated)
 - Initiatives for young people, especially at risk; entrepreneurship
 - To unify aims around the idea of the community as a "future learning city", that mainly means: all public authorities, entities, associations... be able to work in coordination
 - To create common areas of learning resources for training / adult education (from age 16)
- ✚ The high percentage of immigration and the unemployment. Work with young people in social exclusion, without school and work
- ✚ To engage with learners within the Community First areas in the community

PLEASE DESCRIBE IN A FEW WORDS WHAT YOU EXPECT FROM THE TRAINING DAYS

- ✚ Getting guidance for steps in project management in the field of lifelong learning, with special focus on financial issues and information resources
- ✚ I hope to get ideas and advice on how to use European learning resources to meet the community needs by explanations on methods, network

methods and community methods. I expect to learn through group work and the experience of the other guides finding proper catalysts necessary to trigger a renewed enthusiasm in team work giving young adults and over 50 year olds services which will enable them to work in their communities by creating networks of new entrepreneurship and services. Share opinions on the sustainability of the community profile role and its development. I would also like to talk about the best approaches to be used in the community, with a special attention to approaches towards the decision makers of the communities

- ✚ Get to know my colleagues from other communities; an enriching exchange of experiences, doubts, insights with creativity and good humor; to be able to focus more clearly all the inputs collected so far and to give shape and directions to something which is still, to me, too wide and difficult to manage concretely
- ✚ To know and share other experiences with the same or similar profile as my community
- ✚ To know and share experiences in order to reach a consensus on the methodology and "work plan" in order to confront and work the challenges established as a priorities
- ✚ I expect to share experiences and opinions about different projects and resources to do in a population with all these characteristics. To get different ideas and knowledge that we can use in our population with the youth people, the women and the unemployment people for have a better coexistence and integration in the community
- ✚ Advice on how to search and access European funding and how to write successful bids. Learn more about Xploiting multi-media and the internet

ANY SPECIAL TOPICS YOU WOULD LIKE US TO ADDRESS DRUING THE TRAINING DAYS?

- ✚ Integrating various target groups in the projects
- ✚ The resources already available in the EU for learning and training and implementations which have already been planned aside from those proposed in our Xploit LLL project. (Most of this has been included in the training days schedule, which is wonderful!)
- ✚ Meet the need and keep the pace of the community. Often a need that arises from a community also contains suggestions, such as actions, based on local knowledge and common sense that may help and solve the problem. *But it's always so complicated and slow to make the "government" bodies (City of what else) act consequently with simple answers and "common sense". In the same way policies and strategies (social, economical, educational ...) are always delayed, outdated, if compared with the way our society (and local community too) is developing. Is it a gap in terms of methodologies? Policies? I have the impression that with EU programs this gap get even wider. The "listening" process attitude that is already so rare and difficult on local level is impossible on EU level. So my question is: how can we find mediation? A dialogue between EU praxis and local day by day life. Is there a way to make EU tools really meet the community, to create a flexible structure capable to change as the community changes?*
- ✚ To know other experiences and share different knowledge's

- ✚ To know other communities with the same profile, with a big variety of educational levels and to know how these countries can help people in the lowest level.
- ✚ How LLS can Xploit social networks not just within our community but with other agencies, students and providers across Europe.

Other comments?

- ✚ I am eager to participate in the training and learn from the other guides giving my input in order to create a bridge which will connect stakeholders, theories and ideas to realistic and practical training services in the community
- ✚ To respect the interest of our community: to empower people to feel better, giving them resources

These personal approaches should during the training be balanced against the agreed 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

3) Elderly and lifelong learning in general

Common community *thematic fields* to be addressed by the first action phase

A) Local lifelong learning cooperation infrastructures

B) European orientation and interaction

C) Community Centres for lifelong learning and empowerment

A dialogue between EU praxis and local day by day life. Is there a way to make EU tools really meet the community, to create a flexible structure capable to change as the community changes?

These clever words (thanks!) from one of our guide colleagues really ask the most crucial questions in Xploit and in relation to the role of the guides!

The Xploit project is not addressing all kinds of needs in the community. We are not addressing the citizens' financial situation, their housing or their health care needs. At least not in a direct way.

Neither can the project solve all sorts of educational and social problems in the communities.

The Xploit project is about learning needs, how to identify these needs, especially among citizens at risk, and how to link those needs to European resources in an ongoing and systematic way; as it is stated above: *a dialogue between EU praxis and local day by day life*. In this way the Xploit project should contribute to the development of learning communities.

At this point another comment (thanks again!) from a guide colleague is important:

...something still, to me, too wide and difficult to manage concretely.

This is very true.

How to manage the Xploit aims and mission in practice?

This is precisely what the guide training is really about.

This is why we in the recent 1-page paper called GO PRACTICE! introduced the word

→ *catalyst*.

We cannot address all sorts of learning needs at the same time, in the beginning of the action phases. We need a *strong focus*, and to use this focus as a *catalyst*. In the GO PRACTICE! paper we say:

The Xploit action phase 1 is expected to be focusing on the target groups needs and transversal thematic above.

But, it is not possible to start the action phase by addressing all sorts of topics or groups of citizens. The first action phase is also for the new guides to find their ways in the community, to experiment and to explore opportunities in the community.

The action phase can be described very briefly as:

Linking the needs of the target groups to European and other resources

By doing that, taking steps to establish a new lifelong learning infrastructure in the community

To start this process, a strong focus is needed: focusing on a specific activity or initiative allows a realistic and practicable first step. Such a first step we call a catalyst. Through this first step further steps can be unfolded, catalyzed by the activities, resources and collaboration established around the first step; precisely the meaning of a catalyst.

The communities in Xploit might choose one or two different catalysts, based on their needs, interests and resources. The options are listed below.

The first role of the lifelong learning guides is to facilitate these initial steps.

[Please see the attached paper]

This method is known as the “bottom up” approach. This does not mean that the community should not establish more top-down approaches in parallel. Such initiatives would clearly support the project and the perspectives.

It simply means that the project and the guides should start addressing one or two specific needs.

And then, learn, and slowly expand the practice further.

A very important aspect of the guide dialogues in preparation of the Salt days will precisely be about this question:

- ✚ What kind of catalyst(s) will be the most useful in your community in the first action phase?
- ✚ How are you and we going to prepare working in practice with this catalyst?

[Please refer to examples of catalysts in the attached GO PRACTICE!]



INTRO

As mentioned, the guides will play a double role.

First of all, the guides will develop competences on identifying and meeting lifelong learning needs in the community, how to design learning provisions for groups of citizens, and how to exploit available European resources instead of inventing everything themselves.

But the guides are also expected to help the community to organize the European involvement and the lifelong learning approaches in a more systematic way: help make such activities an ongoing focus area in the community, and help organize a strong collaboration between key stakeholders in the community around these challenges.

However, the guides also play a crucial role in the Xploit project, as the guides are expected to be the key coordinators, initiators and facilitators in the project's two long action phases in the communities.

This means that the guide training in Salt is also about preparing for the first action phase, starting in summer 2011.

At the same time, we hope that the guide team will contribute to the project outcomes by producing material, documentation, web elements and so on, in collaboration with the project's media team - in Salt represented by Enara and Thoeger.

We hope that the training sessions will be productive and contribute to interesting and useful project material; in the beginning by producing smaller open-questioned material, later on by producing more formal outcomes.

We hope that the guide team finds this kind of productive work interesting and challenging.

The community profiles are important to these activities. The guides should be aware of key elements in their community profile and study the coordinator's summary, attached to this first communication.

The community guide sort of "represents" the interest of the community in the guide team and during the guide training activities.

We expect the guide team activities to produce a lot of new knowledge, new ideas and new competences among the guides.

At the end of the project, the coordinator will offer each guide a certification, and although this is not formally recognized at European or local level, we believe it might benefit the guides in their future lifelong learning or learning community involvement.



THE SALT EVENT

What is the Salt event about?

What do we mean by "training"?

[Attached you will find the agenda for the training days]

We have an agenda for the training days. We might change the agenda, based on the online guide dialogues, and we might decide simply to use it as a framework during the work days...

The Salt training days are about preparing the guides for the first Xploit action phase, preparing the guides for their community role, but also to develop new competences, new ideas - and a deep understanding of a learning community.

The training days are indeed also about forming a group of people who can support each other throughout the Xploit project, and hopefully after the project.

We use the word "training" for this. But we don't really mean "training" in the traditional sense. "Training" in the traditional sense would imply that "we" know what "you" are going to do in your community. This is hardly the case.

What we actually mean by "training" is far more: *dialogue, inspiration, discussing challenges, finding opportunities, learning about what we need to learn about.*

The principles we would like to apply in the training activities are:

- Dialogue based
- Presentations and input should take place when there is a need in the team
- Open discussions, but accompanied by strong focusing and progression
- Finding solutions, not repeating obstacles
- Meeting challenges on the flight, not stepping back
- Respecting different approaches, different interests, but also working towards a mutual platform

One of the results from the training days should be a mutual understanding of how the team will work through the action phase 1, and how we can support the guides in the communities.



SALT PREPARATIONS

The online dialogues in preparation of the training days are really important.

The quality of the training days can be doubled from a strong online dialogue.

A little reading is needed, and reflecting and commenting.

But this is also what the guide role is about - reading a little, looking for new things, reflecting, communicating...

How to prepare? How to communicate?

The idea is to ask some relevant questions addressing the team at large and receive response from the guides.

The opening questions might, then, be followed by new questions, or a new theme.

The questions are all aiming to qualify the training days in Salt. Therefore it is important that we all take part in these preparations.

We expect such a dialogue to last for a couple of weeks. This means that we can work with 3 or 4 themes prior to the Salt days.

The dialogues are online and based on a simple mail list. We do not wish at this stage to use online systems like Moodle, First Class or whatever, as we are a small group and work within a limited time perspective.

The guides are requested to respond to the team mail, as we believe everybody should be able to follow the dialogue openly.

The dialogues will be collected and documented by the coordinator.

An important part of the preparations is to study and comment on the relevant Xploit papers, all attached to this first communication:

Xploit - towards a common focus 2nd version

Xploit Guides Training Salt

Xploit Guides Training Salt PROGRAM

GO PRACTICE

Xploit NEW progression

We might refer to these papers in the dialogues and during the training days.

During the dialogues, and during the training days in Salt, we will surely give you more papers, but we prefer at the moment to wait a little and identify needs and interests first.

Some reading is needed, since lifelong learning knowledge is materialized into quite a lot of papers.

When we communicate online or during the training days in Salt, please bear in mind that we all speak and write very different forms of "English" (even the Swansea people!).

We are not interested in more or less perfect English. The only thing that counts is that we express ourselves the best way possible.



MEDIA WORK IN SALT

As mentioned, the Xploit project activities, including the training sessions, are not only meant to benefit the communities, but also the project itself.

If we work well in the project, who knows, perhaps we will be funded for another 2 or 3 years...?

Benefitting then project also means contributing to the project material and website.

A strong and resourceful website is very important to a European project, and a website full of useful material will definitely help raise an interest in the project from many European communities and stakeholders.

In Xploit we promise that "material" does not (only) mean a lot of papers. It also means multimedia material, audio-visual material, graphic material, etc.

We must contribute to this in all project phases.

Therefore we expect to address *media production* in two ways in Salt:

- How can we during the sessions produce contributions to the project website?
- How can the guides help the communities produce interesting material from the action phase 1 activities?

Such material could be a small text with photos, a power point with text and graphics, a video interview (individual, in pair or team), photo montage with subtitles, a small cartoon describing certain events or activities, etc.

There are no limits to the creativity in this field.

Creativity, self-expression, communicating in different ways are important aspects of lifelong learning!

In Salt, media designers will be present to support these activities, but as to media work in the communities, this might be one of the first challenges to the guides: to form small collaborations in the community with young media people who can support the media work in Xploit, and who can benefit from such activities at the same time!

If you have ideas for the media work in Salt, please let us know !!



FIRST ONLINE DIALOGUE

So, let's get started!

First:

All questions and comments from you are welcome and will be taken seriously!

Next:



*Please, all guides send us a **photo** of you, as we would like to insert it in this document.*

Now, to the first round of dialogues.



First question

Now, considering the common Xploit focuses (in GO PRACTICE!), and considering your community needs and interests, what catalyst(s) or focus(es) would you suggest to be the most useful to your community in Action phase 1?

Please explain; please reflect on target groups, stakeholders interested, resources needed, ways to approach the challenge, etc.

We suggest that 1 or 2 such catalysts would be relevant in Action phase 1. Action phase 2 might address other catalysts or focuses.



Second question

What kind of competences or resources do you think you would need to be guiding the community towards seriously addressing the needs linked to this focus or these focuses?

Please offer input on these questions within the 25th of March. You are most welcome, of course, to consult colleagues in your community.

The coordinator will give response both at team and individual levels.

Once again, welcome to the Xploit guide team!

Best regards

*Jan Gejel
Enara Zabaleta*

Xploit coordinators