

TIPS NEWSLETTER March 2009

The Newsletter Issue 5 is part of the informative material concerning the aims and activities of the TIPS project and intends to disseminate and promote the main project outcomes.

TIPS Course Delivery: Learning Object production and activities

During the months of December through March, the project team was involved in the accomplishment of various activities.

Throughout January and February the final selection process of the TIPS course participants for the pilot training course "Practising and Enhancing Cultural Mediation in a Pluralistic Europe" was conducted in each partner country. TIPS course participants were selected among the identified "European Target Group" comprising of social workers and people interested in working in cultural mediation. The TIPS course selection process was announced and advertised in various specialized publications/ professional magazines, national newspapers, as well as promoted on university campuses and at workshops on the TIPS project.

The selection criteria, agreed upon by the partnership required candidates to be:

- ❖ Highly motivated to learn and improve skills relating to cultural mediation
- ❖ Social workers with basic experience in cultural mediation

And have:

- ❖ An intermediate level of English
- ❖ Basic computer skills and know how to navigate the Internet
- ❖ A personal computer with Internet access (ADSL or higher)
- ❖ A mobile phone with Internet access (supporting S.Operative Symbian S60 or Windows Mobile 2005)

The final selection of the TIPS course participants for the TIPS pilot training course "Practising and Enhancing Cultural Mediation in a Pluralistic Europe" consists of 85 total participants from the following partner countries:

- ❖ Italy: 21 participants
- ❖ Greece: 25 participants
- ❖ Poland: 20 participants
- ❖ France: 12 participants
- ❖ Austria: 7 participants

In France, three types of participants were selected for the TIPS course: social workers, cultural mediators and potential cultural mediators/social workers. Most of the trainees (two thirds) are professionals, either social workers working for an association closely linked to Uniformation (a training body specialised in the Social Economy field) or cultural mediators working in associations that were contacted during the consultation held in Ile de France (Iriv, May 2008). The remaining one third of the participants are students from the University of Evry Val d'Essonne – Ueve (Master 1- Social and Human Sciences – International Cooperation and Solidarity) enrolled in the course conducted by Dr Bénédicte Halba (lecturer at the Ueve since 2005). Some of the students are directly following each Virtual Class, while for those who are unable to participate directly; most of the Modules will be explained during the course at the University. Students will also be asked to evaluate the overall course. Mahgol Salemi, a foreign student at the Ueve and trainee at Iriv until the end of June, will also conduct a concrete evaluation of the experimentation that she has been following since the very beginning.

In Greece, the aim of a local event held in Patras was to attract attention to the project and the course in preparation for the selection process. As a consequence, more than fifty (50) people were interested in participating in the TIPS course and submitted their CVs and pre-enrolment forms. It is important to note that applications came from all over the country, as well as from countries other than Greece, including Germany, Italy and Finland. Apart from using the weighted criteria specified by the consortium, other selection criteria included: professional experience, background /degree, current occupation and environment. .

After the selection process, twenty-five (25) students were selected. An effort was made to ensure a broad and balanced coverage of the selection criteria, as well as to ensure equal gender opportunity. To further support trainees, three (3) TIPS centres were established, in Patras, Athens and Rethymno. Each centre is equipped with a PC with Internet access and an IPTV that can host up to ten (10) students.

Months prior to the selection process and the delivery of the TIPS course, all partners who were responsible for a specific module, designed and produced the various Learning Objects for each platform. Learning Objects for the E-learning platform include: Audio lessons and quizzes, audio lesson slides and Lecture Notes. Learning Objects for the Mobile learning platform feature Mobile Learning Pills, consisting of five specific terms for each pill that review the course contents from each module accompanied by an image, audio and text. The main Learning Object of the TV-learning platform is an IPTV video with multiple choice quiz questions.

The first virtual class for the TIPS course was conducted by a representative from each partner organization in the native language. The purpose of the first virtual class was to introduce the TIPS course and show users how to access the three platforms. The virtual classes for Module 1 took place on the following dates:

- Poland, February 26th
- Italy, March 2nd
- France, March 3rd
- Greece, March 13th
- Austria, March 23rd

The TIPS Course “Practising and Enhancing Cultural Mediation in a Pluralistic Europe” officially started on Monday, March 9th, with the delivery of Module 1: *Introduction to the TIPS course*.

Dissemination and Promotion activities

Greece - The Hellenic Open University Office of Public Relationships, together with the Greek group participating in the TIPS project, organized a local event on January 21, 2009, at the HOU Library. HOU produced posters and invitations for the event, in addition to the TIPS course brochures. The event was announced to the general public via press releases that were sent to all major local and some national newspapers and radio stations. Moreover, personal invitations were sent via post or email to local authorities, including all local MPs, the Director of the Region of Western Greece, the Prefect of Achaia, the Mayor, deputy-Mayors and the Municipality of Patras, the Regional University Hospital of Patras, the President and the Board of Directors of HOU, the Rector of the University of Patras and the President of the Technological Educational Institute of Patras, etc. Invitations were also sent to various organizations, public and private, such as the Red Cross – Patras branch, the International Organisation of Immigration, the Institute of Immigration Policy, various Centres for Vocational Training (KEK), Amnesty International, the Specific Service of Managing the Equal Programme, the Greek council for Refugees, the Centre for Support of Resettled Immigrants, the Achaia Institute of Adult Education, as well as to individual Cultural Mediators working in the Region of Western Greece.

At the event, Prof. Achilles Kameas analytically presented the project TIPS and the TIPS course "Practising and Enhancing Cultural Mediation in a Pluralistic Europe". Afterwards, the invited speakers Ms Chrysa Geraga (Municipality of Patras), Mr Christos Karapiperis (Red Cross – Patras branch) and Ms Kuriaki Vamvaka (Achaia Institute of Adult Education) talked about issues relating to how the city deals with economic immigration and the situation of refugees, in addition to presenting case studies of cultural mediation and discussing the profile of the cultural mediator and the skills required to do the job efficiently. At the end of the presentation, an open discussion took place between the participants and the speakers.

The event received broad coverage and participation ranged to around fifty (50) people, consisting mostly of trained cultural mediators, social workers or young people interested in the profession. All participants received a TIPS fiche, including the project brochure and the application form for the TIPS course. At the same time, the event announcement and the application form were published on the main HOU website, while posters announcing the event were displayed at all tertiary educational institutes, several public buildings and two major city hospitals. The announcement was also e-mailed to the announcement lists of local higher education institutes.

An aftermath of the event resulted in Prof. Achilles Kameas giving a live interview during a radio programme, where he briefly presented the concept and aims of the project, while being interviewed by a reporter who attended the event.

France - A national committee will be held in Paris, under the aegis of Uniformation, French supporter of the TIPS project, on May 12th, 2009. The main purpose will be to make a statement on the experimentation of the TIPS course among French trainees and define the ways the results of the TIPS project will be exploited and disseminated in France.

Italy – Paolo Degasperi and engineer Mikail Feituri, Project Manager and Technical manager at For.Com, participated in the Annual Edition of the International Technology, Education and Development Conference (INTED 2009 – www.inted.org) in Valencia, Spain, on March 9-11th, 2009. The general objective of the conference was to promote international collaboration in the fields of Education, Technology and Research in all educational fields and disciplines. The For.Com team presented the TIPS project products, focusing on the technological aspects and the experimentation phase.

In addition, the TIPS project poster was presented by FOR.COM at the 37th EUCEN European Conference "Transforming the University into a Lifelong Learning University" in Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium on March 26-28th, 2009. The conference was based mainly on the results of the BeFlex project and the preliminary findings of the BeFlexPlus project, synthesizing the state of play in University Lifelong Learning, examining the role of the Bologna process (ECTS, Recognition of Prior Learning, B-M-D structures) on flexibility in University Lifelong Learning and identifying some best practices in regional learning partnerships between universities and other stakeholders.

The topic was further explored through the presentation of different scientifically reviewed papers. In addition, the conference was enhanced by the keynote contributions from renowned international experts, with roundtable and participant discussions during the workshops.

The conference examined ideas for the formulation, development and implementation of the Lifelong Learning University at European level. In particular, the Post-Lisbon process, and the evolution of Lifelong Learning Universities in the context of competitiveness, equity and sustainability was addressed.

The EUCEN workplan for this implementation was proposed and final recommendations will be disseminated at the Ministers' conference (Leuven-Louvain-la-Neuve, May 2009), in order to make the Lifelong Learning University a more significant priority in the future.



TIPS poster presented at the 37th EUCEN European Conference:



TIPS

T-learning to Improve Professional Skills for intercultural dialogue



Project Coordinator: Consorzio FOR.COM. Formazione per la Comunicazione (Italy)
Via Virginio Orsini, 17/A - 00192 Rome

Partners: Auxilium (Austria), IRIV Conseil (France), Hellenic Open University (Greece), Gruppo Pragma (Italy), Tischner European University (Poland)

Programme: Lifelong Learning Programme, Leonardo da Vinci Sub-Programme

Duration: 24 months

Start date: 1st November 2007

End date: 31st October 2009

website: www.forcom.it/tipsproject
e-mail: tipsproject@forcom.it

THE BACKGROUND

Europe is a multicultural, complex and dynamic society



Intercultural dialogue is a transversal priority of the European Union

European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008)

The strengthening of intercultural competences is a key priority to ensure integration, cohesion and social development in Europe

THE OBJECTIVE AND THE TARGET GROUP

TIPS project addresses cultural mediators and would-be mediators' training needs focusing on issues such as acceptance, social integration and diversity management



TIPS develops and experiments a pilot course to boost cultural mediators' skills and expertise to guide immigrants with their integration in the receiving country

THE METHODOLOGY

The TIPS pilot course is delivered through the t-learning solution: an integrated methodology which exploits the potential of e-learning, m-learning and tv-learning. The TIPS pilot course is modular and each module is divided into units hosting various learning objects.

e-learning platform 	m-learning portal 	Tv-learning platform 
TRAINING AREA Video lessons Lecture notes Quizzes e-COMMUNITY Forum Chat Virtual Classroom	TRAINING AREA Brief pills (audio, text) Multilingual Phrasebook Glossary m-COMMUNITY Chat SMS	TRAINING AREA Short movies Quizzes

TIPS COURSE: PRACTISING AND ENHANCING CULTURAL MEDIATION IN A PLURALISTIC EUROPE

Module I: Introduction to the TIPS course

Module II: Cultural Mediation - A Professional Profile

Module III: The Psychology of Cultural Mediation

Module IV: National and European Legislation

Module V: Cultural Mediation - Fields of Application





This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.
This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Rome Transnational Meeting - Results

The 2nd mid-term didactic plenary meeting took place on January 15th and 16th, 2009 in Rome, Italy. The primary issues discussed at the meeting concerned the final production of the Learning Objects for each module and different aspects relating to the delivery of the TIPS course. In addition, each partner contributed their ideas, suggestions and opinions regarding the project and progress at the meeting.

During this meeting the following topics were addressed and discussed:

- The status of the production of the Learning Objects for each course module
- Procedures for the course delivery and the presentation of each platform
- Future evaluation and exploitation activities
- The presentation of Uniformation, the French partnership
- Future deadlines and status for the course delivery phase, including the course delivery calendar (the delivery dates of each module and the virtual classes), the role of TIPS tutors, the selection process of the TIPS course participants and the TIPS Centres in each country

News on cultural mediation

The Field in Italy

As Italy continues to become a more multiethnic society, the intercultural mediator plays a key role concerning the relationship between citizens, new and old, and above all, the relationship between new citizens and institutions. Today, however, mediators are still not fully recognized professionally nor have unequivocal training opportunities.

A fundamental starting point would be to propose a bill for a 'proxy law' asking the Italian government to institute with legislative decrees, the "Directory of Registered Intercultural Mediators" and the "Directory of Registered Intercultural Mediation Associations" and to harmonize already existing laws. Training programs for this field should then be defined and devolved involving institutional entities, as well as labour organizations and non-profit sectors.

Aspiring mediators will first undergo basic training regarding the communication and legislation of the profession and then continue on with specialized training that is essential for working in different environments (e.g. at school, hospital, in court, etc.). The government will then establish and define the professional role of mediators within public and private institutions and volunteer organizations working with immigrants.

The bill will also specify the necessary requirements in order to become a registered mediator, that without, one cannot officially practice the profession. One of the primary requirements, for example, is to know the Italian language and culture in addition to knowing the language and culture of at least one other foreign country. Registered mediators must also have a degree in liberal arts, social work or linguistics or at least be able to demonstrate that they have acquired "suitable or equivalent" experience and knowledge in their country of origin.

Moreover, a transitory law will protect intercultural mediators who are already practicing today and those who have extensive experience in public and private organizations will be able to become registered within six months of the effective date of the legislative decree.

News in Italy

Since 2000, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has collected data on issues regarding racism, xenophobia and related intolerances through its RAXEN National Focal Points (NFPs) covering all EU Member States on issues of racism, xenophobia and related intolerances. NFPs are organisations selected by the Agency through an open call for tender and contracted to provide through different reporting tools background material on phenomena of racism, xenophobia and related intolerance, as well as policies and initiatives promoting equality and diversity.

Additional information is available on the website: <http://www.fra.europa.eu>

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) commissioned the Incident report on violent attacks against Roma in Italy immediately after the violent anti-Roma incidents which took place in Italy in May 2008. The purpose of the report is to provide the Community and its Member States with a factual overview of the situation during these months in Italy.

Whilst the main focus of this report is on the events relating to Roma, some information is also related to other minority groups. That is because measures taken by the Italian government in response to the events were simultaneously packaged with measures affecting irregular immigrants, and because the climate of public opinion generated by the Roma events also manifested itself in attacks on non-Roma immigrants.

The Agency collected the information on these events by drawing on its Racism and Xenophobia Network (RAXEN) 2 of National Focal Points (NFPs), of which there are 27 total, one in each Member State. The Italian NFP, COSPE3, was asked to document the facts of the violent incidents against the Roma population in Italy, the actions of the authorities, and the responses of the media and of civil society, as well as to provide other relevant contextual information to the FRA. The FRA National Liaison Officer for Italy⁴ also kindly provided additional input.

The time-line for this data-gathering exercise was set from the beginning of May to June 20th 2008, and the Italian NFP was asked to document incidents and responses which took place during this period. However, it should be noted that even in the short time between collecting data and the publication of this report, some things may have changed.

News in France

In France, as of January 2009, a new Minister in charge of Integration and Migration, Mr. Eric Besson, was nominated. Mr. Besson has been a member of the government in charge of the Prospective and the Evaluation of Public Policies since 2007. He is the successor of Mr. Brice Hortefeux, who was the promoter of the 'European Pact on Immigration and Asylum', proposed under the French European Presidency, and signed by all EU countries in October 2008. According to French opinion, Mr. Besson seems to be more reluctant to DNA testing proposed in the context of family gatherings that intends to prove if newcomers in France are really family members of the immigrants welcoming them. According to M. Besson, this kind of test would raise more issues rather than solving them. Moreover, many associations were violently opposed to such testing for ethical reasons.

Another important event in France, was the opening of the Mediathequ to the general public at the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration (CNHI) in March 2009. This is quite a unique place in France, and in Europe, that values and promotes the diversity of French citizens. CNHI, opened in October 2007, is a place dedicated to the history of immigration in France for the past two centuries, representing cultural and educational institutions that recognise and value the role of immigrants in French society.

CNHI is proposing a museum, temporary exhibitions, and networks of teachers/researchers in the field of immigration, symposium, and documentary resources. For further information, please visit: www.histoire-immigration.fr/ (the site is still available only in French).

News in Greece

On December 18, 2008, World Day of Immigration, the operation of a Model Centre of Reception and Service of Immigrants was inaugurated in the city of Piraeus. This is the first one-stop-shop which serves immigrants living in Greece. Its purpose is to shorten the process for renewing the permits of stay for immigrants, by concentrating all necessary actions in one and only office, to help avoid all the time-consuming bureaucratic procedures. In this way, the whole process is greatly simplified, because immigrants can directly address Regional immigration offices, thus alleviating the need to submit applications and documents to municipal services. This service will gradually be offered in all Regions of Greece.

Moreover, the Citizens Service Centre (KEP) has been operating successfully for many years in Greece where all citizens are supported in carrying out various cases that include transactions with public authorities, local or national. In order to servicing non-Greek EU citizens, KEP provides four processes that concern the authorisation of stay, in collaboration with the Greek Police. In addition, the KEP portal (www.kep.gov.gr), features administrative information for thirty-seven processes that concern immigrants (economic and refugees) and eight concerning citizenship affairs. The KEP portal is available in five languages: Greek, English, French, German and Bulgarian.

Also, citizens can dial the number 1500, which operates 24 hours a day, via IVR (interactive voice response) system, in order to seek information and directions on matters concerning economic immigrants. The operator gives information in English, French, Albanian, Russian, Arabic and Bulgarian.

The sixth issue of the periodical TIPS Newsletter will be available in July 2009.

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This communication reflects the views of only the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.