



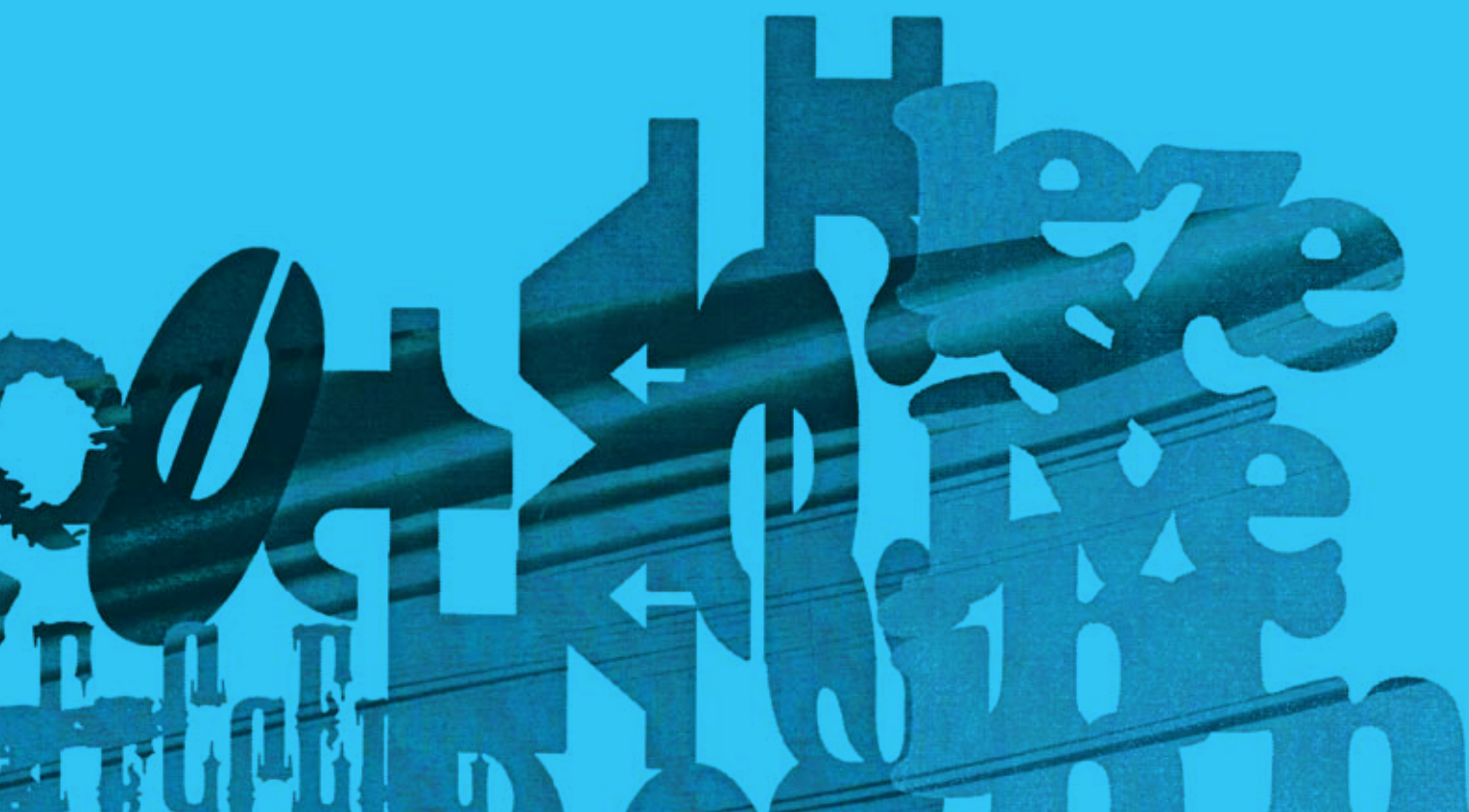
ENHANCING  
THE POWER TO  
TAKE ACTION



LEARNER  
AND TUTOR  
EXPERTISE  
SERVING LITERACY



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# I. Eur-Alpha

## European network for adult literacy and numeracy



2009  
-2012

**T**he development of literacy and basic skills for adults is an essential element in building a European knowledge society.

It is fundamental that adults, who wish, have access to local quality literacy provision which takes into account their needs and opinions.

Provision is intended for adults without any schooling or who have limited experience of formal education and who have difficulties understanding texts concerning their everyday lives.

This formed the basis for 16 partners from 12 countries to set up the Eur-Alpha network in 2009.



## EUR-ALPHA: A NETWORK AIMED AT

- Promoting exchanges between all literacy practitioners: learners, tutors, researchers and policy makers,
- Supporting and developing the quality of literacy and numeracy provision in Europe.
- Improving teaching practices to facilitate learners' self-determination, participation and voicing of opinions.

## EUR-ALPHA: A NETWORK THAT INNOVATES

The network comprises three types of players: learners, tutor-facilitators and representatives of organisations. It adopts a shared power structure in an operational dynamic that maintains autonomy and identity of each group that work together with common objectives:

- To organize and develop the network: the Partners' Consortium,
- To collect and disseminate teaching practices facilitating learner empowerment, citizenship and participation: the Scientific Committee Tutors Training,
- To develop and support learners to voice their opinions in their training bodies and in society: the Learners Scientific Committee.

This network effectively enables learners to get together and commit themselves to draw greater attention to the literacy issues in Europe, in a context of meetings which, beyond permitting discovery of other places and exchanges of practices, give substance to self-organized action and consolidate autonomous territories that are indispensable for taking action. Power to act takes concrete form particularly in the determination to see that tomorrow Eur-Alpha will become the European network of literacy learners.

## EUR ALPHA: A NETWORK THAT PUBLISHES AND DISSEMINATES

**A TUTORS' CHARTER** that establishes the conditions and criteria for quality training adapted to learners' needs and based on participation and reflective analysis.

**A MANIFEST – THE MANIFESTO** – in which learners express their claim for greater attention to the literacy issues in Europe.

**PRACTICES TO PROMOTE PARTICIPATION AND SELF-DETERMINATION.** Some are described in this brochure; others can be found on the network website, [www.eur-alpha.eu](http://www.eur-alpha.eu), that also includes further information on this project.

**A DVD** of learners' testimonies.

## THE CHARTER

The Charter associated with this brochure was drafted by the Scientific Committee Tutors Training after several months of discussions and exchanges on the words and concepts used to describe the Eur-Alpha project and specifically its objectives: **to improve teaching practices favouring self-determination and participation of learners; to develop and support learners voicing of opinion.**

This Charter constitutes a set of principles, recommendations, observations, pedagogical reflections and methodologies to favour the creation and development of training practices targeting self-determination and participation of learners.

During our work, in our discussions on the criteria for assessing our practices, we took account of six criteria: self-determination, citizenship, creativity, critical thinking, empowerment and reflective analysis. These criteria seem to better reflect practices and approaches developed by tutors and we feel they are interesting aspects on which the self-determination dimension of literacy actions can be developed.

On our website, you will find all the approaches proposed by the Eur-Alpha partners and those presented in the tutor training modules they organized.

## THE MANIFESTO

The manifesto attached to this brochure was developed by learners on the Learners' Scientific Committee, with the contribution of all learners who took part in the workshops and who were consulted in their countries. It was drafted:

- To support and create change
- To reinforce the value & worth of adult basic education learners
- To reinforce the right to learn
- To create a collective voice
- To help learners get qualifications
- To remove stigma and discrimination
- To inform politicians and those who can help address the needs of literacy learners
- To educate employers about how literacy learners can contribute
- To educate the public about literacy needs and create a change in attitudes.

The first section describes the learners' demands, the second why they want to learn, what they want to learn, how they want to learn and how they would like to see politicians involved.

The Manifesto was the subject of intense discussions and exchanges. Today the project has reached fruition: the Manifesto is ready to be distributed to political decision-makers, and participants have already begun to communicate it to other groups of learners so as to continue the discussions, enrich the Manifesto and launch new actions.

## EUR-ALPHA: THREE YEARS OF WORK

In October 2009, the first meeting consisted of representatives of partner organisations. In June 2012, the fifth meeting brought together learners, the largest group, tutor trainers and representatives of organisations, around the table, discussing, confronting each other, negotiating... Some partners stressed that three years earlier, they would not have believed it possible.

Tangible results: organization of workshops for tutors and for learners, drafting and publication of a Charter, a Manifesto, exchange of good practices... The processes developed to achieve these are at least as important as the results. And they entailed obstacles to be overcome in order to meet the challenge: participation of tutors working in the field and adult literacy learners in the Eur-Alpha network.

There were difficulties in combining the network activities with the various possibilities offered by European programmes to support mobility and organize training programmes, both for tutors and for learners. Still today, the procedures are too complex and too uncertain to significantly support participation of actors in the field.

There were difficulties in reaching tutors. Most of the participants already worked as pedagogical advisors, with considerable experience and very good training.

Paradoxically, learner participation was the largest despite the challenges that this represented for learners (and for the organizers) – striking out in unknown territory, the lack of material resources, not being used to travelling, the (sometimes very) long trips, the lack of linguistic resources...

The challenge of a multilingual project grouping people speaking French, English, Spanish, German, Dutch... with no common language.

The challenge of acting with and not for learners. The challenge of talking with and not about learners.

The challenge of a job with mixed groups of learners/tutors/representatives of associations, respecting the pace and working methods of all, authorising confrontation, refraining from speaking in someone else's place...

After these three years, the results are not the conclusion of our work – they are a new starting point to meet these challenges and continue the action.

## EUROPEAN MEETINGS OF TUTORS AND REALITIES IN THE FIELD

Over 3 years tutor trainers had a chance to meet 5 times, first in the Eur-Alpha meetings and then in the tutor training workshops. Organized alongside the meetings, with the objective of sharing good practice and enabling trainers to assimilate these practices by using them in real learning situations.

The workshops were greatly appreciated, not just for their conviviality, but even more because they provided an opportunity to discover innovative approaches for providing quality training programmes. Finally, and this is a fundamental aspect, they allowed exchanges on complex but nevertheless common teaching situations.

Still, the number of trainers who took part in these workshops was too small. In fact, one workshop that was scheduled had to be cancelled.

On many occasions, we had an opportunity to talk about this problem with participants and to analyze the reasons for it.

We feel that this point must definitely be communicated to decision-makers, both in training centres, where the management must absolutely find a way to free up time for teacher training, and in local, regional, national and European financial policies.

We observed that this issue is common to all European trainers. First, they do not have enough time for internal exchanges with their own teaching teams, or to meet their peers, learn from each other and pool their skills.

Second, even when the heads of training centres agree to send their teachers to training sessions supported by European programmes, the applications are not always accepted by the funding agencies.

This can be explained,—and was confirmed by trainers who attended—that there is a pressure to be “profitable”, training programmes are being increasingly subject to the rules on public supply contracts. Demand on teaching teams sometimes means practitioners have to compromise. Too often, as is the case in France, trainers have only a limited number of hours available to teach learners and so only the basics of the language can be covered.

The tutor’s Charter that was developed collectively over these three years is an attempt to achieve the basis for quality training programmes in which learners are equal and active participants.

In recent years, we have seen the disappearance of guidance and follow-up actions as well as cultural and citizen approaches. Opportunities for tutors to stand back and assess their profession have shrunk to almost nothing in all the countries represented in our training workshops.

This is not what Europe recommends, but it may be what it induces.

For education to truly become a right for all and throughout life, it is crucial to give everyone the time this entails.

## LISTENING TO LEARNERS' VOICES IN LITERACY PRACTICE

One of the many opportunities presented by the Eur-Alpha network has been the opportunity to bring together learners from many different countries to share their experiences as literacy learners, to give voice to their ideas and views and to empower learners to make changes to their own lives and the lives of others.

Adult learners from various countries represented in the project met at 3 workshops each lasting one week – in Namur, Barcelona and Brussels. The underlying approaches at these meetings were strongly influenced by the philosophy and ideas of the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. Through presentations and discussions, learners began to think about themselves and their situations and a dialogue was created to deepen their understanding. The need to enhance justice and human rights through developing new ways of learning was also discussed. In each of the workshops the learners exchanged experiences (through interpreters) about their learning experiences at home, their shared views, and experiences from attending the workshops. Evidence was gathered through group interviews with learners carried out in 5 different language groups. Learners were asked a series of questions about their expectations, experiences on meeting others and their involvement in developing the learners' Manifesto.

Findings can be summarized as follows:

- Learners appreciated the experience of meeting with other learners from all over Europe,
- They were able to exchange experience and expressed the view that they had benefited immensely from the educational and cultural experience of being part of Eur-Alpha,
- They said they had greatly increased their self-confidence through meeting and talking with other adult learners, volunteer workers, tutors, teachers and others,
- They had a much better understanding of what it meant to be European as a result of participating in the project,
- The meetings reinforced their views that a need for help with literacy skills should not be seen as a problem created by the individuals themselves, but rather a problem for the whole society, the causes of which need to be fully understood by everyone,
- Learners mentioned that discrimination was experienced by literacy learners in many countries, including inability to gain access to employment, educational opportunities and a quality of life enjoyed by most other people,
- By focusing on the development of the learners' Manifesto, many became aware of the potential for education to empower individuals to make changes in their lives and to assist communities in meeting the challenges of a lack of literacy skills,
- The need for the European Union and national governments to acknowledge access to basic education as a basic human right was strongly expressed,
- The power of learning through adult education and other literacy projects to engage citizens was acknowledged, as was the need to provide a high quality service,
- The promotion of learning networks (at local, national and international levels), which bring teachers, learners and others together to provide high quality programmes, was recognized as an important step forward to reach others in the future,
- Researching and reflecting on good practices were seen as central to the network and to improving services.



## THE QUESTION OF LANGUAGES

*"One of my fears was how I could understand other countries, since I don't speak the language.*

*The most powerful thing this week was not understanding the others' language and still managing to mingle with each other and do things together.*

What can you say in another language?

- *A few words in English and in Spanish, hello, goodbye and thank you,*
- *I can say a few words in Spanish: thank you, goodbye, it's alright,*
- *I can't say anything. It's something of a feat that I understand and speak my own language, French. But communicating in another language is a future challenge for me,*
- *Yes, I learned a few words of the language, but I'm not sure of which country. I saw that I was able to understand people, even without speaking,*
- *For me the language was a barrier. I was unable to find a way to get over it. We should have had activities where we could understand each other without needing to talk.*

What will you take home with you from this experience?

*A desire to learn English to be able to talk to other participants in the network."*

It was impossible to decide to work exclusively in English when learners from different countries want to work together. So we had to meet the challenge to work in a multilingual environment. Given the times and the contexts, we combined the following means:

- Interpreters: a difficult solution when there are 5 or 6 languages, when we want to work in a dynamic of interactive construction and when participants are not used to dealing with translations. An expensive solution: using professional interpreters who know the context and the content is indispensable. This was an indispensable solution at times when we needed to agree on concept or to accurately understand the situations experienced by others. It is a solution that takes time... It must be foreseen in the organization of the work... However, this time also gives an opportunity to think, and to consider things from a distance,
- Teams of trainers/moderators who were bi- or multilingual and moderated in several languages. Very effective but very demanding for the moderators, who must be particularly competent. It is indispensable, however, if we want to use active teaching techniques,
- Language facilitators who were generally with Eur-Alpha groups of learners provided support during working sessions and intervened in informal exchanges and discussions. Their contribution, which was voluntary, was fundamental and should be recognised,
- Creative approaches, using types of expression other than verbal and written communication, were used whenever possible,
- Moments in language subgroups,
- Confidence in everyone's communication resources...

## II. Practices promoting participation and self-determination

In these first three years, tutors and learners exchanged their practices and models of action in distinct committees.

To support learner participation and self-determination, the tutors and tutor trainers stressed:

- The importance of tutor training centred on cultural approaches, writing workshops, project based learning, reflective analysis on one's own practice, participation in action research groups focusing on constructing educational tools etc.,
- The importance of coherent training schemes with the objectives of participation and self-determination,
- The importance of pedagogical approaches and moderating that help develop self-confidence, expression, the capacity to act...

On their side, learners underlined projects that took them out of their learner status and put them in the role of militants for the right to literacy. Projects by which they acquired the knowledge and basic skills they need. Reading, writing, counting... to be able to create and manage their association or file a proposal for a law, technologies to be able to communicate and be informed, competences to speak out, organize events, understand the causes of illiteracy, develop arguments, debate ideas...

A description of a few of these practices follows. Others can be downloaded on our website [www.eur-alpha.eu](http://www.eur-alpha.eu)

# From the learners' standpoint

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# An interactive website specially designed for adults with literacy difficulties: [www.a-b-c.nu](http://www.a-b-c.nu)

## WHO ARE WE?

The ABC foundation was created by people with low literate skills. The foundation has three main activities:

- Sensitizing public opinion to the theme of illiteracy by providing testimony of the experience of adults with literacy difficulties,
- Encouraging adults to take part in reading and writing courses,
  - Organizing meetings where literacy learners and trainers work together.

## DESCRIPTION

### A TECHNOLOGY THAT GIVES YOU WINGS!

No doubt the new communication technologies have worked a revolution in our relationship models. For adults with literacy difficulties, this could have been an additional source of exclusion from life in society.

But ABC decided to make it a mean to broaden communication and to increase the visibility of the learners-ambassadors' commitment– these learners undertake to testify about what literacy training has done to change their lives. With their tutors, they organize actions to encourage people with literacy difficulties to take training. The website of the ABC foundation uses the "Text-to-speech (TTS)" technology.

This technique reproduces all texts in a synthetic voice close to a natural voice.

To obtain access to the information on the site, you simply must point the mouse on the text. Everything is in oral form, including the functions of the buttons and the various columns on the site.

This technology abolishes the difficulty associated with reading, and at the same time makes it possible to continue to learn. In fact, the user can practice reading along with the natural voice.

### WHAT CAN A WEBSITE LIKE WWW.A-B-C.NU CONTRIBUTE?

The site is organized in 8 tabs:

1. **START:** begins the visit of the website. Here you find the objectives of the ABC Foundation, what an ambassador of the ABC Foundation is, and the action plan up to 2015.
2. **FILMS:** gives access to video documents. Here you can see people who explain their itinerary, who are interviewed by journalists... The objective of these videos is to stimulate learning of reading and writing for adults with literacy difficulties. You can also see a public event organized by ABC to publicize the struggle and sensitize politicians to the need to take account of persons who have low literacy skills.
3. **NEWS:** keeps visitors informed about what is happening in the various ABC groups in Holland. You can read what is said in international encounters like Eur-Alpha for example.
4. **AGENDA:** lists the dates of events or encounters scheduled in various sites where the ABC Foundation is active.
5. **CHAT:** allows instant discussions that can involve two or several people. By putting the mouse on the sound icon, you have access to a spoken reproduction of whatever is written. To communicate, of course, you must write, but this gives people impetus to learn and to dare take part. Records of the conversations are kept for a very short time only.
6. **FORUM:** is accessible to everyone. The ambassadors can exchange thoughts on their activities, say how everything went, trade view points and ask each other questions. The forum records are archived.
7. **LINKS:** helps find links to events that pertain to illiteracy, with a list of organisations that propose literacy courses and articles published in the press on the theme of literacy.
8. **CONTACTS:** gives the data needed to contact the ABC Foundation. You can write a message and leave your name, address and telephone number.

### WWW.A-B-C.NU A WEBSITE THAT LETS LEARNERS TAKE PART IN MEETINGS AND THE LIFE OF THE ABC FOUNDATION

There is a special button with a password at the bottom of each page of the website. This gives special access for ABC Foundation members to official documents, which can also be read by the text-to-speech software. This feature gives everyone the possibility to take an active part in meetings and life of the foundation.

www.a-b-c.nu is a real tool for the ABC Foundation learners-ambassadors.

Not only does it enable them to communicate with each other or to manage information that concerns them, but they can also use it to train and to use Internet, a tool that is an integral part of citizenship today.

This website also adds visibility to the work of the ambassadors, and consequently the illiteracy issue is publicized and literacy learning is presented in a positive way.

### WHAT ARE THE PERSPECTIVES FOR THE ABC FOUNDATION AND ITS WEBSITE WWW.A-B-C.NU?

Text-to-speech (TTS) software is accessible in various languages (English, French, German, Spanish, etc.) ABC could help other European countries develop a website like its own.

STICHTING  
BELANGENBE-  
HARTIGING  
ALFABETISERING

NETHERLANDS

### CONTACT

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# Par-Chemins: Learners set up their association

## WHO ARE WE?

The purpose of the Par-Chemins Association is to convince more and more people to join training by helping them “open the door” and to inform, testify and sensitize to the issue so that the right to education becomes effective.

Par-Chemins is a link in the chain Chaîne des Savoirs.

The Chaîne des Savoirs is a movement made up of local groups, the “links”- that involves learners, tutors, local elected officials and social workers in the framework of action-research about literacy difficulties. Together with Anne Vinérier (PhD in Educational Sciences), they study the causes and consequences of literacy difficulties and identify potential action paths.

## DESCRIPTION

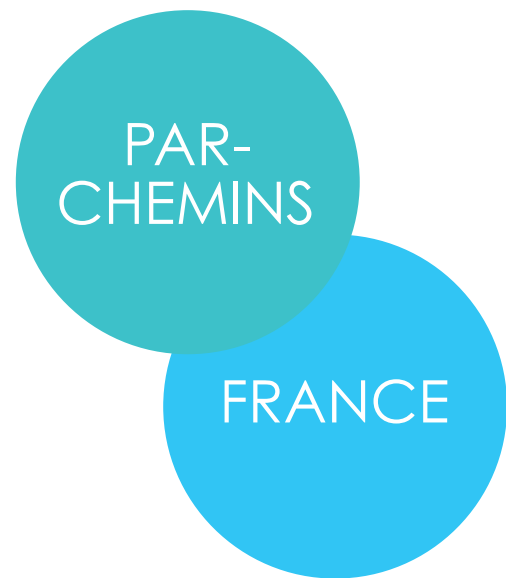
For Par-Chemins, things got started in 2008-2010. During those two years, learners took part in three experiments where they worked in a partnership with tutors, volunteers, social workers and local elected officials:

- Parents with literacy difficulties took part alongside Actions Educatives Familiales in the creation of a documentary called “Les mots, le monde” (“The words, the world”) to say what was at stake in re-learning to read and write as an adult and they participated in discussions after the projection of the film,
- Learners joined members of the Chaîne des Savoirs in a research-action-training project to improve awareness of the fight against illiteracy and the right to lifelong learning,
- Finally, learners participated in the European project Grundtvig to create a European network of learners-ambassadors to fight illiteracy.

### THE CREATION OF PAR-CHEMINS TO GIVE MEANING TO LEARNING

After these initial actions, we proposed a programme to parents to continue their training for one year, and then to set up a local association to militate for the right to lifelong learning for all. By learning the principles of associative life, and by working on helpful skills (debating, defining a project, writing statutes, voting, writing minutes, planning, making commitments, establishing a budget...) they became the ones who would undertake a citizenship action by bringing together allies for the right to lifelong learning, thereby shifting from the status of a learner to that of a militant in the fight against illiteracy.

In June 2011, the General Assembly that officially created the Par-Chemins Association took place at Château-Chinon. It grouped some fifty members – learners, volunteers, professional tutors and allies – supporting the project. The Steering Committee and Bureau were elected, consisting of equal numbers of learners and “literate”. Each position in the association consists of a pair: the chairman and co-chairman, treasurer and co-treasurer... (One a learner and the other not). This is a way of envisaging lifelong learning for all.



### PAR-CHEMINS/FRANCE

Members of the Steering Committee must learn to be understood by all, in all acts of the life of the association (organization, discussions, exchanges, decision taking, voting...). Learners speak out as a group, or address target audiences during the debates, research projects, and presentation of video documents. They are present in the decision taking bodies of the association, as well as in the various committees that organize and plan its action. At this time, there are 4 committees: budget, communication, awareness, prevention. And finally, the learners use democratic decision-taking processes, seek arguments and listen to those of others.

Associative life in itself is a fantastic source of basic training: note taking, writing minutes of a meeting, preparing an agenda, answering correspondence, keeping accounts, accepting and fulfilling responsibilities... all as life-size exercises.

### PAR-CHEMINS WANTS TO SEEK OUT THE “INVISIBLE”

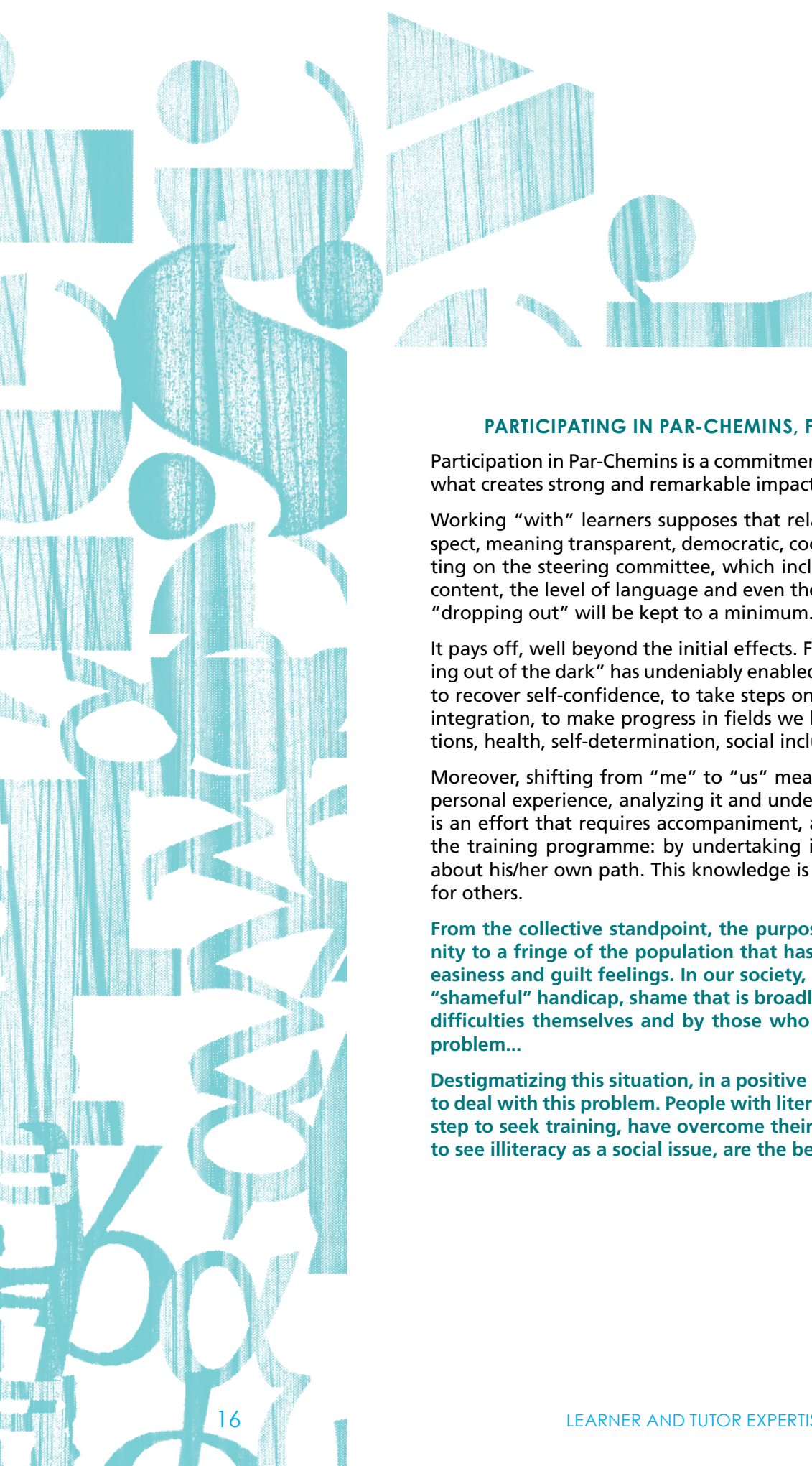
The people whom the association refers to as “invisible” are people with literacy difficulties who are hiding –because they are ashamed, because they don’t dare envisage the possibility of getting training. The association is located in the Morvan region, an extensive rural area, which is fairly hard-hit by illiteracy. The learners who created Par-Chemins say that the training programme changed their lives. The ones who made the effort to reach out to education say they know other people who don’t dare take the step. The association takes action locally to remove the stigmas from the learning process and to encourage those people to come out of the dark.

Through its action, the association increases awareness of illiteracy by showing the many parameters that can touch on this theme.

In these local actions, the learners meet with parents, schools, local officials...

When they speak in tutor training, they explain how their lives were totally changed because they learned basic skills. With the tutors, they consider proposals for educational approaches.

When they take part in meeting in the Chaîne des Savoirs, they think with other learners about a common theme related to literacy issues. These meetings give the learners a chance to shift focus away from their own backgrounds, and to gain a better knowledge of the world.



### **PARTICIPATING IN PAR-CHEMINS, FROM DARKNESS INTO LIGHT**

Participation in Par-Chemins is a commitment. The quality of this participation is what creates strong and remarkable impacts at various levels.

Working “with” learners supposes that relations are established in mutual respect, meaning transparent, democratic, cooperative relations. For example, sitting on the steering committee, which includes learners, entails preparing the content, the level of language and even the operational process to ensure that “dropping out” will be kept to a minimum.

It pays off, well beyond the initial effects. From an individual standpoint “coming out of the dark” has undeniably enabled some people to improve their lives, to recover self-confidence, to take steps on the path to social and professional integration, to make progress in fields we hadn’t even considered: family relations, health, self-determination, social inclusion...

Moreover, shifting from “me” to “us” means taking an objective look at one’s personal experience, analyzing it and understanding it as part of a whole. This is an effort that requires accompaniment, and it is an important dimension of the training programme: by undertaking it, the learner produces knowledge about his/her own path. This knowledge is important both for him/herself and for others.

**From the collective standpoint, the purpose is to give a place in the community to a fringe of the population that has become “invisible” because of uneasiness and guilt feelings. In our society, literacy issues are still considered a “shameful” handicap, shame that is broadly shared by the adults with literacy difficulties themselves and by those who are not, but prefer not to see the problem...**

**Destigmatizing this situation, in a positive approach, is the first job to be done to deal with this problem. People with literacy difficulties, who have taken the step to seek training, have overcome their personal difficulty, and have come to see illiteracy as a social issue, are the best equipped to do this.**

### WHAT ABOUT THE TRAINING?

By writing an article for a regional paper, speaking out to an audience, preparing a general meeting, bringing a poster to a social centre, presenting a film, or meeting a journalist... the person is **TAKING ACTION** in the sense of the objectives of Par-Chemins, to improve the situation in the meaning of the Charter of the Chaîne des Savoirs. In this sense it is a **MILITANT ACTION**.

At the same time, it means reinvesting in things that one already knows how to do, as well as doing things for the first time, taking risks, succeeding or failing, and learning lessons from it... This is **LEARNING** by doing things that one would not be doing without the opportunity provided by Par-Chemins. In other words, this is training through experience, also referred to as non-formal education.

Of course, there are other ways of getting training, which consist of acquiring knowledge or skills directly. This is programmed training or formal training, which consists of acquiring "reference knowledge", beginning with basic skills. These include traditional on-the-job training programmes that may be done with a tutor or volunteer. Often these start with situations (that are often described in written documents) conceived specially for the learning process.

There is no hierarchy to be created between these two types of learning programmes, nor should one take priority over the other, even if all learners in Par-Chemins began by formal training.

An action becomes a learning process when it is done conscientiously, or, in other words, when the skill has been identified and one can verify that the learner can use it in a new situation.

Par-Chemins (and Chaîne des Savoirs) is a place where ambassadors and support staff **MILITATE AND LEARN** through experience.

### TO KNOW MORE ABOUT IT:

[www.cooperativedessavoirs.org/fr/partenaires/6-par-chemins](http://www.cooperativedessavoirs.org/fr/partenaires/6-par-chemins)  
[www.chainedessavoirs.org](http://www.chainedessavoirs.org)

### CONTACT

NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION  
Par-Chemins is a link  
of the Chaîne des Savoirs

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# Ambassadors for literacy: From learners to experts

## WHO ARE WE?

The 3 main objectives of Bundesverband Alphabetisierung und Grundbildung e.V. (the German Federal Association for Literacy and Basic Education) are:

- Promoting reading and writing skills for adults, motivating people to make use of training programmes, lobbying, counselling of persons concerned,
- Raising awareness of the public about causes and effects of functional illiteracy,
- Supporting tutors, empowering learners and supporting them in constructing networks and self-help structures.

The association provides a counselling service for people who want to take part in training and work with the training organisations to set up their training programmes.

## DESCRIPTION

To carry out its actions, the Bundesverband uses the "ALFA-Mobil" (literacy-mobile), a bus that serves as stand in important public events. With the "ALFA-Mobil", the association tours German speaking countries. The learners do interviews in every kind of media, make speeches and organize workshops at congresses. They are also invited as experts during tutors or social workers' training programmes.

The Bundesverband has realised how interesting it was to work with learners to raise awareness about literacy difficulties. Their speech is authentic and straightforward. When they say that reading, writing and mathematics learning in adulthood is possible, their words are extremely meaningful. It allows everyone to see the abilities that the adults with literacy difficulties can develop (unfortunately not recognized by any qualification) and how basic skills training can improve their quality of life.

The learners are experts in presenting their topic and persuading decision makers, tutors, the media, key persons and other persons concerned to give support to the cause.

### LEARNERS-EXPERTS

This project started at the request of learners who wanted to improve their communication skills but also get their abilities as literacy experts recognized.

As part of a project funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the qualification "Learners become Experts", initiated by learners, was developed with the central aim of becoming more professional for public literacy awareness campaigns.

This accredited training course contains 3 different modules:

Module one: media training:

- What are the German media and what kind of public relations do they have?
- What are your personal rights when in contact with the media?
- How to handle media requests?
- Concentration and relaxation exercise.



Module two: communication skills:

- What is the perception of oneself and others?
- What are the basic rules for successful communication and how to practise them?
- How to communicate face to face?
- How to discuss in a group and negotiate?
- Learning how to say “No”,
- Improving rhetoric and elocution,
- Concentration and relaxation exercise.

Module three: presentation in public:

- Awareness of your body language,
- How to present yourself and your story (chronological narration)?
- How to present the topic and get to the point (in interviews),
- How to cope with stage fright and camera shyness?
- And once again, exercises in concentrating and relaxing.

The training was conducted by three professional tutors, supported by a literacy tutor and a researcher.

During the implementation of the modules, positive side-effects could be seen.

For example, the things learned were applied in everyday life immediately. Learners were better able to cope with their fears, felt more confident in their appearance and were more able to stand up for their own position, in both private and professional life. Some learners took a step forward and decided to participate directly after the training course in training programmes at the workplace that they had always avoided before.

This project has been truly successful and this is why it still continues. These modules are continually adjusted and enhanced.

### SELF-DETERMINATION IMPACT

The exercises on perception allowed the learners to assess themselves and others better. Not only did the participants learn how to evaluate themselves but also how to evaluate others. The role-playing in which they had to adopt different personalities with different points of view showed them that they can leave their assigned roles as a “loser”.

The intense exchange with the tutors and their feedback as external professionals paved the way to the “outside”. Learning outside the “safe track” became possible.

In fact, this ‘change’ took place outside the “safe” training environment, as if this detachment made it easier to be aware of oneself and others.

The immediate application of activities learned with the “ALFA-Mobil” and participation as experts at congresses and meetings, as well as positive feedback from the public and other experts, also strengthened the learners’ self-confidence, gaining confidence in speaking and enabled them to address their concerns assertively.

BUNDESVERBAND  
ALPHABETISIERUNG  
UND  
GRUNDBILDUNG  
e.V.

GERMANY

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# Agricultural ploughing championship. An opportunity to improve awareness

## WHO ARE WE?

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) is an independent membership organization set up by volunteers in 1980. It has been the leading campaigning and lobbying force in Ireland for adults with literacy and numeracy difficulties since it was set up.

NALA is committed to making sure that these adults can fully take part in society and have access to learning opportunities that meet their needs

## DESCRIPTION

NALA has a national Student Committee composed of volunteer literacy learners that informs and influences all NALA's work and policies. The Committee also networks with learners in local literacy schemes to hear and reflect literacy student opinions to policy makers and literacy practitioners.

The Committee wanted to be present at the National Ploughing Championship because they are aware that there are 1 in 4 adults with literacy difficulties in Ireland, not all of whom would be comfortable admitting this in a formal environment.

The student committee want to promote literacy services by explaining that:

- learning changes their lives,
- learning is always possible, even as an adult.

### MEETING POTENTIAL LEARNERS AT A NATIONAL EVENT

There is still stigma in Ireland in admitting to a literacy difficulty, so the Committee felt that by having learners run a stand at such a well-attended agricultural event, they were connecting to a hard-to-reach population in an appropriate and accessible way.

A lot of the attendees at such an event are male and from a farming/rural background, this cohort does not traditionally sign up for literacy courses, due to long working hours, lack of transport, etc., so in bringing information about services available and solutions such as the online and distance learning courses NALA organizes, the Student Committee can really reach non-traditional learners.

Members of the NALA Student Committee took a stand at Ireland's National ploughing event, which has an education section. 190,000 people attended the three days of the event. The committee members promote the work of NALA and give out information and contact details for local literacy schemes. This year we found that many adults with literacy and numeracy difficulties approached the stand themselves and spoke openly about their issues. The committee felt that this was due to the fact that learners, not staff, were manning the stand and explaining their journey back into learning.



NALA

IRELAND

Some of NALA's Student Committee members also come from rural environments. This is why if they participate in this event, they can really help to promote NALA's action by talking about their own experiences.

#### WHY ATTEND A NATIONAL PLOUGHING CHAMPIONSHIP?

Members of the NALA Student Committee were present at the NALA stand for all three days of the ploughing event. Their objectives were to inform ploughing attendees about the literacy services that are available (both 1-1 and group training) in their local Vocational Education Committees.

They are available at the stand and engage families who are attending the event to inform them about ways to encourage family literacy. They also advise family members of someone who may have a literacy difficulty on how to help that person and perhaps access support for him /her. It is also in this informal way that they can explain to members of the Irish public that anyone can have literacy and numeracy difficulties and above all, that there is a confidential and free way to address these difficulties.

Participating in an event of this scale also allows the Committee to meet politicians and the media. The Student Committee take advantage of this opportunity to draw politician's attention to the fact that funding and training is still needed for those who haven't got adequate reading, writing and numeracy skills.

NALA learners have met the President of Ireland and often serve as media spokespersons on radio and TV. Their message is that it's necessary:

- to extend the training provision and funding for people with literacy difficulties;
- to be aware of the barriers that the adults who wanted to participate in a training have to face and to take these into account

#### WHAT ARE THE LONGER TERM IMPACTS OF ATTENDANCE AT THE PLOUGHING?

NALA observed in recent years an increase in members of the public who enrol in literacy training, and many new learners say they have come after meeting students at the stand of the Student Committee in the National ploughing championship. NALA hopes to continue attending the ploughing and to support learners returning to education.

The student committee feels that is a very powerful message that it is students manning the NALA stand. They feel adults who may face similar difficulties find it easier to approach a student who can explain their pathway back into education rather than a literacy professional.

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# The Kirkcaldy Student Forum

## WHO ARE WE?

The service “Adult Basic Education” (ABE) of Fife Council offers free training to those who want to improve their reading, writing and numeracy.

## DESCRIPTION

First of all, the Student Forum, is a place where learners can meet each other, physically... as well as virtually on their website:  
<http://www.kirkcaldy-abe-studentsforum.org.uk/>

The Forum represents learners from Kirkcaldy. This Forum deals with issues that affect learners such as access to training premises, the way the training programmes are delivered, and the organization of activities for learners.

The Forum is organized and managed by learners. They meet once a month.

### TRAINING THAT TAKES LEARNERS INTO ACCOUNT

In Kirkcaldy, groups comprise 6 – 8 participants and meet two hours a week. A training plan is developed with tutors and this is tailored to the needs of each participant: short and long term objectives are set for everyone. ABE Training programmes are not like the school model. Learners work at their own pace to reach their own objectives. There is no pressure, because everyone is considered to be “in the same boat”.

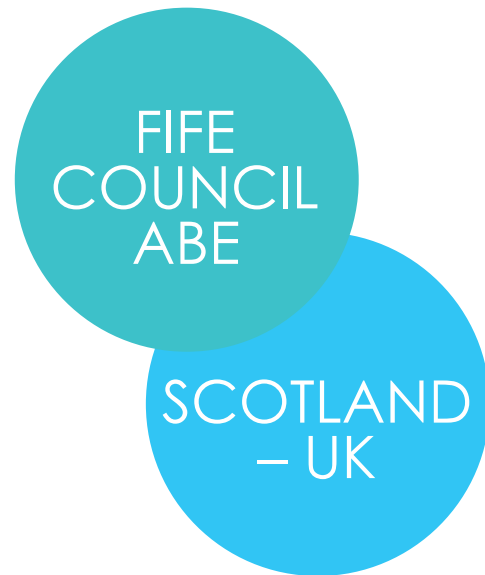
### WHY A STUDENT FORUM?

There is no doubt that joining Adult Basic Education can be difficult. People are reluctant to come for help. And that was one of the reasons for creating the Kirkcaldy Students Forum. This is a space run by learners for learners, where they can support and reassure each other.

If someone is hesitant about joining Adult Basic Education, he or she can phone or email to arrange to meet up with another learner or an ABE buddy for a chat.

Members of the Student Forum get together over a cup of coffee and biscuits to organise activities for learners which provide opportunities for everyone to get to know each other. It's what makes people feel welcome and confident.

This does not prevent learners on the Forum from working on serious issues such as how to integrate new learners into groups, ensure easy access to learning and influence the delivery of training programmes which are relevant to learners lives.



The learners draft and share recipes. Together they have formed a reading group and a group working on the written part of the driving theory test. The Forum is also in contact with Digital Fife which offers free training modules. For example, learners can learn how to use e-mail, to do banking transactions online, be aware of internet security. They also learn how to manage their digital photographs and raise money for their projects.

The Forum also organizes short-term courses and workshops on all kinds of themes, ranging from origami to digital photography.

#### **WHY ENCOURAGE A DYNAMIC SUCH AS THE KIRKCALDY STUDENT FORUM?**

At the Forum learners can voice their points of view and opinions on a variety of issues which impact on their learning. Their involvement in the Forum also gives them the skills and confidence which can influence their everyday lives, their family lives and their community lives.

The Forum enables learners from different groups to come together in a positive way. They can influence the content of their learning, ensure the learning environment suits their needs and, above all, they can make suggestions on how things can be improved.

Learners in the Forum can also express themselves on behalf of other learners; for example, they can draw the attention to the lack of computer equipment in the training premises. Recently they organized an open day when they invited local elected officials to sensitize politicians to learning conditions, and also to the learners' determination to learn.

The learners' participation in the Forum increases self-confidence to such an extent that one learner, the Chair of the Forum, felt sufficiently self-confident to approach the Deputy Prime-Minister of the Scottish Parliament on a street in Glasgow, and talk to her about the Eur-Alpha project, and the issue of adult literacy learning.

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# A network of communities of learners who are committed to the right to literacy training

## WHO ARE WE?

Created by trade unions in 1983, the goals of Lire et Ecrire are:

- Raising public awareness and that of public authorities on the persistence of literacy difficulties and the urgent need to fight the causes and find solutions,
- Promote the effective right to quality literacy provision for all adults who look for it,
- Developing literacy in the context of empowerment and participation of people and achieving greater equality through social change.

Lire et Ecrire develops and coordinates literacy trainings, analysis, political lobbying and prevention and awareness-raising actions. It also supports the development of literacy provisions and the improvement of their quality as well as the social inclusion of adults with literacy difficulties.

## DESCRIPTION

In 2007, French-speaking learners from the Verviers region observed that in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation of Belgium, literacy actions were geared for the most part to migrants. They asked themselves about the causes of the persistence of illiteracy despite mandatory education, and decided to make an effort to sensitize the people concerned.

This group chose to call itself “L'illettrisme, osons en parler” (Illiteracy, dare to talk about it) and organized a conference “L'illettrisme on en parle nous-mêmes” (Illiteracy, let's talk about it ourselves) during which they analyzed their paths and developed their messages.

For them, illiteracy is not something to be ashamed of. It must be brought out in the open – they must talk about it themselves.

Groups of learners sprang up in other regions with the same objective of improving awareness and the same approach focusing on concrete development of awareness tools: comic strips, posters, video spots to be broadcast on local television channels...

Lire et Ecrire organized meetings of various groups and supported the learners' determination to make their voices heard and to claim the right to literacy for all. The “learners' network” began in October 2010.

At the time of the creation of the network, the 80 learners that were present chose 4 images to express the reasons why they wanted to get organized:

- A solid network, like a tent in the desert, to resist and be heard,
- A network like a tree, to produce fruit,
- A network like a heart, to work trustingly and generously,
- A network like a spiral, to expand and count for those who are fighting for greater consideration of illiterate people.

LIRE ET ÉCRIRE  
COMMUNAUTÉ  
FRANÇAISE

FÉDÉRATION  
WALLONIE  
BRUXELLES -  
BELGIQUE

### HOW DOES THE LEARNERS' NETWORK IN FRENCH-SPEAKING BELGIUM WORK?

Learners meet three times a year in general assemblies. The purpose of these meetings is to determine the general orientations of the network and to assess its actions.

At the same time, a monitoring committee, consisting of two learners representing each group, meets every six weeks. Its role is to act as a go-between for other learners and to prepare the general assemblies and follow up the decisions taken.

### THE OBJECTIVES OF THE LEARNERS' NETWORK IN FRENCH-SPEAKING BELGIUM

To have their voice heard better, learners decided to work on a common theme for a given period of time. At the end of a general assembly, the learners had identified 6 "worlds": the Teaching World, the Business World, the Administrative World, the Literacy World, the World for the Fight for Equality and the Prison World.

After discussions and a vote, the theme of the school and teaching was chosen. Illiteracy often begins with failure experienced at school. Consequently an important issue is to change the school system, to fight to have all children leave school with basic skills, and to see that everyone has real access to schooling, whatever his/her social condition.

Acting preventively is one of the priorities. For that reason, learners go to schools, meet teachers and learners, distribute tools that they have created, speak at conferences.

To carry out these actions and give a positive approach to confront the negative attitudes of certain teachers, they need to understand the way the school system works and be able to analyze the reasons for failure. Lire et Ecrire consequently organized a training cycle where learners learn how to take focus off themselves, and to relate their own stories to a historical, geographical, economic and social context.

Learners also want to see this become a political priority in a concrete policy that takes consideration of literacy training, as long as it is chosen freely, accessible to all, under good conditions.

### IMPACTS

Participation in the network enabled the learners involved:

- To gain more objective awareness of the issue of literacy. To associate their own experience with a broader social-economic context,
- To develop their capacity to travel alone and to use technologies to communicate,
- To take new initiatives in their training programme, and also in their private lives,
- To maintain contacts among themselves outside of the time devoted to the network – the network reduces isolation,
- To question the association Lire et Ecrire on how to support and develop participation of learners at institutional level and in teaching practices.

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# A thousand and one languages in Guyana

## WHO ARE WE?

Le Centre Régional de Ressources (Regional Resource Centre) is the body that oversees the technical and teaching aspect of the Programme Régional d'Éducation et de Formation de Base (PREFOB) (Regional Education Programme for learning basic skills) in Guyana.

The centre gives a pedagogical support to the teams of various operators in the PREFOB network, according to its reference framework. In this capacity, it organizes training programmes and makes teaching aids available.

The Regional Resource Centre maintains ties with various partners in the social and cultural environment which maintains basic skills training programmes at the heart of local, social and economic life.

## DESCRIPTION

Guyana is characterized by a great diversity of languages. 20 languages are used in daily life. A language is also associated with cultural identity. For the people from Guyana, it is important to maintain this multilingual aspect and have it recognized as world heritage.

Learners enrolled in literacy training programmes are representative of this multilingualism. In 2010, 32% of learners in literacy programmes spoke 3 languages or more. This aspect is often neglected to leave room to learn French, the language that paves the way for social and economic integration.

The idea is to gain acknowledgment of the cultural wealth associated with all these languages, that the learners recognize it as knowledge, and to have this knowledge be recognized as a world heritage.

This is how the DVD “Mille et une langues en Guyane” (A 1001 languages in Guyana) saw the light. It includes video reports that testify to the diversity of languages in Guyana, and its cultural wealth.

## FROM THE IDEA TO THE PROJECT

The project was presented to learners at various literacy training centres. People interested in the theme and in learning how to use the audiovisual material could sign up freely. In this way, we were able to train 4 groups from 4 towns in Guyana: Cayenne, Saint Laurent du Maroni, Saint Georges de l'Oyapock, and Mana. Each group (representing 32 learners) worked for an average of 10 days per month on the project over a period of five months. The learners worked using various sources of documentation on languages spoken in Guyana – thanks to the audiovisual material at the Resource Centre, the learners could watch various reports, and make others themselves.

In the first preparatory phase, the groups initially thought about the concept of a cultural heritage, the word “multilingualism”, languages in the world and the concept of an endangered language.

As they considered these issues, the learners reflected on their own language practice, and discussed it. To do so, the learners watched films, did research on Internet and met specialists. As they developed their thinking and analyses, the learners wrote texts in which they express their viewpoints. They also wrote progress reports on the project, and, on the basis of the many surveys they did, developed an objective analysis.

Little by little, each group developed its roadmap for filming a report, describing the scenes to be filmed, the places, the people to contact and interview, the equipment needed, etc.

Then came the phase of making the film itself. In this phase, the learners got first-hand experience with video equipment and filming. For this, a video specialist met with each group for 10 half-days. The groups organized into teams with the filming timetable, and readjusted their specifications to suit the real situations. They talked to cameramen, operators and script technicians.

### A STRONG IMPACT ON THE LEARNERS

The learners began to see things in another way. They saw that their own language practice was a skill as important as the French language in which they were trained. Their culture was emphasized in the reports on the DVD, that they themselves created, which increased their self-confidence.

By evaluating their own cultural knowledge, they were able to think about language and its practice in a more open way, and this gave them the motivation to actively invest in their training programmes. They clearly saw that they could make the most of their own potential.

Many things were learned in making this film. Not only during the formal training periods for preparing or making the film, but also during informal times, in meetings with people from the outside, like language specialists and audiovisual technicians. They were able to realize their own capacity to learn by themselves, and to realize the importance of teamwork and collaboration.

The objective of gaining acknowledgement of multilingualism in Guyana as world heritage gave meaning to their video project. With this objective, the project put literacy learning at the heart of learners' concerns, with positive recognition of what they are and their culture.

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# Annual conference of literacy learners

## WHO ARE WE?

CONFAPEA is a confederation which brings together several Spanish cultural and educational associations. Participants from the different associations join in decision-making and project management processes. All participants are volunteers.

CONFAPEA was created to promote associations that seek greater participation of those who are in a situation of social exclusion.

CONFAPEA supports a model based on the competence of adult learners instead of focusing on their shortcomings.

CONFAPEA promotes training aimed at transforming society and organizes events and meetings to strengthen the voice of participants in the design and organization of training centers for adults.

## DESCRIPTION

### THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF LITERACY LEARNERS IN SPAIN

“Today we spoke about literacy from the standpoint of citizenship, by saying that, from this point of view, literacy increases the desire to learn.”

These conferences gather once a year, engaging learners from various literacy training associations, as well as participants from cultural associations.

### HOW DID THE IDEA ARISE TO ORGANIZE LEARNER CONFERENCES?

The first conference was held in 1999. It brought together 300 learners and it was a success. It was during this first meeting that participants decided to organize an annual meeting for adult training associations.

Their idea was to consolidate this emerging movement: adult learners should be able to decide what they want to learn and how they want to learn it.

Learners are working to make the following bill a reality:

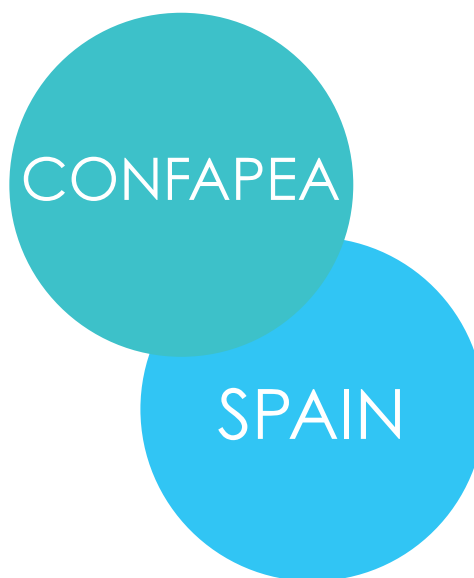
Training, as an inalienable right for adults, should be an instrument of self-determination that overcomes social inequality in relationships based on power. Training involves intercultural dialogue and recognition between communities.

The adoption and development of this Declaration is consistent with the objectives of adult learners who have no qualifications, and who act as volunteers. These are people in possession of a rich culture who have been silenced by the literate society.

### Preamble to the Bill of Learners

In its first two editions, the learner conference brought together associations at the regional level. From the third meeting, the forum went national.

The 3rd Conference was organized with the Cultural Association Paulo Freire, from Vitoria (Spain).



Gradually participants from rural areas (in particular from Galicia) started joining associations and eventually organized the 5th Conference in Granada (Andalusia), where many Roma took part.

The 6th Conference in 2004 has become a reference for CONFAPEA because it was the milestone where the organization was consolidated and the Conference acquired recognition at national level.

The 7th Conference took on an international dimension. It was held in Almeria (Andalusia). During the meeting, participants had the chance to share their reflections by videoconference with another meeting in Porto Alegre (Brazil) on the topic: how does adult literacy contribute to democracy and citizen participation, especially for those who are excluded from public debate because they lack a university qualification?

A videoconference facility was also used during the 8th Conference. Learners from three countries, Brazil, Argentina and Spain were able to share opinions on how adult education should be taken into account to grant everyone participation in society.

From then on, the Conference became international in scope, while it strengthened the representation of Spanish associations at the national level.

The 10th Conference in 2011 brought together learners from Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and Scotland. It was held after the Eur-Alpha Learners Workshop, in which learners spent a week together to reflect on the good practices to promote the participation of learners.

This conference has highlighted that, irrespective of their origin, learners share a common dream and they want:

- To see prejudices disappear, allowing different cultures to live together,
- An increase in availability and access to literacy training, particularly for people in remote rural areas,
- An increase in the number of volunteers for training institutions,
- Respect of the right to lifelong learning,
- Creation and promotion of spaces for intercultural dialogue,
- More resources and policies committed to popular training,
- To have public meetings take place to discuss educational issues.

## CONTACT CONFAPEA

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### HOW IS A CONFAPPA CONFERENCE ORGANIZED?

In the months prior to the conference the topics to be addressed are considered by literacy learners in their classes and centres . Then, a chat room is set up as a means of communication. Participating learners and organisations have the chance to suggest their proposals and discuss them further.

The definitive content of the conference is decided during this virtual assembly. It is democratically decided which are the most successful literacy and basic skills interventions that will be presented during the round-table discussions and which issues related to adult training will be discussed in the working groups.

The chosen topics are discussed in literacy classes and in initial basic skills training. These discussions are subject to analysis and surveys, and the results are later presented in the conference. In this way, the opinion of all learners is represented in the conference, including that of learners who do not physically participate.

All conferences are organized and prepared by adult learners with literacy difficulties. For most participants, this is the first time they have ever taken the floor before several hundred people. It is remarkable how participation enhances these learners' confidence and self-esteem.

After each conference; discussions, exchanges of opinion and conclusions are drafted on paper to put all details on record, and to allow the reflection to continue. This means that a conference is not an end, but a starting point to consider the work from other dimensions.

The conclusions and reflections of participants are also published and disseminated by the media and interested organisations.

Unity creates strength. By meeting at the conference, participants who are preparing for these meetings, and they are many, make their voices heard by policy makers and by administrative organisations that make decisions affecting them. Through preparing and organizing congresses, participants show that adult basic education learners decide and speak for themselves.

### VIA THE EUR-ALPHA PARTNER

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# From the tutors' standpoint

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# DIVER: An interactive video tool to explore and reflect on practice

KEY INFORMATION	DESCRIPTION
<p>FIELD</p> <p>Continuous professional development for tutors</p> <p>TARGET AUDIENCE</p> <p>Tutors and Learners</p> <p>OBJECTIVES</p> <p>Question yourself about your practices and develop them</p> <p>METHOD USED</p> <p>Reflective analysis supported by video records</p>	<p>Queen's University Belfast (QUB) has been investigating various tools to allow the tutor to focus attention within video scenes for the purpose of "guided noticing" – the authoring and sharing different perspectives on video evidence to facilitate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Better understanding of what they are seeing and interpreting in classrooms,</li><li>• Video capture of "times of trouble" or "times of excellence" in their teaching,</li><li>• Studies of classroom discourse,</li><li>• Reflection and choice of focus and pathway as catalyst for memory and later knowledge use,</li><li>• Re-seeing and re-annotating videos over time,</li><li>• Studies of small group learning and collaboration,</li><li>• Studies of novice-expert perception differences among tutors,</li><li>• Through guided noticing focused examples of specific classroom management challenges or instructional events that help overcome misconceptions,</li><li>• Learning in a community.</li></ul> <p>Video records can provide data for discovery and has been recognised as an important tool for tutors to support: critical reflection, meaningful comparison and productive discussion.</p> <p>Video reflection offers the tutors multiple perspectives of their teaching. Tutors are able to see weaknesses and strengths in their practice.</p> <p>Watching videos of others' practice can stimulate professional development and support discussion amongst peers. This can be further advanced if written records of these observations and reflections can be incorporated with the video and easily shared with others.</p>



QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST

NORTHERN  
IRELAND  
– UK

DIVER (Digital Interactive Video Exploration and Reflection) is a digital tool used to encourage practitioners to reflect on their practice in the classroom. After uploading the video records of the teaching session(s), DIVER allows the tutor and his/her peers to annotate, explore and share “key moments” in classroom practice.

#### SELF-DETERMINATION EVIDENCE

By encouraging practitioners to reflect on their practice, it allows them to consider things from a distance and assess if their attitudes and their classes promote learners self-determination. For example: Do I encourage the learners to take responsibility for their own learning? Do I do things “for” or “with” the learners? In this session, this learner overcame a misconception. How did this come about?

DIVER is also a valuable tool for learners: they have the opportunity to review the content of their lesson, to give feedback, ask further questions, revisit topics and make suggestions for future learning sessions.

#### DIFFUSION

Via the website: <http://diver.stanford.edu/> interested persons can contact the creators of this tool to get usernames and passwords to access the DIVER programme.

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# Supporting Evaluation and Reflection with young adult literacies Learners (16-26)

KEY INFORMATION	DESCRIPTION
<p><b>FIELD</b></p> <p>Pedagogical aspects Evaluation and reflection from a learner centred perspective</p> <p><b>THEME ADDRESSED</b> Youth Literacies (16-26)</p> <p><b>TARGET AUDIENCE</b> Literacies and Youth Workers</p> <p><b>OBJECTIVES</b></p> <p>Encourage young literacies learners to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• engage constructively and critically in the learning process,</li> <li>• express ideas, views and opinions in new ways,</li> <li>• appreciate and value their own capabilities.</li> </ul> <p><b>METHODS USED</b></p> <p>The approaches presented here are participative and built around practical tasks. They include listening, discussion and presentation. Digital technology, plasticine and lego are used to aid reflection and communicate views and opinions.</p>	<p><b>PRACTICAL MODALITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tables and chairs set up in a workshop formation,</li> <li>• At least 2 mini camcorders (dependant on group size),</li> <li>• Break out rooms or quiet spaces,</li> <li>• A large TV screen to view participants' video productions,</li> <li>• Plasticine/Playdough/Modelling clay (Session 2),</li> <li>• Multi-coloured Lego and Duplo (Session 3).</li> </ul> <p><b>SESSION 1: BUILD SELF-CONFIDENCE</b></p> <p>Participants are asked to find a partner (preferably someone they don't know). Participants must then interview each other and find out about their partners skills, abilities and achievements (We all have these!). With this newly acquired information each participant must speak to camera explaining why their partner should be nominated as Literacies Learning Champion (or context suitable alternative). Finally as a whole group we review the recordings.</p> <p><b>OUTCOMES</b></p> <p><b>KNOWLEDGE</b> Young people are better able to recognise their own capabilities and achievements,</p> <p><b>SKILLS</b> Young people acquire or develop skills in communicating with others, public speaking and IT,</p> <p><b>UNDERSTANDING</b> Young people are better able to understand the role of literacies in everyday life.</p> <p><b>SESSION 2: HANDS ON REFLECTION</b></p> <p>Participants are asked to create a model which describes their learning journey using different coloured plasticine. Participants are then invited to describe their model to camera explaining how it represents their journey. Video footage is then shared with the group.</p> <p><b>OUTCOMES</b></p> <p><b>KNOWLEDGE</b> recognition of learning as a continuous journey,</p> <p><b>SKILLS</b> improved ability to reflect and communicate ideas and opinions,</p> <p><b>UNDERSTANDING</b> understand that learning is different for every individual.</p>

### SESSION 3: EVALUATING THE SESSION

Participants are asked to evaluate the session by responding to three or four questions. Each participant is provided with a selection of Lego and Duplo and asked to construct towers to a maximum of five bricks high representing their assessment. Participants are then encouraged to use their 'construction' as a prop to talk to camera about their assessment of the session. These assessments can be shared immediately with the group or disseminated later.

#### OUTCOMES

**KNOWLEDGE** better recognition of the role of reflection and evaluation in learning,

**SKILLS** increased ability to reflect and evaluate,

**UNDERSTANDING** greater awareness of learning as an interactive process.

#### SELF-DETERMINATION EVIDENCE

Young literacies learners typically carry with them a legacy of limited and poor learning experience from the formal education sector. Typically they have a limited experience of having their views and opinions listened to and often have low self esteem. Expressing views and opinions – in other words engaging constructively and critically in the learning process can be both challenging and demanding.

The activities which are explored here are designed to reduce barriers to critical and constructive engagement in the learning process and particularly in relation to 'functional literacy'. They provide a vehicle to express ideas, views and opinions in new ways (digital technology, plasticine, lego) and support learners to appreciate and value their own capabilities.

Furthermore, learners are better able to reflect about and define their own learning needs and achievement and express views and opinions.

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# A literacy programme in a rural setting. Challenges of the countryside

KEY INFORMATION	DESCRIPTION
<p>FIELD</p> <p>The pedagogical approach of this programme includes basic skills in sustainable development (starting an economic activity that is environment-friendly, etc.)</p> <p>THEME ADDRESSED</p> <p>Raising the literacy skills of low educated unemployed people in the Slovenian countryside</p> <p>TARGET AUDIENCE</p> <p>Low educated unemployed people living in the Slovenian countryside</p> <p>OBJECTIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Raise the level of skills and competences,</li><li>• Evaluate and assess individual talents, develop potential and resources.</li></ul> <p>Start an economic activity on the basis of available resources, local traditions, and sustainability.</p>	<p>In the rural literacy programme teachers help people living in rural areas find and take advantage of opportunities provided by the environment they live in. Through the programme they are also trying to help participants improve their social position and economic living status.</p> <p>The rural literacy programme (like other adult literacy programmes in Slovenia) is aimed at increasing participants' basic skills and competences (literacy, numeracy, ICT), social skills, promoting lifelong learning and developing skills to becoming an active citizen.</p> <p>The objectives of the programmes are: to raise the level of skills and competences, evaluate and assess individual talents, develop potential and resources, and start an economic activity on the basis of available resources, local traditions, and sustainability.</p> <p>The rural literacy programme has been chosen as an example of an educational initiative which proved to be successful especially with low skilled and low educated adults in promoting self-determination of the learners. We believe and the national evaluation confirms this, that the educational experience of the programme produces long term benefits for the learners. We describe our theoretical model and illustrate using the successful story of one of the participants, Mrs. S.M. We have also added some results from the national evaluation of the literacy programmes in Slovenia from 2010.</p>



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### THE MODEL FOR THE RURAL LITERACY PROGRAMME

The educational model we used is based on the actual educational needs and interests of the target group which are low educated people, unemployed and living in the Slovenian countryside. The model is therefore designed to give results for the most vulnerable adults. It should also be noted that the members of the target group are non-participants in education and learning.

Their need (generate income) and their interest (start a business with the natural resources they possess) are mostly of an economic nature. Offering a literacy programme that meets the actual needs of the participants helps create and maintain a high level of motivation.

Entering the rural literacy programme will bring key changes which enables participants to fulfil their urgent and actual need. These changes obviously include newly acquired knowledge directly useful in every-day life. But there are also indirect effects (a more positive educational experience, new values and beliefs regarding learning) that will contribute to the emergence of new educational needs.

Those new educational needs are considered as one of the most important factors of the success of the programme because they brings long term impacts and deep changes to the life course of the individual. In the case of Mrs S.M., it reinforced her self-determination to start a small business but also her need for new learning.

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### THE STORY OF A PARTICIPANT

Through the concrete story of one participant we will confirm the points and crucial elements of the programme that have assisted the participant to make progress.

Mrs. S.M joined the rural literacy programme in May 2010 and until the end of June 2010 attended the planned 120 hours of training. At the beginning of the programme, when the participants presented themselves, their hobbies and goals, she explained that years ago she lost a job as a saleswoman in a shop and has been without a job ever since. Her family owns a small farm, which meets the needs of the family, but her wish is to acquire new knowledge that could be used in the preparation of domestic products (bread, baked goods, homemade meat products, production and processing of herbs, etc.). She said that in addition to her lack of relevant knowledge she also lacked confidence and above all the courage to enter the market with her products and to start selling them. Another wish of hers was to acquire computer knowledge, which she did not have.

It was interesting that soon after becoming involved in the programme Mrs. S.M. clearly shaped her goal: to sell her own products at the farmers' market in the town of Velenje. She pursued her goal by acquiring both arithmetic skills (setting the cost and economic prices of the products) and literacy skills (product descriptions, recipes, invitations, offers...). At the computer course she designed her business card and the presentation of their farm. During the programme she realised that she also lacked knowledge of communication, a foreign language, and the production and processing of indigenous fruits, arranging products for sale, ethnological characteristics of the products in the Upper Savinja region, etc. So after the completion of the rural literacy programme she participated in some additional courses and became an active member of two societies (Society of Rural Women and Fruit Growers' Association).

She encouraged her husband to join the programme with the aim of acquiring knowledge in the field of personal supplementary work and obtaining the permits required for supplementary activities on the farm. This allows them to sell their products at the farmers' market in Velenje and thus to achieve her main objective.

### THE NATIONAL EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAMME 2010

The national evaluation of the adult literacy scheme in 2010 revealed that the Rural literacy programme contributes significantly to self-determination and participation of adult learners.

#### THE EVIDENCE IS AS FOLLOWS:

“...76% of participants in the Rural literacy programme in the period 2005-2010 said that they have a better understanding of their living environment, 83% met individuals who convinced them that the individual has chances to succeed in the local community, 87% of participants identified new opportunities for them in their community...”

In addition to that, teachers in the rural literacy programmes have said that the participants acquired new communication, social and interpersonal skills. The most significant benefit according to teachers was: new knowledge and skills, self determination, motivation for further education. (Evaluation report of adult literacy programmes in Slovenia, SIAE 2011).

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# Co-construction of training tools

KEY INFORMATION	DESCRIPTION
<p><b>FIELD</b> Co-construction of training aids based on previously acquired skills by the learners</p> <p><b>THEME ADDRESSED</b> Training that targets professional life, social life and citizenship</p> <p><b>TARGET AUDIENCE</b> Migrant adults with low literacy skills and illiterate persons</p> <p><b>OBJECTIVES</b> Working with trainers in the field and learners to create pertinent tools related to needs expressed by all. These tools are interactive and enable both the trainer and the learner (or group of learners) to make choices and organize the course/programme.</p>	<p><b>METHOD</b></p> <p>The AEFTI (Association for Education and Training of Migrant workers and their families) Federation sets up Research-Action-Training Groups (GRAF) to jointly develop training aids based on the experience of the learners and tutors in the field. The members of GRAF are all tutors/players in the field who know and share the goal of self-determination with the trainees by using interactive, dynamic teaching aids.</p> <p>When these tools are created, the volunteer tutors working with the various AEFTI sections take part in the work in 6 days of meetings per year plus interactive work between meetings. They start with a problem that arose in the field and a concrete need in terms of tools, approaches and teaching aids. These needs are expressed by learners and by tutors.</p> <p>From that point, the group organizes a meeting to find what kind of teaching aid could meet the need. Then the necessary conditions to the creation of the tool are implemented. Many back-and-forths are done in the literacy classes to check the relevance of what has been produced. The tools are tried out by trainees. The teachers-authors give feed back to the GRAF with the comments from the field. The person in charge of coordination facilitates cooperation and collaboration among all and in the GRAF. Coherence is promoted by collective feedback on experience and sharing of practices.</p> <p>This work entails experience, reflective analysis, pooling of ideas and resources, formalization and training using common production of knowledge.</p> <p><b>RESULTS</b></p> <p>GRAF (Research-Action-Training Group) has developed:</p> <p>A <b>writing tool box</b>, offering a choice of activities based on previously acquired skills of learners and communication needs in daily life. Each learner or group of learners can build a suitable path. The tool includes 10 modules: <b>organizing learning, introducing yourself, shopping, managing life in the house, knowing where you are and how to get where you are going, communicating at work, preventing/solving problems, managing time, using public services.</b></p>

The logo consists of two overlapping circles. The top circle is teal and contains the text 'FÉDÉRATION AEFTI' in white. The bottom circle is light blue and contains the text 'FRANCE' in white.

FÉDÉRATION  
AEFTI

FRANCE

**A Curricalbumvitae to highlight skills:** This consists of a use guide, a set of photographic expressions and the learner's Curricalbumvitae that is developed gradually in the training course. This tool allows for oral expression, mainly dialogue, and increases awareness of experience by means of the images. The photographs were chosen for their suggestive power and their capacity to refer to a variety of situations. Finally, the tool kit also includes a guide for the teacher who should help the learner underline his/her skills in a personal document (photographs, CV, calling cards...).

This tool consists of several components: the guide, the image bank and the learner's booklet that the learner builds up himself as he uses the tool. He can add components that are useful in organizing his job hunt and components he can present to the employer.

**Le droit en jeu** (the game of law) is a game to better understand labour law. This is an interactive tool that enables trainees to know their rights when they are working, and who to apply to... it consists of an interactive map on which the trainees put the various places and people they deem helpful during the sessions, plus a teacher's guide, a resource booklet, place cards and character cards.

The tools created are published and distributed throughout the network; they are also available from the federation.

The main aspect of all the above is that the tools are interactive – not only can they be used very flexibly, but they also belong to a structure in which the learners, as well as the tutors, are encouraged to build on these aids and to add data sheets, authentic documents, new ideas of activities, updates (particularly for the game of law)...

Consequently the tools can be adapted to different training situations and they encourage those involved in the training course (learners and teachers) to use authentic documents from daily life, insofar as possible, plus the resources of everyone involved.

Once the tools have been published, those involved in training (teams of teachers, teachers, learners) can appropriate these games and transform them as they please. Sharing opinions and proposals for modifications are strongly encouraged.

### FACTOR(S) FOR SELF-DETERMINATION

The learners take part in building the tool in that they express their needs for tools, they try them out and, by the way they use these tools, they can determine their own progress, the teachers aids they prefer to use, and how they want to use those aids; they can choose their approach, or co-build new data sheets with their group or their teachers. They can also do self assessments to see their own progress.

On 3 February 2012 at Expolangues, the AEFTI Federation received the European label (see doc, page 22:

[http://www.europe-education-formation.fr/docs/20120203\\_RECUEIL-LABEL-2.pdf](http://www.europe-education-formation.fr/docs/20120203_RECUEIL-LABEL-2.pdf))

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### III. A dynamic for tomorrow

**T**he Eur-Alpha experience shows that participation of adults with low literacy skills is possible at European level.

The involvement of learners in meetings and workshops has dispelled the fears that they felt at the beginning of the project about:

- Meeting new people from different countries,
- The language barrier and communication difficulties,
- Lack of self-confidence,
- Confronting changes in climate, cooking habits, housing, etc.,
- Travelling far and being far from one's family and friends,
- Speaking in public, presenting a project and participating actively in a workshop.

Now they feel that the discussions and activities taught them a lot about other participants and about basic education for adults in the countries of Europe. In many ways they have recovered important self-confidence.

They stress the need for a network of learners, the need for a new positive image of literacy learning and of learners centred on what they can do and how they can contribute rather than on their difficulties. They also emphasise the need to sensitise politicians and other policy makers to the necessity to invest in literacy, and basic education for adults with low literacy skills.

At the end of these three years, there is enthusiasm and strong determination to continue the work and to develop Eur-Alpha as a network of European learners.

- By renewing and **BROADENING THE PARTNERSHIP** to learners organisations who have already participated in our work or who have expressed their interest in joining the network... and to groups which are now being created as a result of dissemination. In Scotland, for example, dissemination has not only allowed Eur-Alpha's action to be publicised and the Manifesto to be broadcast and discussed, but it also has laid the groundwork for a network of Scottish learners. Participants were mobilised to meet other persons, to make their voices heard and to continue the Eur-Alpha network in relations with other countries,
- By continuing the **AWARENESS-RAISING WORK OF POLICY MAKERS**, particularly by distributing the Manifesto,
- By meeting the **CHALLENGES OF WORKING WITH A MIXED GROUP OF LEARNERS/ TUTORS/HEADS OF ASSOCIATIONS**, respecting the pace and working methods of everyone, authorizing confrontation and refusing to speak in the place of others... The conditions are now fulfilled for learners working with tutors and the heads of training structures to make real changes in the way learners are considered and the way literacy programmes can be realised in Europe.

**FOR EUR-ALPHA TO BECOME A NETWORK WHERE LEARNERS/AMBASSADORS AND TUTORS/FACILITATORS CAMPAIGN AND GET TRAINING BY MEANS OF EXPERIENCE SO THAT THE RIGHT TO LITERACY AND BASIC EDUCATION FOR ALL ADULTS BECOMES EFFECTIVE IN EUROPE.**



Ah Charlotte,  
would you like to know  
what I got from being  
among you...

**In a critical consciousness approach, militants from Par-chemins write a diary. It is a precious tool to measure the progresses and individual changes.**

Here is an extract of Chantal's diary relating the changes generated by the Eur-Alpha meeting in June 2012 and the importance of what's done in the network to ensure to all the right to learn, at any ages.

I got a great deal of fulfilment: I was listened to, again and again, learning and re-learning, communicating and re-communicating. I learned everything on the spot and it was great. True, it is very hard to be understood with all these foreign languages, but they are translated, thank goodness!

I remember when Tim asked Bernadette and me our ages. He beat his chest to get us to understand that he was talking about himself and telling us that he was 44 – then we should give our ages.

I didn't get it, and I wanted to go for the translator, but he wouldn't let me bother her and Miss Bernadette was the one who understood and we answered: I'm 55 and Miss Bernadette is \*\* years old – wow, how old we are, but not in our heads nor in our hearts.

What I took home from there, was that France is not the only place where people have problems reading, writing and calculating (it all goes together, I think, reading, writing and counting).

They are everywhere, but we belong to the European Union and it's important to work together to ensure the right to literacy.



The way I feel about it is that for all the learners who wrote their texts, these texts must be kept as they are. It doesn't matter if they aren't perfect, they represent our ideas and our words.

Learners used their minds to get there.

All these words scribbled on a notebook, were put there with Love, with the heart.

Let's hold out our hands to all these people who are still in the dark to bring them up to the light.

Take a deep breath of fresh air, and things will seem better.

The change is now, to be like everyone else, to be able to communicate in writing.

We must share all these texts with all the other learners and non-learners. This is the only way to make things change.


Spoken words blow away, but written words last.

So Charlotte, if I had to do it again, I would, to show how far I have come.

Chantal

Thanks to the Eur-alpha network...





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**On the DVD you will find some additional documents and statements of learners on their life stories and Eur-Alpha experiences.**

These are the people who were interviewed: Abada Amour (French Guyana), Allan Campbell (Scotland – UK), Roland Canivez (FWB – Belgique), Yves De Graef (FWB – Belgium), Bernadette Detret (France), Tim-Thilo Fellmer (Germany), Chantal Godard (France), Liz Hargreaves (Scotland – UK), Yves Huysmans (FWB – Belgium), Carol Macaulay (Scotland – UK), Adelaida Morte (Spain), Jos Niels (Netherlands), Monique Outers (FWB – Belgium), Michael Power (Ireland), Peter Rennie (Scotland – UK).

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- AEFTI – Fédération nationale des Associations d'enseignement et de formation pour les travailleurs immigrés et leurs familles (France)
- BVAG – Bundesverband Alphabetisierung und Grundbildung e.V. (Germany)
- CAEA – Cyprus Adult Education Association (Cyprus)
- CFAES Georges Rapon – Cercle de Formation et d'Action en Économie sociale "Georges Rapon" (Guyana, France)
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- Education Scotland (Scotland – UK)
- FACEPA – Federació d'Associacions Culturals i Educatives de Persones Adultes (Catalonia – Spain)
- Lire et Ecrire Suisse (Switzerland)
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- Queen's University Belfast – School of Education (Northern Ireland – UK)
- SIAE – Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (Slovenia)
- Stichting ABC – Stichting Belangenbehartiging Alfabetisering (Netherlands)
- UIL – UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
- UOM – University of Macedonia (Greece)
- WIT – Waterford Institute of Technology (Ireland)

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