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Introduction

During the development of the *Equal León Actúa* Project, promoted by the León City Council and coordinated by Ildefe, the transnational cooperation has revealed itself as a learning and innovation process that would progressively enrich the national project. It has been the base of a reflection at the multi-territorial level about the techniques and interventions developed in the field of the social and labour insertion of the most disadvantaged groups.

The results include new approaches and ways of working, joint developments among projects from different countries and, most importantly, the establishment of a transnational cooperation network that will remain after the duration of the Equal projects.

This publication is elaborated in the context of the transnational cooperation European Pathway to the Future, from the Equal Community Initiative. This document offers a global vision of the work developed during the project, as well as its main results.

The different chapters reflect the good practises identified in every project in the field of the social and labour insertion of the most disadvantaged groups, especially youngsters.

It also reflects the experiences, results and lessons learnt from the cooperation among projects from different countries, as a result of the concentrated exchange of information and experiences and the different activities carried out among the technicians from each territory.

Finally, a reflection on the transnational cooperation considered as a learning process has been included. This process has led to the identification of methods and tools that have proved to be useful elements or strategies to maximize the results of the cooperation among projects from different countries.

1. Participating projects

1.1. French project “Territoires Insertion Communication”

The French Development Partnership consists of the following entities :

- ARDML Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur (Regional Local Task Force Association)
- CAFOC (Centre Académique pour la Formation Continue - Academic Continuing Education Centre)
- CRIJ PA (Centre Régional d'Information Jeunesse - Regional Youth Information Centre)
- UPAR / CAPEB (Union Professionnelle Artisanale Régionale - Regional Professional Craft Union)
- ARCADE (Agence Régionale de Coordination Artistique et de Développement - Regional Artistic Coordination and Development Agency)
- GIP Luberon Local Task Force
- Marseille Local Task Force
- Pays d'Aix Local Task Force
- Alpes Haute Provence Local Task Force
- GIP Mission Jeunes 05 (GIP Local Youth Task Force 05)
- Est Var Local Task Force
- Nice Local Task Force
- Centre Var Local Task Force
- Jeunes d'Aubagne Local Task Force

1.2. Spanish project “Equal León Actúa”

The Spanish Development Partnership consists of the following entities :

- Spanish Association of the Catholic Migration Commission. ACCEM
- “Isadora Duncan” Association of Single Mothers
- Association of Paraplegics and the Severely Handicapped. ASPAYM
- Leon Association of Family and Friends of the Mentally Ill. ALFAEM
- Association for the Protection of the Mentally Retarded. ASPRONA
- Leon City Council

Leon Chamber of Commerce

Caritas Diocesan (Leon)

“María Auxiliadora” Occupational Training Centre

European Centre for Business and Innovation, S.A. CEICALSA

Spanish Red Cross

Romany General Secretariat Association. FSGG

Leon Institute for Economic Development Training and Employment, S.A. ILDEFE

Castilla y Leon Regional Government. General Directorate of Budget and Community Funds of the Regional Ministry of Finance and Tax

Castilla y Leon Regional Government. Social Services

Provincial Trade Union of Leon. General Workers Union in Castilla y Leon. UGT

Comisiones Obreras Trade Union in Castilla y Leon. CC.OO.

Leon University

1.3. German project “Schule-Ausbildung-Beruf in Rheinland Pfalz”

The German Development Partnership consists of the following entities :

ISM - National and transnational co-ordination. Mainstreaming

Justus-Liebig-University Gießen - Evaluation

TÜV Akademie Rheinland - Standort Bad Kreuznach - Life without addiction

IB Bad Kreuznach - School dropout

Youth Centre of the Protestant Parish of Kirn - Vocational integration of disadvantaged migrants

Co-ordination Office Kaiserslautern, ASL - Association of the City and the County of Kaiserslautern for the Promotion of Training and Education (GBK)

Target group oriented advisement and attendance (BQZ) - Focus Work

Strategic Partners:

Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Health of the Land Rhineland-Palatinate

Ministry of Education, Family and Youth of the Land Rhineland-Palatinate

City of Pirmasens

City of Zweibrücken

County of South-West-Palatinate

City of Bad Kreuznach
 County of Bad Kreuznach
 City of Kaiserslautern
 County of Kaiserslautern
 Employment Office Pirmasens
 Employment Office Bad Kreuznach
 Employment Office Kaiserslautern

1.4. Italian project “Rete Servizi Territoriali, Reset”

The Italian Development Partnership consists of the following entities :

CIOFS-FP - National Headquarter
 CIOFS-FP - Calabria
 CIOFS-FP - Campania
 CIOFS-FP - Emilia Romagna
 CIOFS-FP - Sardinia
 CIOFS-FP - Tuscany
 CE.TRANS, research, guidance and training organisation
 Consortium Europaform, research organisation
 OESSE-Officina Sociale, social co-operative
 Gandalf, research and training organisation
 Obiettivo Lavoro, temporary job agency
 De Lorenzo Formazione, training organisation
 ENAIP Lucca, training organisation
 CNA Campania, association of craft enterprises
 VIDES, voluntary association
 CISL, trade union
 Lucca and Reggio Calabria Provinces
 Lucca, Leghorn, Reggio Calabria, Marano (Naples) Municipalities

Employment centres in Reggio Calabria Municipality and Bologna Province
Guidance Windows for youth in Marano (Naples) and Lucca Municipalities
Social Services in Lucca and Leghorn
Caritas
Vocational Training Organisations
High Schools in Leghorn, Reggio Calabria and Cagliari
Assindustria (association of industrialists) in Reggio Calabria
Confocooperative (association of cooperative societies)
Confartigianato (association of craft enterprises)
Local SMEs
Local Trade Unions

1.5. Swedish project “Meeting the Future”

The Swedish Development Partnership consists of the following entities :

Klippan Municipality
Åstorp Municipality
Perstorp Municipality
Confederation of Swedish Enterprise
Public Employment Service: The National Labour Market Board - County Labour Board
The Federation of Private Enterprises Forëtgama
Kristianstad University
Local Social Insurance Office
LO - The Swedish Trade Union Confederation
Women's association of Åstorp
Adult Education Centre South Ridge, Åstorp municipality
Resource Centre, Åby - school, Klippan municipality
Social Services, Klippan municipality
Artur Lundkvist Centre of Lifelong Learning, Perstorp municipality
Tegelbruks - school, Klippan municipality
Upper Secondary School, Klippan
Östra Ljungby, Naturbruksgymnasiet i Östra Ljungby, Klippan municipality

2. Objectives of the transnational cooperation “European Pathway To The Future”

The transnational project “European Pathway to the Future” funded under Equal Community Initiative aims at promoting transnational exchange of good practices that were developed, tested and validated at local or national levels through new strategies for action.

Within this framework we aimed at developing innovative ways to deliver training and social inclusion policies whilst also taking advantage of innovative policy developments occurring in other member states.

The Development Partnerships involved in the project firstly agreed to conceive, organise and implement common actions in order to compare the experiences gained by the different transnational partners in the field of the social and professional integration of young people and disadvantaged collectives.

To make this transnational co-operation efficient, these common actions operated on two levels:

- Operational level: it has involved operators who work with young people and other collectives in risk of exclusion in the five participating countries of the transnational co-operation, with the objective of enabling these operators to develop and strengthen their skills
- Strategic level: it has involved project managers and representatives from working-life institutions and/or public authorities, the objective being to undertake a comparison and enhance mainstreaming among Development Partnerships on several commonly agreed issues in line with the conception and organisation of specific schemes and actions devoted to facilitating the integration of young people.

Products

The transnational co-operation led to the conception and spread of a training scheme for local operators working for the social and professional integration of youngsters. In order to design such a scheme, five issues were developed in depth, each issue being linked to one step of the pathway of a youngster to professional integration:

- Reception and information
- Follow-up
- Guidance
- Networking
- Link with the economic world

The implementation of the project led other additional benefits, in the shape of exchange of information and ideas, exchange of expertise and comparisons between different cultures.

3. Experiences and results of the transnational cooperation

3.1. Transnational seminars

The work developed during this transnational co-operation was focused on the key issues for the social and professional integration of youngsters in situation or in risk of exclusion. The main subjects of study have been:

- Reception and information of beneficiaries
- Follow-up and guidance
- Networking
- Links to the economic world

This work was accomplished during the seminars celebrated in León (Spain), Marseille (France), Bad Kreuznach and Mainz (Germany), Rome (Italy), Klippan (Sweden), and during the continuous work carried out all along this transnational co-operation.

Similar structural problems in the social and professional integration of adolescents and essential common requirements for the work with disadvantaged young persons were identified. The conclusions of the common work developed are as follows:

3.1.1. Reception and information of beneficiaries

During this admittance and information phase for the beneficiaries, the following points should be emphasised:

- A welcoming and respectful attitude should be shown at all times
- Clear, thorough information about the project and its aims should be provided
- The integration of all information provided by the body that referred the person to the centre
- The detection of social, health and family problems, etc., which could constitute an impediment for the insertion of the young person into society and the labour market.

The personnel who are involved in this phase should not therefore simply concentrate on the “catchments” of beneficiaries; they should also be professionals who are able to carry out a complete diagnosis, with the capacity to listen, understand and analyse the situation of the people they are dealing with, in terms both of their training needs and their social needs.

It is important to create an atmosphere of trust, with a demonstration of willingness, availability and competence on the part of the operator who will be in charge of answering the first questions posed. This initial contact is essential because it not only allows an initial diagnosis of the situation but also creates the conditions for subsequent regular contact with the beneficiary.

This phase should always end with a proposal, be it internal, directed at the centre where the person was seen, or external, in cases where the centre does not answer the need of the person in question. It is, therefore, essential that the professionals who are responsible for this admittance-diagnosis phase, should have a thorough knowledge of the resources available.

It is important to act rapidly, not letting the difficulties worsen, and to avoid acting alone, working as a network with the territory's key agents when needed. An accessible and effective reception is a key issue. It would be unacceptable to fail to reach the people who are in most need of assistance.

Youngsters wish to become independent at an increasingly early age, and the difficulties they encounter in attempting to achieve this independence are becoming increasingly greater. So today youth is still associated with problems. It is essential, however, to remember that even within these difficulties, youth must be regarded as an asset.

It is up to the players in charge of support to be pertinent in setting up the tools which enable our society to benefit from each young person's potential.

3.1.2. Follow up and guidance

The general objective of follow-up and guidance of youngsters is to guarantee an equal access to social rights and employment, offering at the same time a personalised approach and a global solution, so they can take their place in society.

These activities ensure the consolidation and continuity in the insertion process, which is a pathway consisting of various complementary actions put into practise according to the beneficiary's specific conditions and needs.

Follow up and guidance are carried out on two levels:

- The beneficiary of the insertion pathway: offering him/her support in the transition process, especially in those phases marking a change between action and action. Follow-up of the different steps
- Partners in charge of carrying out different actions: acting as mediators between beneficiary and structures, linking various subjects and acting as problem solvers with regards to co-ordination difficulties arising among the network's agents.

The professionals in charge of the follow-up and guidance activities will establish the specific objectives adapted to the needs and the situation of each young person. In addition, they will construct an individual pathway and a personalised approach covering the whole way from the social to the workplace integration.

Key aspects in the follow-up and guidance of beneficiaries

Despite the different contexts, all partners involved in this transnational co-operation share a common philosophy and common principles in the development of this activity.

Mobilisation and motivation

The youngsters who join the different programmes find themselves in a situation of failure and low self-esteem, a situation which needs to be overcome in order to start a new project. Making the youngsters participate in the elaboration of their own itinerary will increase their levels of motivation. Mobilisation and motivation are essential elements in this process.

Individualised global approach

A global approach is necessary, including all aspects of social and professional integration, in order to provide an integral attention to the beneficiary. It is also necessary to develop an individualised follow up and accompaniment, according to the beneficiary and combining collective interventions that bring the benefits of group dynamics, with individual integral itineraries, that offer a better answer to the personal problems of the beneficiaries (social aspects, work, family, health...).

Implementing individualised attention allows for the evolution of the beneficiary to be known, and for evaluating whether his/her path corresponds to the common objectives. If needed, the initial path can be modified in order to adapt to the beneficiary's personal evolution. We should adapt the intervention to progressive behavioural evolution.

Beneficiary as active agent

The youngster must be very involved in the process and become an active agent in his/her own social and professional insertion. The individual itinerary must be designed together with the beneficiaries. It is necessary to promote a proactive and participative behaviour, not only guiding the beneficiaries, but helping them to develop enough autonomy and resources to know how to make decisions and find solutions to the different situations and problems they will find in the future. Discipline and self-confidence are important values to work with these groups.

Social-familiar intervention

In this follow up process, it is essential to have the participation and involvement of the family, tutors, friends, and the social informal network. As they exert influence on the beneficiary, a social-familiar intervention is needed in order to provide an integral attention.

This intervention will allow a higher level of involvement of the youngsters and a "normalisation" of their life outside the programme.

Availability of the professionals and structure

This individualised monitoring work with the beneficiaries requires the allocation of qualified and sufficient human resources, with an open and accessible structure, which is permanently available to welcome the beneficiaries.

This requires enough human and financial resources in order to offer the best possible service to the beneficiary.

Local network

Working as a network with entities and professionals dealing with the social and labour insertion of the most disadvantaged collectives in the territory is essential to optimise the support offered to youngsters.

In many cases, the beneficiary needs to cover his/her basic daily needs, i.e. housing, living expenses etc. If these needs are not covered, they will not be able to join or follow any programme. This proves the importance of complementing training and employment programs with social services, in order to ensure these measures are effective and to provide the beneficiary with a better service.

In this network we cannot forget the economic world. Working in collaboration with the territory's economic agents will improve the knowledge of the labour world, and will also facilitate the youngsters' labour insertion..

3.1.3. Networking

Networking is essential to improve the employability of the most disadvantaged young segments in the workforce. This final outcome summarises the challenges when setting up a network and the recommendations to make it effective and keep it that way.

As far as challenges are concerned, they can be considered on two levels: institutional and operational.

With respect to the former, you may notice a difficulty in setting up a cohesive network, especially when partners are many and do not know each other well. There are many reasons which explain this difficulty. First of all, the partners belong to different contexts, which means each one of them selects and emphasises different problems. These different insights and perspectives immediately determine difficulties in identifying a common problem to solve. As a consequence, the main aim - which should represent an answer to that problem -, and the related objectives -which should be specific enough to be translated into concrete actions-, often remain abstract or not accurately defined. Moreover, if the partner does not envisage a clear benefit there is a quick loss of motivation and a decrease in participation, especially when partners are responsible for carrying out the foreseen actions. The project hence risks becoming weak and not able to really help the beneficiaries.

In addition, the partners are not used to working with a networking approach; they may have different cultures and different social and professional backgrounds and often lack a co-operative approach. There is also a technical problem: the majority of partnerships do not use specific methodologies which allow effective networking.

At an operational level, the challenges are related to the difficult balance between flexibility and rigidity. Being an effective network requires a flexible organisation, where all the partners can reach the same goal not 'despite but 'by the means of' their differences. Nevertheless, a certain degree of structure is required, such as the presence of specific professionals in charge of communication, the definition of protocols, the formalisation of roles and tasks, and a legitimate leadership. However, the study of concrete cases points out an opposite correlation between the level of rigidity and the level of effectiveness: the more formalised is a network, the less effective it is, especially in the long term.

The partners underlined more specific operational problems:

- The rotation of professionals during the project: this significantly inhibits the effectiveness of a network, as you have to start 'from scratch' every time
- The amount of time networking requires: it is important to see that the innovative features of networking (participation, elevated number of partners etc.) are, by definition, time-consuming
- The burden represented by bureaucratic requirements: this often frustrates a network's good will and efforts.

In terms of suggestions, one can distinguish between those referring to the foundation phase, to communication, and to management.

As for the foundation phase, these are the most relevant suggestions:

- Ensure every partner is equal in weight
- Check and clarify each partner's actual interests

- Clearly appoint a leader position: this position can be rotational, though it must always be clear who is responsible for moving things forward
- Sign formal agreement among partners - although cohesive and effective networking may also occur without formalisation.

As for the suggestions on communication and information, they are mostly related to the following aspects:

- Agreeing a protocol on communication
- Adopting methodologies allowing to exchange information in due time
- Identifying one person responsible for communication.

As for the recommendations on the management of a network, these are as follows:

- Monitoring and evaluating the network
- Adopting stable tools which could be used also in case of rotation of professionals
- Scheduling periodical meetings in advance
- Providing common training for operators
- Managing the 'de-motivated partners' in an appropriate way; the management function should be able to assess why de-motivation has taken place, and to intervene accordingly.

In particular, the monitoring and assessment not just of the project activities but also of the partnership could ensure the effectiveness of the networking in a concrete way, genuinely improving the employability of the jobseekers, which is the main goal of the Equal initiative. Employability and networking are strictly connected, and monitoring and assessment are needed in order to evaluate the real impact of this type of projects. It is therefore essential to pay specific attention to the assessment of networking. Good monitoring establishes a natural, continuous and mutual control, reducing the need for rigidity, underlining what it is not working and, therefore allowing corrections to be made in due time. Finally, it improves the networking quality, in terms of co-operation, results and, consequently, sustainability, giving the project the chance to survive in the future.

3.2. Bilateral exchanges

Apart from the exchanges among operators carried out during the transnational seminars, two bilateral exchanges of technicians have been celebrated.

3.2.1. Reception of a German delegation in Marseille

This exchange seminar involved the activity of Local Task Forces and CRIJ (youth information resources centre) around the issues of the integration of young people in difficulty. It made it possible to continue the work carried out during the first three seminars (France, Spain and Germany) and to go into greater depth on themes relating to information, reception, guidance and support of people in difficulty.

a) Programme involving operational players

The French partnership co-directors proposed a programme to the operational players of the German delegation focused on understanding the workings of existing facilities and devices in the regional territory which deal with the vocational integration of young people in difficulty.

This exchange made it possible to organise work meetings with professionals and exchanges with the decision makers in the sphere of integration, in order to address the following issues:

- The missions and organisation of the reception, guidance and support facilities (local task forces) and youth information facilities (CRIJ)
- The use of computer tools in the integration process: "parcours III", "webjeunes", the latter of which is developed by the communication area
- The different integration devices: support methods with the local taskforces, financial and for young people in difficulty, integration devices through economic activity, such as "integration worksites" and "integration companies".

b) Programme involving strategic players

During this exchange, the strategic players of the German delegation were invited to:

- Visit "Local Task Force" facilities, a youth information resource centre (CRIJ), a training centre, a social centre (reception and co-ordination facility for young people and adults, offering social-cultural and sports activities on a district scale)
- Participate with the strategic players of the French partners in debates and work meetings relating to: the offer of training for young people, the collaboration methods between Local Taskforces and training organisations, and the information available for young people.

In this way, the German delegation was able to become familiar with the initial features of the Local Task Forces, to perceive their regional dynamics and acquire a better picture of the implementation methods of social action policies through the Local Task Forces.

3.2.2. Reception of a German delegation in Klippan

Klippan municipality received the visit of a group of technicians from the German transnational partner. The exchange of knowledge started at the Swedish project office, where the co-ordinator of the project provided the group with information about the Swedish system. Then the group visited the sub-projects which were active in Klippan.

There was an exchange between the German technicians and the student's care team, which consisted of the school nurse, the vocational guide, the school counsellor, the headmaster, the school priest and a field assistant. Visits to the sub-projects in Åstorp and Perstorp were arranged. The group also had the opportunity of interviewing students of the Swedish project and visit the local newspaper.

The last activity took place in the school for handicapped children, where the German technicians visited an education programme for women in activities considered traditionally masculine, as part of a larger project specially designed for women.

This exchange of technicians proved very useful for all those involved. They had a chance to exchange their experiences and acquire a better picture of the different methodologies used in every project.

This exchange contributed to increase the knowledge of the technicians and also offered them new points of view and experiences to solve the common problems encountered when working with youngsters who risk exclusion.

3.3. Transnational exchange of beneficiaries

Since this project began, there have been three beneficiary exchanges between young people from different countries participating in the project. The prime aim of the exchanges was to provide the young people with the opportunity to see other realities different from their own, share experiences with young people in situations similar to their own and learn about the labour market in other countries.

These exchanges gave a real boost to our young people, increasing their self esteem, their motivation and their active participation in the project. The beneficiary exchanges have proved to be important in stimulating a sense of initiative in our young people, one of the most important challenges faced by the personnel who work for the insertion into society and the labour market of the most disadvantaged groups.

This kind of cooperation has made it possible to bring transnationality to the most disadvantaged groups, in this case, young people who are excluded or at risk of being excluded from society.

The first beneficiary exchange took place in April 2003 in Bologna. Several young people from the León Actúa Youth Centre from the Spanish project, carried out various activities and visits organised by the Italian partner, CIOFS/FP. Of special interest was the cultural exchange day for young Italians and Spaniards, as was the visit to the Simulation Training Centre, one of the most popular activities among the young Spaniards due to its novelty.

The subsequent evaluation by both the young participants and the professionals taking part in the exchange was highly positive, demonstrating how this type of activity developed specially for young people, visibly increases their self-esteem and motivation, and provides important encouragement for their own personal and professional projects.

The second beneficiary exchange took place in June 2004 in Aix en Provence, France. Young people from the León Actúa Youth Centre and from the Local Mission in Aix en Provence participated in this exchange. During this experience, the young people carried out a wide range of activities and had the chance to get to know each other and share their experiences and the problems that worry them.

Among the many activities carried out by the participants, of special interest was the open day held at the Mission Locale in Aix en Provence, where the young people from Spain and France shared information about the activities carried out in their respective programmes. It was also a chance for the professionals to exchange points of view on the different approaches used in their work with young people at risk of social exclusion.

Another interesting activity was the recording of a video by the young French and Spanish participants, which showed the activities enjoyed throughout one of the days spent together, and which has been edited and produced with the aim of showing the importance of this type of activity for stimulating initiative in the participants.

Also taking part in this beneficiary exchange were young people from the Simulated Business Project within the Spanish project *Equal León Actúa*. Among the many activities carried out, they had the chance to get to know similar French simulation training projects, as well as visiting companies from different sectors.

The latest beneficiary exchange was held in November 2004 in León. This time the young French people from Aix en Provence visited the León Actúa Youth Centre, thereby building on the experiences of the previous exchange. The activities carried out were related to the environment and recycling. The promotion of environmental awareness in young people is one of the interests shared by all the partners in the project.

The professionals who have accompanied the youngsters in these exchanges say that the most relevant aspect of the experience has been the degree of motivation achieved before, during and after the exchange. It is

important to point out that this motivation has occurred not only among the young people who have participated directly in these exchanges, but also in the group in general, boosting their self esteem and their personal growth.

These exchanges have also improved the capacity of the young people to adapt to new situations and to find alternative ways of communicating when facing different obstacles such as language. The exchanges have encouraged human and intercultural relationships, and have served to improve their social skills, empathy and assertiveness.

The experience has also been an opportunity for the young people taking part to put their own problems in perspective, as they got to know other young people in similar situations, who were also finding solutions.

The professionals taking part in the project have also had the opportunity to become acquainted with other approaches and programmes working with young people at risk of social exclusion, and to exchange information about the problems they face in their day-to-day work with this group.

Below are some of the opinions expressed by the young participants showing the positive nature of the experience:

"I have had the chance to get to know another country, its culture and its people"

"This trip has been the best thing ever, it has been a unique opportunity to travel to another country, get to know its people, its customs, how they work and how they enjoy themselves"

"The activities carried out have been very interesting to compare with our own, and be able to value what they have and what we have"

"For me it has been a beautiful trip, and very educational, which I have taken advantage of by exchanging opinions with the pupils at the workshops we visited"

After this trip it will be easier for me to relate to foreign people who live in Spain because you become less shy"

"I have got to know other ways of working and relating to people"

"After getting to know the French kids who are in the same situation as me, I have come to the conclusion that we share the same problems, here and there"

"I have really enjoyed getting to know French people, travelling abroad and getting to know new cultures"

"It has been a unique experience".

3.4. Adoption of an innovative methodology of training in simulation

During the beneficiary exchange held in March 2003 in Bologna with young Italians and Spaniards, one of the activities carried out was the visit to a Simulation Training centre, an initiative from the Italian partner, CIOFS/FP.

It is an innovative training approach that consists of simulating real work conditions in a company, thereby preparing the integration into the labour market of the young people following the courses.

The Spanish partner, having studied the possibility of adapting this initiative to the regional context, decided to include it in its own programme, *Equal León Actúa*, adapting the approach to its own territory. It is an innovative initiative in the region, it being the first simulated business of the network in the Spanish region of Castilla y León.

The participating beneficiaries have received training in business administration, simulating the tasks carried out in a real business, with support from other simulated businesses in the network, and the collaboration from the Italian partner CIOFS/FP.

Some pupils taking part in this initiative took part in the beneficiary exchange held in Marseille in June 2004. This project had a total of 15 beneficiaries taking part, all of whom have expressed their deep satisfaction with this innovative training approach, which has also provided a high degree of integration into the labour market.

4. Good practices identified in each project

4.1. French project “Territoires Insertion Communication”

It is necessary to point out the importance of the preliminary investigation and research work developed for the construction of the project.

The ambitions of the project led to search for partners with whom they had never or rarely worked before. Only the ARDML and the Local Task Forces had worked together on specific actions because of the fact that they belonged to a network. The challenge was therefore to create a synergy among the partners and to bring the players together, despite the differences between them.

Anxious to give each of the partners the possibility of expressing him or herself and to stay in the proper place and role within the partnership and the project, the ARDML leading candidate decided to provide methodological guarantees by obtaining the services of an external office to structure the rules and tools of the partnership.

The schema, which was conducive to good practices, was as follows:

- A leading candidate
- The presence of a construction and coordination assistant
- Definition of operating tools.

4.1.1. The action plan: definition of guiding operating principles

The existence of an action plan is essential for the project to work properly; it is a good practice to spread. The organization managed to use this methodological support to establish strictness and coherence around the actions carried out. It also succeeded in creating true consensus among the partners on the objectives to be pursued and the resources to mobilise.

The drawing up of an organisation schema was a fundamental element in giving rise to and structuring the active involvement of the “TIC” partners, from the very beginning of the project. The definition of objectives enabled the different partners to be gathered around the common threshold of values and practices required to implement the project. The TIC project succeeded in leading the partners to reflect collectively on common issues.

Backed by the originality of its structure, the project relied on the partners' taking responsibility for each specific area of work. The notion of co-responsibility was a guiding principle in the implementation of the TIC project. Operating rules were defined in order to allocate responsibilities and a role suited to his or her sphere of competence to each co-director. These rules had the advantage of being very readable, which made it easy for the partners to understand what their priorities were and encouraged constant involvement throughout the project.

The tools are the formalised dimension of the partnership. They enable the project to be developed and the operating rules for the common work to be defined. Consequently, the main criteria for the partnership to work properly arise from the precise definition of objectives and responsibilities among the partners, from the mobilisation of the players, from the actual carrying out of the activities.

In the context of the drawing up of the project, guidance committees, steering committees and technical committees (task forces) proved to be the key figures in the development of the partnership. They were allocated clearly specified functions: decision making, regulation, production. Regular regulation stages

were organised. The existence of a bridgehead per area of work encouraged good steering of the activities carried out.

The high grade of involvement of all the partners was an asset for conducting and monitoring the activities insofar as it was a stability factor.

This work methodology (considered as a good practice itself), combining the efforts and complementary resources of the territory, was the origin of the activities identified as good practices in the field of social and labour insertion, as they are described as follows.

4.1.2. Description of the activities carried out by the centres

a) “Inter-facility communication” and “Young people-facilities” area

Area drivers: Marseille Local Task Force and CAFOC

Technical Committee Members: GIP Mission Jeunes 05 (GIP Youth Task Force 05); Alpes Haute Provence Local Task Force; Centre Var Local Task Force; Pays d'Aix Local Task Force.

This area has developed the product Webjeunes, a communication tool for the social and vocational integration of young people.

More specifically, it is a web tool intended for youngsters and for all the reception facilities operating in the sphere of integration of people in difficulty. It has several major functions which arise from:

- Either the daily work of the integration adviser within the facility itself
- Or the needs relating to the reinforcement of communication between the reception facility players in order to facilitate concerted work on the youth project.

This product is characterised by the following functions:

- Remote reception and presentation of facilities in a given Region, regional and/or territorial news
- Communication and working tools for young people and for all the relevant players
- Youth routes: updating, monitoring, statistics, reminders (mobile phone SMS) and communication with the other players
- Curriculum vitae tools (co-construction and communication-circulation on the Internet), sponsoring-tutoring, job offers, creation of activities
- Online documentation, discussion forums, “FAQs”, links to partner sites.

b) “Mobilisation” area

“Unpopular occupation mobilisation” section

Area pilot facility: CAPEB

Technical Committee Members: GIP Mission Jeunes 05 (GIP Youth Task Force 05), Alpes Haute Provence Local Task Force, Nice Local Task Force, Aubagne Local Task Force, Marseille Local Task Force, CAPEB from the Departments: Alpes de Haute Provence, Hautes Alpes, Alpes maritimes, Bouche du Rhône.

This section sets out to give concrete expression to activities that must encourage:

- The mobilisation of young under-qualified job applicants around building trades that encounter recruitment difficulties
- The networking of the relevant players through guidance of young people towards this sector.

For this purpose, the co-directors of this section set up different communication devices that are intended to inform and raise the consciousness of the players involved, such as companies, Local Task Force advisers, young people and their family environment. Training activities are also implemented.

The “Unpopular occupation mobilisation” section is translated by the organisation of:

- Breakfast meetings in the presence of young people and professionals in order to communicate better on building sector occupations
- Professionalisation activities with personnel from Local Task Forces in charge of coaching young people through the steps they take. These are backed by training courses in the building sector, including visits to companies and building sites
- Training activities with craftspeople in order to reinforce their recruitment and reception ability
- Training actions for young people, developed as close as possible to the companies' needs.

“Creativity mobilisation” section

Area pilot structure: Est Var Local Task Force

Technical Committee Members: ARCADE, GIP Luberon Local Task Force, Aubagne Local Youth Task Force, CRIJ PA, Nice Local Task Force, Pays d'Aix Local Task Force.

This section is given concrete expression through the development of two products:

A new “Creativity Mobilisation Coordinator” (AMC) function.

It is a group of operational tools to be used for:

- The constitution and qualification of a network of professionals, within public reception facilities, specialised in coordination, mobilisation and creativity
- The setting up of workshops for mobilising young people around cultural and artistic projects.

The main operational tools developed are as follows:

- A directory of the AMC function comprising: the presentation of the context for implementing this function, a description of the activities comprising the function, a description of the skills to be mobilised, by level of responsibility
- A training directory with a description of all the training sessions relating to this function that have been implemented within the experimentation framework
- A methodological guide presenting the methods and tools for constituting and coordinating an AMC network.

The “Dramatic Arts Occupations and Training Courses in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region” Section

The ARCADE internal website has been enhanced with a new section entitled: “Dramatic Arts Occupations in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region”. This section is intended to cover all the dramatic arts as fully as possible. The question that led to the creation of this section was as follows: What training courses prepare people for this occupation in this region?

Arts and crafts and scenic arts are therefore listed in 5 major categories:

- Artistic occupations
- Technical and technical-artistic occupations
- Teaching and coaching occupations
- Project and company management occupations
- Occupations involving the administration of cultural development institutions and organisations.

4.1.3. Policy-change opportunities

The TIC (Territoires Insertion Communication) project was constructed by giving a predominant role to the links between operational and strategic players. The joint mobilisation of technicians and decision makers around common actions had a dual positive impact. In fact it can act simultaneously on the professional practices of the lead personnel and on the decision modes of the strategic players. This joint mobilisation is a determining factor that can be of influence on the improvement of integration policies that are developed from the viewpoints of their design and their implementation.

Thus, several items can be highlighted for the effects they are liable to produce in the policy-changing sphere:

- The transfer of tools and methods between facilities, particularly the spreading of the WebJeunes tool, a tool intended for young people and for the facilities, on different levels. The progression of the TIC project to ACTION 3, the objective of which is to spread the tools on regional, national and transnational level, is a favourable factor for the emergence of increased efficiency of integration devices
- The existence of regional dynamics that are fired by the ability of groups of technicians from different facilities to work together, to build deeper relationships with certain partners as support for the development of new projects
- The impetus of a reflection on the part of the strategic players on the French ways of solving young people's integration difficulties and their involvement in extended co-operation
- The development of networks from the viewpoint of the decision makers and the technicians. "Co-operation acts in the direction in which it is pursued ..."; that is, it can be led to move outside the boundaries of the EQUAL framework
- Improved knowledge for the operational players of the priorities of the regional facilities linked to the project, which strengthens partnership relations on country scale. This reinforcement, supported by the decision makers, may be extended by the reinforcement of political partnerships.

4.2. Spanish project “Equal León Actúa”

The good practices developed in the Equal León Actúa project are the result of the joint effort made not only by the members of the Development Partnership, but also the work in network carried out in cooperation with the key agents of the territory in the field of social and labour insertion of the most disadvantaged collectives.

The activities identified as good practices described are the innovative answer to existing needs of the territory, and by their characteristics they can also be transferred to other contexts, both national or transnational.

The Equal Centre for Integration into society and the labour market (Centro Equal de Inserción Sociolaboral) is the centre where the recruitment and admittance of the potential participants in the project, the interdisciplinary activities with the different agents and professionals, and the pertinent derivations to other resources and measures.

The programmes of the project have been approached from the Integral Service for Transition to the Labour Market, whose aim was to establish an Individualised Insertion Programme for each participant in the project, in order to increase their individual skills through activities based on their professional training and complementary support measures (guidance for getting a job or setting up a business, mediation with companies, basic training, help to reconcile family and work life, the chance to participate in psychological and social support groups when looking for employment...).

4.2.1. Multidisciplinary intervention team. The itinerary experienced

The Integral Service for the Transition into the Labour Market kicked into action with the creation of a Multidisciplinary Team in which several professionals take part and from which all the individualised insertion programmes are designed and developed in a coordinated manner, taking into account the personal, social and employment circumstances of the potential participants. The team is made up of:

- Recruitment professional: initial admittance and social mediation
- Social and professional insertion programme coordinator
- Employment survey and professional mediation
- Equal opportunities agent
- Support teacher
- Self-employment tutor
- New technologies teacher
- Psychologist/coordinator of self-help groups.

Characteristics of the integral intervention strategy and programme flexibility

Flexibility in the formation of the team and participation in the interventions

The Multidisciplinary Team has a flexible structure, determined by the nature and specific conditions of the socio-economic context . This makes it possible to articulate a more intense intervention of specific agents or professional figures in the Team, as well as to determine the characteristics of the interventions undertaken.

Creation, development and promotion of the network of resources and participant bodies

The articulation of the network of collaborating organisations is essential for the establishment of communication channels, which are both permanent and bi-directional, demonstrating its great value and usefulness as regards:

- Permanent research surveys to gather current knowledge of resources and organisations operating within the area
- Bringing the project (and its associated initiatives) closer to potential users
- Improved links and relationships between the professionals and the different bodies
- The possibility to articulate suitable measures that improve these resources.

Analysis and problem-solving procedures agreed by the team of professionals

All the team's members come from very diverse backgrounds, fields and professional experience, all with their own analysis and problem-solving skills. Systematic communication between members allows us to alleviate, if not fully avoid, perception errors which can arise from using a common, sometimes biased set of specific references and techniques, at the same time as creating new solutions covering a broad range of perspectives. On the other hand, each agent will have a different opinion of the users he or she deals with directly, thus ultimately allowing for a more concrete global vision.

Intervention approaches and strategies

- Assessment of the abilities of the participant. To avoid focusing on failings, deficiencies or pathological characteristics, instead emphasising the user's strong points, reducing the significance of the technician's role (authority and dependency on this figure), developing rational decision-making processes.
- Cooperation and motivation of the professional, that can reduce the user's resistance to change (when he/she is living through very prolonged situations) and the mobilisation of the user's resources.
- Flexibility and approachability of the intervention agent. The agent will recognise the limitations of his/her own point of view, adopting a non-judgement position and being able to recognise the socio-cultural references of the users. The necessary closeness and accessibility with the user will facilitate the expression of relevant aspects that could be inhibited in very formal or short interactions and therefore unknown to the technician. Creating a feeling of closeness gives the user the feeling of "being understood" and facilitates the compromise on his/her side.
- Flexibility of interventions. Each user's programme is totally personalised, so that they are able to benefit from certain activities and actions while not necessarily undertaking others. It also relates to the possibility, in each specific case, of articulating the applicable steps which will allow determined users to gain access to resources in ways which differ according to their own specific requirements. Once an activity finishes, this allows users to be taken in again to other activities.
- The integration into society and the labour market as a gradual process. This means being able to understand labour insertion as a gradual, prolonged process, which must

begin by defining how to adapt the different users to the unemployment which is affecting them, in order to then be able to progressively increase employment quotas. Looking at 'ideal situations'. This view needs regular follow-up and monitoring of all users participating in project activities which, in turn, allow to:

Evaluate the global changes being experienced by the user as he/she passes through the project

Re-directing the various users already disconnected from the project towards potentially positive actions relating to their chances of gaining entry into, and remaining permanently in, the labour market.

- Evaluation of personal circumstances from a social intervention perspective. The user must be considered as a non-isolated psychological entity, integrated in different social structures which are inherent and have a huge impact on his or her behaviour or, in other words, on his or her norms and references for action.

4.2.2. León Actúa Youth Centre: “Integral intervention model for young people at risk of social exclusion”

The León Actúa Youth Centre was established as an alternative model of Integral Intervention for Young People, from 16 to 22, in circumstances of social exclusion or at risk of social exclusion, disabled people, young people excluded from the educational system, immigrants and young offenders, that would facilitate their access to the job market through measures including professional training together with social and educational support activities and family and community intervention.

It is designed as a specific structure for the young people within the EQUAL project for Social and Labour Market integration, in such a way that, together with the specific interventions of the professionals of the Centre, it is tied in with those interventions stemming from the Multidisciplinary team of the EQUAL project. The beneficiaries of the Youth Centre participate in a personalised programme, that allows the intervention and evaluation by all the team, and which is modifiable if necessary, depending on the follow-up of their evaluation within the Project.

Professional figures involved in the intervention:

- Psychologist/professional responsible for the Youth Centre
- Educational specialist
- Support activities specialists
- Occupational workshop monitors.

Methodology

The methodology applied brings together two types of intervention, one geared towards the participants' professional training and incorporation into the labour market, and the other geared towards their personal adjustment and social integration in three spheres: individual interventions (individualised tutorials), group interventions (of special importance in the case of these youngsters), community interventions (coordination, evaluation and communication of results to professionals and participating bodies).

Occupational Intervention Area

Professional training: acquisition of knowledge and professional skills by means of real work experience, reaching acceptable levels of preparation to access the labour market and/or reintegrate in other introductory or professional training programmes through training programmes linked to the most popular occupational activities, as determined by the Evaluation Professional's surveys. The following occupational training programs have been developed:

- Bakery assistant
- Interior decorating and building work: building, carpentry, computer assisted graphic design and interior decorating
- Carpentry assistant for building sites.

Social and Education Intervention Area

Educational group interventions and individualised tutorials develop the participants' skills in order to compensate for the lack of basic work skills, as well as their social skills. The programme includes the following contents:

- Basic educational skills (maths, language and social and natural sciences)
- Job guidance, social skills, basic computing skills, basic social and ethical education (equal opportunities, health education, social relations, environmental awareness).

Social and Family Intervention Area

- Contact with the families, teachers and tutors, together with the network of bodies and people in direct relation with the participants encourages involvement of all the agents participating in the training process and the normalisation of life outside the centre.

Results

Effective intervention with the youngsters on three fronts: occupational, social and educational, and family, using an integral approach to this process of occupational socialisation. Achievement of high degrees of personal involvement and good results obtained with this group. Creation of a meeting point, which has become a reference point for the young people in our project. Direct and real contact with the business community, allowing the acquisition of knowledge, through direct experience, of the most important aspects of the workplace.

4.2.3. Self-help groups

The Self-help Groups for Job-seeking are stable structures set up as periodic work sessions aimed at the participants acquiring and exercising their skills to solve their job-seeking problems and handle the changes they face.

- These groups are open in structure, allowing the incorporation of new participants in the course of the different meetings, while other participants abandon the groups temporarily or permanently after getting a job or starting a training programme.

- They are also open and flexible meetings as regards the work contents or areas throughout the different sessions; it is the group itself that detects and proposes their needs in an open manner.
- The number of work sessions each participant can should or attend varies, it being important to note the participants' excellent reaction to the initiative. In fact, the self-help groups' meetings are in themselves an attractive incentive, it also being an opportunity for the participants to integrate in the other members' social networks.

Specific work in self-help groups

The self-help group sessions are held once or twice a week and last from 120 to 180 minutes, following the following structure:

- Introduction of any new members, and explanation of how the group works
- Gathering of individual information and group debate
- Development of work dynamics, structured and adapted to the specific subject of the session
- Group self-evaluation
- Debate and setting of initiatives and aims; call for new meeting and proposal of subject for the following session.

Advantages and new contributions of the initiative

- Structure and resource complementary to other guidance initiatives
- Ability to encourage active contribution of the participants
- The heterogeneous structure of the Group makes it possible to directly approach the need for awareness of the problems faced by these disadvantaged groups, with real people and real conditions of exposure, aiming, in as far as possible, to normalise the interventions and achieve integration through the initiatives themselves
- The intervention is flexible and adaptable to content and times
- Adoption of a perspective complementary to the traditional, almost exclusive, focus on professional knowledge and skills, paying special attention to what we call skills for the effective self-regulation of behaviour: tolerance to change; self-motivation abilities; action as opposed to inhibition; recognition of the role played; effective problem-solving strategies. Also, the integration into the labour market, understood as a gradual process, imply that different degrees of integration into the job market require different interventions
- Use of the group's capacity as an Influencing Agent to facilitate Change, to impose and restructure norms for the individual members beyond their mere presence in the group, by means of the mechanism of social influence
- Non-authoritative and non-evaluating role of the coordinator, whose specific aims include:
 - To underline the active role of the participant in the circumstances they live in, and to activate possible ways of solving the problems they face
 - To construct the group identity around reference to success, encouraging the participants to identify with the group's capacity for success

- To create a climate that favours spontaneous communication and generates a degree of social cohesion beyond the mere occasional meeting
- To coordinate the different meetings and assess possible new incorporations to the group, monitoring the group's heterogeneity and informing the group of the success of participants, when these are unable to do so themselves.

Results

- Excellent reaction to the initiative by the participants (the meeting itself is an incentive). Stimulates the participants' action for their own advantage
- Possibility of intervening simultaneously with people belonging to different groups
- Encourages the development of social networks by the participants and support from the community, stimulating the participants to act within social references they feel closer to and can identify with. Possibility of adapting to the rhythm of individual progress of every participant
- Capacity of the resource to adapt to the individual rhythm of each user.
- Reduction of the professional's role in the analysis and prescription of solutions
- Encourages contact between different realities and encourages participants to value diversity, showing itself as an excellent tool in activities geared towards awareness and changes of attitude towards groups at risk of exclusion and towards gender equality
- The easy organisation of the groups, together with its low cost burden, makes this initiative an excellent complement to any other guidance or training initiatives
- The open intervention format (any participant can enter or exit the group whenever he/she wants), is likewise perceived as an important advantage.

4.2.4. Policy-change opportunities

The design and development of the Equal León Actúa project has been the base for a reflection in the territory about the work methods and the interventions developed in the field of the social and labour insertion of the most disadvantaged collectives.

The intense mediation work carried out, as well as the communication and diffusion activities developed along the project have had an important impact in the territory:

- Transfer of some of the structures and methodologies developed in the Equal León Actúa project at a local level
- Creation and consolidation of a work in network in cooperation with the key existing agents of the territory, such as training centres, employment services, health and social services, NGOs, associations, economic agents and local and regional representatives
- Optimization of the existing resources in the field of training and employment, succeeding at offering beneficiaries an integral attention; offering an answer to the whole of every person's needs and avoiding the problems caused by the traditional dispersion of resources in the territory.

This work in network has been the key of the success of the activities carried out during the project, in particular the design and implementation of integral individualized insertion itineraries, adapted to the needs of each of the beneficiaries of the project, as only effective answer to the integration of the most disadvantaged collectives.

Both the experiences implemented at a local level, and the knowledge acquired through transnational cooperation invite us to reflect about the need of working in network with the key agents of the territory in order to foster a true change in the policies of the territory.

4.3. German project “Schule-Ausbildung-Beruf in Rheinland Pfalz”

In the context of the German project “School-Training-Profession in Rheinland Palatinate”, good practice means not just to describe the individual activities of this development partnership extensively but rather to focus useful processes within the consulting phases of the projects from the addressing of adolescents up to their integration into employment. Beyond that it is worth identifying and analyzing those methods and instruments, with which target groups that up to now have rarely been reached could be taken up to the different EQUAL-projects. The examples of processes of good practice can be summarized from these criteria under the following main topics: (1) information and reception of adolescents, (2) following up, (3) counselling and guidance (4) holistic approach and (5) setting-up networks on the local level.

4.3.1. Information and reception of adolescents

An important aspect of all EQUAL-projects is the addressing and accessibility of each target group, independent from the usual proceeding of the existing institution system for the promotion of vocational integration. The projects differentiate between a preventive and a curative approach. Preventive approaches mean to address the young people before leaving the secondary school, while the curative approaches start to address the beneficiaries after leaving school. With the EQUAL-actions such target groups are reached, which are rarely addressed by usually used tools of vocational promotion.

Preventive approach

Here those approaches prove to be successful, which are directly addressing the target groups in their social or living areas, their meeting places or in the schools with the method of visiting social work or street work. The visiting in social areas thereby contains not only the instrument of classical street work, but the direct addressing in the dwellings of the young people. The usual way of receiving beneficiaries in institutional facilities is thus complemented by going to where the beneficiaries are to find. Visiting work is accomplished by all Equal projects of this development partnership.

Addressing in schools requires the establishment of contacts with teachers as a first step. This is possibly made by means of an existing social work in schools, by the direct contact with teachers or by means of addressing the headmasters. The supply of a support by a concrete offer to the school is thereby favourable. This can contain the execution of concrete projects in school, among other things special orientation days for girls or organising offers for traineeships, or the individual case work with adolescents in or also outside of school. With regards to this, individual case work requires mostly intensive individual discussions with the young people. The advantages of these co-operations must be communicated carefully to headmasters and teachers, who frequently fear additional work. In some cases common consulting hours for the beneficiaries take place in schools with the teachers or even for the teachers.

Classical meeting places of young people are locally existing youth centres, besides central places. Placing offers for consulting hours about questions of careers orientation, occupational choice identification or for support when writing applications are a good start to build up and establish contacts with the target group. Young people's confidence can be developed with these voluntary contacts, which is in many cases an essential basis of the subsequent following.

Curative approach

The first step consists of establishing contact with the youngsters that have abandoned their studies and that are not following any other labour or training activity. A successfully established approach to build up and establish contacts with young people, who abandoned school and have no training or work, is the principle of voluntariness in a location with youth-oriented offers. An approach like that is here the counselling and guidance in the open youth work. The youth centre in Kirn became meanwhile an important local meeting place for many young people, who fell out of the promotion systems for vocational integration. Primarily a place for leisure activities, the staff of the youth centre offers immediate support on the basis of voluntariness for adolescents, who left school frequently without degree. The addressing is built up less directly with reference to vocation, and more through spending time together within leisure activities. These young people were frequently no longer reached by the institutionalised approaches offered by employment offices, social welfare offices or youth welfare offices.

In addition to the approach of voluntariness to build up contacts, there is a participation which is based on external obligation. Young persons, who committed a crime, are offered by the court to choose between a fine or detention on the one hand, or fulfilling social hours in the youth centre on the other hand. This choice between a punishment or a participation is also given to the beneficiaries of the project Signal-Box for pupils refusing school. The social hours are usually the lesser evil for the young people. The work with these delinquents is pretty often so successful that these cooperate even longer than they have to. A crucial factor for necessary changes in the attitudes of young people is in the context of the individual case work the ability of the staff to place the needs of the young people into the focus of its work and to give them the feeling of voluntariness and having possibilities of own decision- making for their vocational future.

4.3.2. Following up

Within all activities of this development partnership, it became clear that the process of following up is most promising on the basis of a voluntariness of the young people. The basis of creating confidence is strengthened and developed by the availability and willingness of the staff to assist the young people, by providing necessary offers for the beneficiaries as well as by offering small services for the young people, for example travels to offices or assisting the search for a practical course. With this procedure the motivation of the beneficiaries is strengthened at the same time and further steps are prepared.

4.3.3. Counselling and guidance

The process of counselling and guidance or the case -management strictly speaking, is successful if a certain methodological procedure is kept. An individual procedure, which is respecting the needs and capabilities of the young people, is important for assisting the development of self-help. The personal and social needs of the young people are to be placed and worked primarily at the beginning of counselling and guidance. In the further process it is necessary to process the agreed upon goals gradually and transparent together with the young people. Step by step, new goals for the individual vocational path are to be agreed. On the way to possible training or work the beneficiaries are in charge of obligatory tasks, whose fulfilment is controlled. This requires continuity in the counselling and guidance, the stabilisation of the motivation of the beneficiaries, the support for the example with difficult visits at authorities and, in addition, the creation of commitment as well as giving homework. The slogan has to be: "As much as necessary, as few as possible!".

4.3.4. Holistic approach

In all Equal activities a holistic orientation and identification of solutions turned out as successful. It proved as particularly useful to consider and connect at the existing capabilities of the individuals both vocational, social, school and personal aspects of the biography of the beneficiaries in an holistic approach. Less the existing deficits of the young people shall be diminished, rather the recognized capabilities shall be strengthened.

In the context of a long-term based and holistic approach, the available institutional resources are coordinated for the individual support by the staff of all Equal projects and linked with one another. This avoids the frequently missing connections and transitions between the individual measures of the employment offices, social welfare offices or youth welfare offices. The advisors thereby function as moderators between the institutions and managers of interfaces in the interest of each client.

4.3.5. Setting-up networks on the local level

A networking of different institutions and actors regarding the vocational integration was pursued in the framework by two approaches in this development partnership: on the one hand, by a strategic co-operation independently of concrete Equal activities, but with purchase to the general target group of adolescents, and on the other hand by operational co-operation outgoing from the advisors in the Equal activities.

The first approach of a strategic networking was unfortunately quite unsuccessful. Partially concrete starting points for a co-operation between labour offices, social welfare offices and youth welfare offices were missing on a local level. The youth welfare offices especially did not succeed to develop concrete objectives for a co-operation with the employment offices. Due to missing resources and small experiences in labour market-political activities the youth welfare offices were accepted only rarely of labour offices and social welfare offices as equal partners. Beyond that the youth welfare offices were missing personnel resources, in order to appear as the engine of a network for vocational integration. It became very clear that the institutional supply of persons and their motivation to participate are the keys for a successful networking.

It was different with reference to project-related co-operation, which was initiated by the operational staff. The initiated round tables and informal work discussions were welcomed and used as a chance for mutual information and to exchange of experience by the staff of other local institutions. However the starting points of the initiative were the staff of the respective Equal projects. Without their personal commitment and their hard work the network architecture would not have realized.

4.3.6. Policy-change opportunities

During the past decades, one of the main features of the German system of vocational integration was the division of responsibility between many institutions. With regard to the federal constitution of Germany, the system of vocational integration suffered mainly from lack of transparency, an underdeveloped co-operation and missing links between the involved institutions. Due to this segregation, many disadvantaged adolescents did not find appropriate solutions for their complex individual requirements and needs. This was the situation when the German DP School-Training-Profession in Rhineland-Palatinate started its activities in the year 2002. The complexity of the system for vocational integration longed for the development of ways and methods for individual assistance on the one hand and the activation and involvement of existing, but split resources on the other hand.

The divided institutional responsibility for long-term unemployed and young people who are able to work, but do not find a vocational training or a job, was partly over-mounted by a new federal law for the

professional integration which has been in force since January 1st 2005. With the exception of some municipalities and districts which have the exclusive responsibility, most of the job centres and social welfare offices in Germany carried out joint ventures on a local level. Nowadays, adolescents who are able to work get the assistance of case-managers to find a vocational training or a job. Irrespective of this legal change and the upgraded opportunities for personal assistance, there still exists the risk that customised pathways will not be reached within the reformed system of vocational integration. The new structure will not clear away every deficit of the past system.

On the one hand, preventive activities will still not be offered by the new joint ventures of job centres and social welfare offices. There will still be the need to provide social and vocational orientation and guidance in school. This is offered by the Equal projects Network School and Profession in Kaiserslautern and Focus Work in the area of Southwest Palatinate for example. Additionally, the Equal project Signal-Box showed good approaches for offering special solutions for vocational integration to pupils who refuse to go or to attend classes in school. These preventive approaches should be a general offer for pupils in order to offer assistance as early as possible. The older disadvantaged persons are, the worse are the chances to develop alternative directions.

On the other hand, adolescents who have problems finding their way to institutional offers will still have to face difficulties. For this reason, activities which are seeking contacts with the young people will still be necessary. Scouting activities as well as the combination leisure-oriented and vocational-oriented activities came out to be very useful to establish first contacts, sensitise and motivate adolescents for questions of vocational integration. The integration of vocational promotion in the activities of a youth centre in Kirn is a fine example for other youth centres in Germany. The success shows that open youth work is able to offer more than leisure activities.

Two other results of the DP School-Training-Profession are worth to think about: the extent of the individual counselling and the status of the consultant. It is predictable that the relation between institutional case-managers and the number of beneficiaries (the general ratio is determined to be one case-manager for 75 beneficiaries) will stay so bad that an individual assistance cannot be in the focus of the assistance for vocational integration for every case. The main concern of the case-managers is a fast integration into the world of employment in the long run. Disadvantaged adolescents who need more time and help to identify their strengths and to develop their competences will lack an appropriate extent of assistance. The DP School-Training-Profession proved that individual orientation and guidance offered by consultants who are not representatives of a special public administration is a good practice within a system of split responsibilities. They are able to act for the needs of the beneficiaries and to organize resources from different institutions without special financial interests for example.

4.4. Italian project “Rete Servizi Territoriali, Reset”

When we talk about good practice we do not refer to a unique and unrepeatable success, but to the effort to model problems and valuable solutions alike.

Good practices are the result of the combination of four basic elements: project strategies and quality of actions, transferability, innovation and sustainability.

Hence, we may define good practices as the fundamentals of project rationale, the real pillars of the initiative, whereas the finishing touch is represented by:

- Transferability, in terms of impact of the intervention on:
 - Policies and reference institutions: adoption of the local or central action programming model
 - The organisations involved: adoption of the model in the programming activities carried out by the promoting organisation

- Other partners that “operate in the same field: adoption of a model by local entities and institutions that are not directly involved in the initiative.
- Innovation, which is not only meant in absolute terms, but in regard to the:
 - Development of new professional profiles
 - Development of new technologies (for teaching and other purposes)
 - Development of new services (i.e. concerning a specific field).
- Sustainability, namely the stability of the benefits resulting from the implementation of the action.

As far as Equal Reset project is considered we will simply talk about tested practices. Here follow the practices that in our view have all the necessary requirements to be considered as “good practices”:

1. Local Development Partnerships
2. Tailored pathways
3. Voucher
4. Innovative professional profiles
5. Research activities on employability.

4.4.1. Local Development Partnerships

The major characteristic of Reset Development Partnerships was to develop a two-level network; as a matter of fact, the project, albeit sector-based, has set the stage for six local networks whose aim was to encourage:

- The implementation of pilots
- The transferability of experiences
- The future sustainability of the benefits produced.

Local Development Partnerships, then, were mainly aimed at:

- Developing individual and tailor-made pathways with a view to promoting the employability of young people 18 to 25 by involving all local institutions that could and were willing to exploit their skills to implement common actions and share specific responsibilities. (operational objective)
- Laying the foundations for the transferability and the future sustainability of actions, starting from the creation of pathways (definition of common goals, which were to be clear and concrete from a strategic standpoint, identification of human and economic resources, etc.) through RESET, and the establishment of sound relationships and agreements with the partners involved (strategic objective).

4.4.2. Tailor-made pathways

This tool can be referred to as a “tested good practice”. As a matter of fact, in each of the six areas involved in the pilots, “tailor-made” pathways were adopted in order to meet the specific needs of beneficiaries; these pathways helped meet concrete needs that were strictly related to local conditions. Guidance was fundamental in this respect for it provided all the necessary information to develop and plan ad hoc pathways.

Please note that during the pilots special attention was paid to the “central role played by beneficiaries”; we believe this should be done when aiming to encourage individual independence. Putting somebody “at the centre” of an action has definitely a “training” value since stress is laid on the reality represented by him/her.

It must be also reinforced that the pilots on tailor-made pathways were based upon common methods; in fact, experts of the sector-based DP have developed some “guidelines” whereby tailor-made pathways were structured in five main steps:

- Analysis of the transition situation
- Basic training (acquisition of basic and transversal skills)
- Guidance
- Vocational training (acquisition of specialist skills)
- Match between job supply/demand (placement) that should be harmonised and combined according to individual characteristics and needs.

4.4.3. Voucher

The voucher is to be considered as a tested good practice as it turned out to be a tool that:

- Afforded the final beneficiaries the possibility of having a really tailor-made pathway personalised according to their own specific needs. In fact they were allowed to spend the voucher and attend vocational training offered by other organisation in the territory
- Let local network widen and strengthen making exchanging and collaborating relations stronger and stronger.

4.4.4. Innovative professional profiles

Another important element of the practices tested through Reset is represented by two innovative professional profiles: the Tutor of the Network and the Tutor of the Pathway.

As a matter of fact, two specific professional profiles were created within the framework of local pilots.

The tutor of the network whose role was to:

- Encourage the members of local Development Partnerships
- Guarantee communication and exchange among partners
- Act as a go-between among partners
- Analyse relations
- Co-ordinate and enhance network-based resources
- Encourage contacts to activate local resources.

The contribution given by this new professional profile is essential to guarantee the effectiveness and the efficacy of the work done, as well as the thorough exploitation of skills and competencies, which should not only be done as it is imposed by the network.

The tutor of the pathway is a personal tutor that looks after the pathways followed by final beneficiaries, and more specifically:

- Plans training pathways
- Explains the different steps and motivates the young people involved
- Keeps in touch with all those who contribute to the realisation of the pathway, (operators from other organisations, local services, enterprises, etc.).

4.4.5. Research activities on employability

It is to be considered a tested good practice as Reset Development Partnership engaged itself in such an activity quite original and difficult at the same time because it aimed at measuring the growth of the potential employability of the target group involved in the project. To make it possible the research team, together with coordinators team:

- Has produced some supporting elements, namely tools, methodologies, training and technical assistance ad hoc for the operators involved at a local level etc., which might be useful to guarantee the success of pilots
- Has implemented a number of actions concerning specific research, including research on employability, with the aim at thoroughly understanding and measuring the concept of employability.

More specifically, the research study aims to put forward some operational proposals in order to evaluate the effectiveness of Reset in terms of employability. Said research is focused upon four macro-areas that certainly impact on the employability the target groups. The four macro-areas considered were:

- The reference context
- The network of local services
- The characteristics of beneficiaries
- The processes put in place for specific targets.

4.4.6. Policy-change opportunities

The pilots that are being implemented in Italy within the framework of Reset have provided food for thought with regard to intervention practices and interesting working methods aimed at enhancing the same practices on a mainstreaming basis.

The dissemination (identification of innovation, generalisation of project results, documentation and diffusion) and communication process (receipt of results, definition and selection of good practices, transfer and adoption of the new methodology) is being developed with the aid of an ongoing co-operation and exchange that take place at a national and local level under the auspices of Reset.

From the very beginning, pilots have been marked by specific and clear-cut characteristics depending on the cultural roots of the area involved, the state of enforcement of labour laws, unemployment rates and subsequently the availability of entrepreneurs to employ disadvantaged people. To tackle said aspects on an organisational and methodological basis, individual mainstreaming action plans were developed provided that they complied with the innovative content of pilot practices. Besides, the analysis concerning the possibility to adjust said methodology to the provincial or regional levels (in Action 2) was a further motivation to have customised plans.

As regards processes and procedures, focus groups were organised with local working groups with a view to identifying the essential elements that characterise significant practices, which were therefore analysed in detail through monitoring schemes to define:

- Mainstreaming objects
- Products/models to export
- Diffusion/transfer levels (horizontal/vertical)
- Macro- and micro-objectives
- Strategies
- Activities and any related organisational aspects (resources, time schedule, tasks, weaknesses).

In general, it is interesting to outline the most important characteristics of individual pathways.

Tailor-made and individual pathways are a transversal tool common to all pilots, marked by an active role in terms of planning, development and evaluation; these tools are mainly used to cover the network established or reinforced by Equal. This approach has proven to be successful in terms of results, i.e. employability, for it seems appropriate to deal with tricky and difficult situations (family, behavioural, school/training problems...).

Amid mainstreaming objects, it is worth mentioning the so-called voucher, an innovative tool used in pathways to reinforce individual skills aimed at enhancing employability opportunities. This tool is part of a set of tools adopted within the framework of regional operational plans whose aim is to grant a training voucher to young people who make progress at school through public announcements (thus guaranteeing a form of selection). For Reset this tool has gained an additional educational value for it is basically used consistently with individual characteristics and needs.

These two sets of tools (tailor-made pathways and training vouchers) are common to all pilots, whereas other objects, products and/or models have proven to be meaningful only under specific conditions, such as:

- The transfer of a method developed by Reset for a given provincial area (project partner) to another area
- The selection of final beneficiaries carried out in conjunction with public operators (job centres) and project operators
- The adoption by a public partner (job centre) of a guidance method developed for Reset (job centre operators were trained by the national team to properly use this method)
- The transfer of a local monitoring and assessment method to the provincial level
- Special attention is paid to job tutoring methods, and to the role of (internal and in-company) tutors in particular, as well as tools aimed at monitoring work experiences and industrial relations
- In those particular instances for which Reset has given a fundamental contribution to the enhancement of the local network, special attention is being paid to innovative elements (maintenance methods, rules, formalisation procedures, inter-organisational confidence) that could be enhanced to guarantee a better sustainability of the initiatives.

In general, we can talk about a new form of mainstreaming whereby dialogue has been fostered, thus encouraging the reinforcement of the network and its effectiveness (common projects, new forms of collaboration).

The main mainstreaming aspects on which local groups are now focusing concern best practices, whose documentation must be prepared with a special focus on the methodology and then being valued with the aid of institutional levels.

4.5. Swedish project “Meeting the Future”

4.5.1. The project through the experience of one of his beneficiaries

Several initiatives have been organised in the framework of the Swedish project Meeting the Future, with the support of the key agents of the territory. This work in network has offered true solutions for youngsters in difficulty. The best way of getting to know these good practices is to present the case study of young Lasse of FuS project.

Background

Until the age of 16, Lasse had lived alternately with his mother and with his father, because his parents were divorced. He had difficulty controlling his mood when he felt let down, and his school work was not very successful, largely because his childhood had been insecure. Despite this, Lasse was not in any way less intelligent than anyone else of his age. He clung to the security of his friends, but the company he kept was not always the best, which meant that he ran foul of the law a few times. Since he was a minor the social services were brought in.

Lasse in the project

At the time when Lasse became part of the sub-project “Workplace-based training Söderåsen” (known by the Swedish abbreviation FuS) he was living with one of his parents who was not always at home, so Lasse had to fend for himself to a great extent. The adult support he received was mostly from a contact person via the social services a couple of times a month.

Lasse's first trainee place in FuS was at a small business where the founder/owner, assumed the role of mentor himself. Together they drew up a rough action plan for the immediate future so that Lasse would gradually become more able to cope with the tasks at work by himself. Relations with the parent that Lasse was now living with were often strained and he took revenge by breaking a thing belonging to the parent. His behaviour led the authorities to decide that Lasse should be taken into care in accordance with the Care of Young Persons Act, and while the case was being investigated he was placed in an institution for young people, at some distance from his home town.

Lasse's first idea was to disappear so that the decision could not be implemented. After a discussion with his mentor and the staff of the FuS project, the advantages and disadvantages of this alternative were weighed up and Lasse decided voluntarily to comply with the authorities' decision. While the investigation was in progress, contact was maintained between Lasse and his mentor and the project management by telephone, and in these conversations the latter did their best to support Lasse.

During his time in the youth institution Lasse pursued studies, among other things, in the core subjects, receiving praise from the teachers and other staff for his general behaviour. In the proceedings at the County Court his parents and representatives of the social services pleaded that the time Lasse was to be in care should be prolonged and that Lasse should continue to be

placed away from his home town. Lasse himself and his solicitor presented all the evidence indicating that the network which had been built up around him in FuS could help him to carry on. Lasse's mentor and the project staff, who were also summoned to appear in court, felt that he should be given another chance.

The County Court ruled that the placement under the terms of the Act should cease. The decision came suddenly and no home had been prepared for Lasse. The housing question and other urgent practical details were resolved temporarily thanks to the network and the social commitment of Lasse's mentor.

After a few more months in the project Lasse was allowed to try a new trainee place, and with his social skills he quickly became an accepted member of the group of employees. Thanks to his loyalty and competence he was employed the whole summer as a holiday substitute in the company. Soon afterwards he applied for and obtained trial employment with a contractual wage in another company which is not in the project's network. There are good grounds for assuming that one of the reasons he has this job today is the good references he obtained through the project.

Lasse no longer belongs to FuS. Today he has a home of his own, earns his own livelihood, and thinks it is nice to be able to stand on his own feet without being dependent on support. He is taking driving lessons and within a month or so he will be completely free from contacts with the social services.

4.5.2. FuS project

Background

Workplace Education Söderåsen has its origin in the fact that the educational system of today is built on that almost all youths have to go through at least three years in upper secondary school to qualify in the labour market of today.

This means that those who, because of different reasons, not make it through this system have almost non-existing possibilities to get a job.

Aim

The project has as its aim to offer ten youths in the age of 16-18 years an alternative to the ordinary programs in the upper secondary school. The aim is to enable these ten youths to find other ways to the labour market by getting some experience. This means for example that the person learns to take responsibility, be in time, show consideration and respect as well as to regard her own intrinsic value.

The goal with the project is that the participants through workplace training shall have gained knowledge so that they have strengthened their possibilities on the labour market. As a spin off effect, the project hopefully will also work as a base for recruitment for the economic life.

Co-operation partners

The project is based on a co-operation between the municipalities of Åstorp, Klippan and Perstorp, The Business Association (Företagarnas Riksorganisation -FR) and the European Social Fund - ESF.

Who are the youngsters?

The background of the participants varies, but they all have one thing in common: at the moment they are not able to manage the theoretical studies that the ordinary educational system requires. One can come directly from the comprehensive school, another might have experience from the individual programme, and further one might not have had any occupation at all for a shorter or longer period.

Selection of participants

Participation in FuS is completely founded on free will, and the alternative is studies in the municipality's Individual Programme (IV). All those who are interested have been called for an interview and information together with their parents at least one opportunity. Then, after time for consideration, they are supposed to give wishes of three workplaces in order of priority. The next step in the process is that the project managers, consideration taken to both wishes from the participants and other criteria, try to match every individual to the different workplaces.

Documentation

The project management shall document all activities that are made within the frame of FuS.

The basis for the documentation is to be taken through conversations with instructors and trainees, together with a log-book (see "Checklist"), which is kept weekly.

Supervision guide

This supervision guide is meant to function as a support to instructors and contact persons within the project Workplace Education Söderåsen (Företagsförlagd utbildning Söderåsen - FuS). Its contents do not claim to fully cover the field, but are meant to be kept dynamic and developed as the project proceeds and new experiences are made.

Instructor meetings

Separate meetings for all instructors are arranged when necessary, however at least once per term.

Education

When necessary, a company related education with the character of a truck driver course, safety controlling etc., can be provided by the project in consultation with the project management and the workplace. Equivalent conditions are, whenever applicable, also valid in studies in subjects that are connected to a programme in the upper secondary school, at which large flexibility for individual solutions must be possible.

5. Lessons learned

At the centre of the activities of this transnational co-operation stood the development of a “European Pathway to the Future” for the vocational integration of especially disadvantaged adolescents.

Before going further into this chapter, it is important to point out that:

- The exchanges that took place on occasion of the thematic seminars have enhanced our mutual knowledge about the partners, and helped us share network-based solutions addressed to all beneficiaries
- The website www.europathways.org was developed to provide additional information about the project, where you may also find specific documents such as the results of meetings and seminars, and the evaluation report, and which shall continue to be available even after the end of the project
- Aside from our differences, we share common visions about the nature of the problems we deal with
- Above all, we have identified the most efficient means to move forward in reaching our goals : networking and intercommunication
- The key aspects of good systems for the promotion of vocational integration and suggestions to obtain a more effective co-operation within development partnerships represent a conclusion (product) of the transnational exchange, for they contain the elements needed to transfer the experience.

Thus when we talk about reception and information, follow-up, guidance, networking and link with the economic world, it is necessary to say that the efficiency of our actions rests on our ability to develop partnership relations in our territories. These partnerships must respect each actor's competences and complementarities, which aim towards the social and professional integration of young people.

Despite the inherent difficulties to transnational co-operation, all the partners have a common answer to the integration of the most disadvantaged collectives: the path to an “European pathway to the future” is networking.

Some challenges had to be faced in order to develop a good transnational work:

- Young people represented the target group of the activities in all development partnerships, but the approaches adopted to achieve successful results were different, for they were related to national and local contexts. However, the respective national activities could be seen as complementary to each other
- Different knowledge of English as the working language, and different work cultures were some of the difficulties encountered. A common work style had to be found
- The variability of national political and institutional frameworks and conditions was also an added difficulty in the development of the transnational work. Above all, the institutional responsibility for the vocational integration of adolescents, and the limited latitudes of participating actors to act in the national Development Partnerships, turned out to be specially different in the partner countries.

In this setting, transnational co-operation's focal task was set on an intensive discussion of good national examples from the partner countries. Not only the special Equal activities of the Development Partnerships involved were examined, but also effective practices from the five national systems of vocational and educational promotion.

Five aspects are of central interest:

1. Getting acquainted with new activities, methods and instruments used by transnational partners, and their use for the national Equal activities

2. The import of modules of the transnational partners into the national activities
3. The acquisition of knowledge by transnational co-operation
4. General experiences from transnational co-operation
5. The identification of key aspects of good systems for the promotion of vocational integration.

5.1 Getting to know new activities, methods and instruments of the transnational partners and their use for the national Equal activities

Holistic approach to the problems of adolescents

The transnational partners were very interested in the French approach of the Local Mission as an exemplary approach to support the vocational integration of young adults. It represents a holistic approach comprising information, offering of measures and job placement. Among the most impressive aspects we find (a) the comprehensive networking of public institutions with local enterprises, trade associations and trade unions; (b) the mechanism of so-called antennas of the Mission Locales in problematic municipal areas; (c) the comprehensive consideration of social and vocational needs of disadvantaged young people; (d) the possibility of receiving immediate assistance of a different kind; (e) own financial resources for activities.

This general approach to the beneficiary was also implemented in the Spanish project through the establishment of the Multidisciplinary Intervention Team. A group of different professionals provide support to the beneficiaries according to their specific needs, in collaboration with the key agents of the territory working for the social and professional integration of the most disadvantaged collectives.

Intranet-based communication among operators

Another good practice of the French partners is the creation of an intranet between the different professionals in the field of social and vocational integration. This intranet greatly facilitates communication and mutual information between the partners involved. The possibility of Internet-supported communication between the Local Mission and the target groups is also particularly exemplary. Interested people can use an Internet-supported module for their own vocational choice.

Preventive approaches to the problems of adolescents

The Swedish educational system represents a good example within the field of prevention. It is particularly worth emphasizing the integration of vocational orientation, vocational choice and guidance into regular classes. In view of the low number of students in the classes, it is possible to provide an intensive support, which facilitates individual problem solutions for each case. Beyond that, there are individual support offers for young people, who refuse instruction or the school in resource centres. Another good example is the German Signal-Box project in Bad Kreuznach, which helps pupils who refuse to attend school to find their way back into the educational system or to explore alternative possibilities for a vocational integration.

Customised pathways to vocational integration

The Italian development partnership RESET includes orientation and guidance to job insertion in each vocational activity. The project has set the stage for customised pathways with a special focus on guidance, with a view to identifying career pathways that might be consistent with local conditions. A step by step development and the use of training vouchers, as well as tutoring activities, have encouraged a successful job insertion of the beneficiaries. The German development partnership follows a similar model of orientation and guidance with a special focus on preventive activities in school. The Spanish project has also based their interventions in the design and implementation of individualised pathways for every beneficiary, combining occupational training with complementary measures, and directed by the itineraries' coordinator.

Reaching adolescents in their own environment

Another good example is the offer for vocational orientation and guidance in the context of the open youth work. The offer of a German youth centre in Kirn is particularly interesting for those young people, who are not reached by the usual systems for the promotion of vocational integration. Particularly useful is the linkage of vocation-oriented and leisure-oriented offers for ethnic minorities who often refuse to visit public institutions.

A similar program was organised by the Spanish partner for youngsters in risk of exclusion, where they received professional training complemented by social-educational and family interventions, in conjunction with leisure activities, as an innovative offer for young people.

Training methodologies aimed at the targets

During the exchange of beneficiaries celebrated in Bologna, Italy, the Spanish partners had the opportunity of acquainting themselves with an innovative methodology of training in simulation. The students receive a training which is very close to the conditions of work in a real company, with the support of a network of simulated enterprises across Europe. The training process simulates the conditions of the labour world in a very realistic way. This improves their possibilities of insertion in the labour world, as well as consolidating this insertion.

Network-based approach

The networking and intercommunication of the Spanish Development Partnership with local partners was remarkable. The strong coordination made from the project, joining the efforts of entities such as NGOs, trade unions, training centres, economic agents and other organisations, led to the comprehensive integration of the key agents of the territory in the field of the social and labour insertion of the most disadvantaged collectives.

The Italian Development Partnership has operated at different levels, apart from the national partnership. A total of six networks were established in as many tested areas. A non-profit-organisation was responsible for the entire network of the Development Partnership, whereas local networks also involved enterprises, enterprise associations and public bodies including provincial and municipal authorities: all these stakeholders have successfully contributed to the initiatives taken to the benefit of target groups.

5.2. Import of modules of the partners into the national activities

Transfer of the simulated enterprise methodology

The Spanish partner, with the cooperation of the Italian partner, imported to its own Equal project the model of training in simulation. They got to know this innovative methodology in a target group exchange with Italy into the Equal activities. The results have been very positive, and the beneficiaries of this experimental activity have expressed their satisfaction about this training methodology, which is very different to the traditional activities developed in this field.

Thorough exchange between the organisations operating in different countries

No direct transfer of transnational results to the activities of the first round of Equal occurred in the case of the German partners. However the district Südwestpfalz is at present trying to integrate elements of the French Mission Locale into those offers which have to be rearranged for the vocational integration, within the reform of the German system for promoting unemployed persons.

5.3. Acquisition of knowledge by transnational cooperation

Similar approach in the activities aimed at target groups

All transnational partners, despite their different contexts and situations have similar ideas of what processes should be followed in an insertion itinerary. They all stress the importance of mobilisation, individual guidance and personal accompaniment, getting and staying in contact with enterprises and economic agents. The partners were able to acquaint themselves with different perspectives or variations, but always based on the same principles of action.

Operational information about the governmental structure and problem-solving

Germany is a federally organised country. The separation between the federal level, the level of the Länder and the municipalities entails a very strong division of responsibilities between the institutions. This situation is very similar in Spain. For this reason, it was most interesting to find out more about national structures and experiences where the institutional separation is less strict. Particularly, the bundling of resources in the French Local Mission and the very preventive approach in the Swedish school system are innovative ideas in this context.

In Italy a federal reform is about to be implemented, after which non-profit organisations will be given more clout in the provision of social services.

In Sweden, municipal authorities are responsible for most part of the services rendered to the community.

5.4. General experiences from transnational cooperation

Information and experience exchange

The partners agree that learning processes have been a pivotal aspect and result of transnational co-operation. On the basis of a profound open mindedness, there was a very strong willingness and eagerness to exchange information and experiences, to learn from each other, to accept and to adapt the different cultural aspects within the transnational co-operation and interest in the structures and activities of each member country and development partnership. The transnational exchange offered chances to widen the personal and professional perspectives of the participants. It also offered an opportunity to review opinions about transnational co-operation, that became a value in itself.

Use of special methodologies for achieving successful workshop results

The use of special methods like GOPP (goal-oriented project planning) for the transnational seminars was highly beneficial, even in a context where everybody spoke English as a foreign language. Eschewing long monologues and their usual subsequent questions and answers, and replacing them by methods which eased structuring and facilitated communication helped to respect and include the opinions of many participants.

Participation of direct beneficiaries in the exchanges

The successful results of the exchanges of beneficiaries which have taken place have been highly impressive. Making transnationality reach the most disadvantaged adolescents is a fruitful experience. The partners could see how the exchanges genuinely had an impact on the lives of those involved. Feeling that they receive something from society and that other people are in their same situation is a positive experience for these adolescents. The exchanges increased their self confidence and changed their ways of working with the advisors of the national development partnerships.

Exchange between strategic partners

Tasting the spirit of European integration means that many strategic partners had the opportunity to exchange their views with officeholders in similar positions from other European countries for the very first time. These partners learned something new about other European political and institutional frameworks, and they also got the opportunity to re-assess their national systems and their own institutional settings, in the framework of another country's system of promoting vocational integration. This helped some partners understand that they were going in the right direction with their national tools, and other partners to realise that they still had possibilities to improve tools and methods.

All in all, it was impressive to see all the difficulties posed by working and learning together in such a variety of contexts and realities from the beginning, and finding ways to work together and achieve excellent results in the end. There was a strong personal commitment on behalf of the transnational partners to offer the best conditions for formal and informal communication. Therefore, it is not surprising that strong relationships were established between partners from different European countries.

5.5. Key aspects of successful systems for the promotion of vocational integration

From the point of view of the transnational partners, the following points are essential characteristics of a successful system for the promotion of vocational integration for adolescents:

Unique points of information

Unique points of information are necessary to avoid the traditional dispersion of institutions and points of information, especially for disadvantaged adolescents. In general, many institutions and NGOs exist and provide information about options for the professional and vocational integration. Unfortunately, beneficiaries are not adequately informed about the possibilities for information. Institutions are able to provide information about their own specialised tasks, but not about offers from other actors. A unique point of information can offer different sets of information from one source. A good networking action among the existing information points at a local level (starting from a low level) can help in creating a unique point of information of this type.

Integral and resourceful services for all personal, social, sanitary, housing and vocational needs of adolescents

Disadvantaged young people often have more than one problem. Someone who loses their job is often unable to pay the rent for a flat any longer. Poor health conditions are often responsible for the loss of jobs. Different problems are consequently linked to each other. For this reason, it is essential to provide integral and resourceful services for all personal, social, sanitary, housing and vocational needs of adolescents. An ideal institution would be that which is able to offer one-stop solutions for a variety of problems. Such an institution is able not only to give individual assistance, but also to contribute to developing the local surrounding. Perhaps even more important for young people is to have a consultant who provides individual help to assist the individual pathways. The Italian experience of pilots in Leghorn and Reggio Calabria involving the welfare city structures is a good case study for this point.

The collaboration networks developed in the Spanish project with the key agents of the territory such as health services, social services, training centres, economic agents etc, is another example.

Special promoting institutions at an adolescent-only venue

Often young people dislike mixing with adults, and they prefer to stay within their own age group. Their needs and ways of communicating are different from those of elderly people. This is why institutions and locations which promote vocational and professional integration of adolescents should dedicate them special spaces. Young people need facilities where they feel comfortable and welcome.

Individual and tailored solutions for each beneficiary

As a result of very different backgrounds regarding personality, needs and problems, it is essential to offer individual and tailored solutions for each beneficiary. All transnational partners offer individualised pathways. A good example is provided by the Italian partners: the Italian tailor-made pathway comprises a detailed analysis of the situation, basic trainings, guidance, vocational training and job placement. This combination can meet concrete needs and offer sustainable solutions.

The Spanish project is also based on the design of individualised itineraries for each beneficiary, according to the integral needs of every person, offering not only professional training, but all kinds of personal support and guidance.

Good flows of communication and information among different institutions

As a result of different political systems, some European countries have the involvement of a large number of different institutions with different responsibilities and tasks regarding the vocational and professional integration of adolescents. An integral and resourceful service – as stressed in point (2) – is difficult to provide in such a situation. With respect to the lack of transparency and the complexity of existing relationships, it is essential to have a good flow of communication and information among these institutions. A general but also beneficiary-oriented communication has to take place to inform each institution involved about their respective politics and offers. This is necessary to help to identify interfaces and links between the different incentive measures on the one hand, and to facilitate the transfer of beneficiaries between the institutions on the other hand. The French intranet is a good technical starting point for improving communication and information. The Italian web site and its access to internal documents are playing the same role for the Italian Development Partnership.

The designation of a professional as the Social Mediator in the Spanish project, responsible for being in contact with all the key agents of the territory in the field of social and professional integration, is also a very good way of improving this flow of communication among different institutions.

Working in networks with key agents of the territory

A high number of institutions also accounts for the need to organise networks for the vocational integration. Local networks have to integrate all institutions and actors who can contribute to facilitate the vocational integration. Important actors on the operational level are for instance: job centres, social welfare offices, youth welfare offices, chambers of commerce and crafts, trade unions, secondary and vocational schools, as well as governmental or non-governmental organizations who are providing incentive measures for vocational integration. Local enterprises have to be integrated as much as possible. Local networks also need the participation and support of representatives of the local government to ensure a sustainable financial and political support. Another integral element is a well qualified and respected co-ordinator who is able to motivate participants, to identify necessities and possibilities of co-operation, to ensure mutual information and to organise workflows within the network.

Integration of job-related information and activities in secondary schools

Secondary schools offer a general education for adolescents. Strengthening the integration of explicitly job-related information and activities in schools seems to be positive. Schools should have a growing interest for the vocational preparation of adolescents, in order to help pupils get the best possible school education, and to ease overcoming the threshold between the education system and the world of employment. An integration of job-related information and activities in secondary schools already exists within the Swedish school system and is becoming evermore for German secondary schools, for instance. The collaboration with secondary schools characterised the Italian local pilot projects.

Social- and vocational-oriented guidance in secondary schools

Even though school might offer job-related information and activities, a non-marginal group of pupils is not able to master the step from school to vocational education on their own. These pupils can already be

identified within school. A social- and vocational-oriented guidance is able to assist those pupils to identify individual strengths and to develop individual perspectives and pathways for vocational integration. The German Development Partnership offers good examples for such a type of guidance in schools.

Scouting activities and street-working to contact adolescents who refuse to visit facilities

A significant amount of adolescents are dropping out of the general system of vocational promotion. Even if they have to do without financial support of supplementary benefits, they refuse or at least hesitate to get in contact with job centres or social welfare offices. The challenges entailed by visiting public institutions to seek for assistance sometimes seem too hard for youngsters. Social workers visiting locations where adolescents hang out are good examples of overcoming the barrier of contacting the world of employment. Such activities can give the beneficiaries confidence in the necessity and the adequacy of assistance. They can pave the way back to institutional systems of vocational promotion.

Low thresholds for adolescents to get in contact with promoting institutions

Another different way of contacting adolescents who refuse to visit public institutions is through leisure-oriented activities. Activities like mountain-climbing or workshops for artistic activities are not only good for having fun but also for identifying personal strengths and for training abilities for teamwork. A careful and sensitive addition of vocational-oriented activities to leisure-oriented activities can make adolescents aware of the fact that they are responsible for developing job-related activities.

Along the same lines, one of axes of the French Equal project is to find new ways of mobilising young people who are not ready to get involved in working out their integration pathways. During the last two years, more than 250 French youngsters were involved in creative activities which aim to make them more confident in their own abilities. French professionals check that these news tools have a real impact and contribute to developing a new relationship with disadvantaged youngsters, or at least, to getting in touch with them.

The same idea was put into practice by the Spanish partner in the Youth Centre Project. Professional training was complemented with sports, leisure and cultural activities.

Manifold and adaptable personal, social, methodological and professional competences of advisors and trainers

The success of actions and assistance is absolutely dependant on the competences of advisors and trainers. An advisor who continuously ignores the wishes of beneficiaries, who is unable to help the beneficiaries to find appropriate individual solutions for existing problems or who is unable to support the best career path cannot be successful. In order to achieve the ambitious objectives of the vocational promotion of adolescents, advisors and trainers need manifold personal, social, methodological and professional competences. Among many other aspects, they must be aware of their own abilities and limits, they must be able to communicate with adolescents, to know and to apply a variety of tools and methods, and they have to be able to co-ordinate social and institutional networks. These requirements do not always imply a university degree, but rather open mindedness, eagerness and willingness to assist people in lifelong learning. Aside from the individual requirements of consultants, an individual pathway requires different knowledge and competences. The Spanish partners are working with multidisciplinary teams of consultants and trainers of diverse professions in order to fulfil the various needs of beneficiaries.

The Italian Development Partnership RESET created two innovative and specific professional profiles: the Network Tutor and the Pathway Tutor, whose contribution was essential to guarantee the effectiveness and the efficacy of the work carried out, as well as the thorough exploitation of skills and competences, which should not only be done as it is imposed by the network.

6. Effective transnational cooperation methods

As a means of support to the work carried out in the context of the project and the experience acquired within the transnational partnership “European Pathway to the future”, the partners are in a position to highlight a number of methods which make it possible to carry out effective transnational co-operation.

These can be perceived through 4 dimensions:

- Project construction
- Management
- Assessment
- Transnational cooperation tools.

Distinguishing the success factors of a transnational partnership re-poses some of the initial questions which the players were encouraged to ask themselves at the start of the project:

- Why transnational co-operation? What does one hope to achieve?
- What are the activities to be defined?
- Who are these actions actions to be shared and carried out with?
- What resources are required?

Thus, the co-ordinators from the 5 transnational partnership member countries set out to provide well-constructed, operational answers that would be relevant, despite the differences in context, to the issues encountered by each country in the sphere of vocational integration of young people in difficulty.

6.1. Construction of the project

The success of the transnational co-operation results largely from the work carried out at the start of the project, which was devoted to establishing the framework for the transnational partnership.

In addition to the construction itself, the management of the project and the co-operation also make it possible to distinguish the methods used. The organisation of this partnership was further facilitated by the fact that a common, formalised and shared threshold for transnationality was defined.

Shared objectives

In order to be effective, the objectives of transnational actions must be clearly specified. Presented from an operational viewpoint for each transnational activity (seminars, bilateral exchanges, website), these objectives contribute to the definition of an action schedule.

The drawing up of the methods for the transnational co-operation was based on attentive understanding and in-depth analysis of the expectations expressed by each transnational player. The support of the partners for shared objectives and common actions was essential to the project. The joint preparation of tools which enable the partners to come together around common actions (seminars) and of tools that enable individualised answers to the partners' expectations to be prepared (bilateral exchanges), is a qualitative component of the project. The items for analysis of the needs expressed by the partners were dealt with so that a plan of action could emerge.

Common targets

The transnational partners reached an agreement on the definition of common targets; that is, who was to benefit from the transnational actions, and also on the operation levels. Thus, three main categories of beneficiaries were targeted: the operational players of the co-directing facilities, the strategic players and disadvantaged young people. In fact, a fourth beneficiary level can also be distinguished, that of the transnational co-ordinators involved in each of the 5 member countries.

The partners thus conducted a whole reflection prior to the contractualisation of the transnational cooperation agreement, which was decisive in the success of the transnational project. They were motivated by the constant concern to ask themselves the right questions and find appropriate answers between them. The explanation of the levels of beneficiaries of the transnational activities reveals the partners' concern to link the public to this project. It reveals a strong will to consider transnational co-operation not only as a fact which cannot be ignored, but also as a complementary tool for producing positive, induced or manifest effects on national projects.

The action plan

Without an action plan to define the mobilised organisation means, transnational cooperation cannot be managed.

Effective transnational cooperation is organised around:

- The function of coordination between the partners, the keystone of cooperation
- The mobilisation of the players
- The definition of transnationality support tools.

6.2. Managing the Project

Co-ordination

This function plays a predominant and driving role in managing the project.

Having a good leader and a high-performance team of co-ordinators is a support point that makes it possible to:

- Run the project and carry out the activities properly: regulation, adjustment, preservation of coherence
- Create and encourage the link between the players
- Ensure that Equal principles are observed.

These coordinators played an active role in the involvement of the operational players participating in the project, by creating the conditions for the partners to feel at ease and take on responsibilities.

Mobilisation

The mobilisation of the partners in the implementation of co-operation is a key success factor. It is expressed both from the viewpoint of organisation of the partnership and from that of carrying out the activities.

This involvement is only possible if everybody is considered equal and if great respect is established among the partners.

The partners must be in a position to develop the ability to work, analyse and put things in perspective, which is necessary if real project dynamics are to be initiated and consolidated.

The role of the co-ordinators is decisive to encourage active involvement of the partners. Mobilisation responds to impulses such as the need to question oneself regarding one's own professional practices. The keys to the mobilisation of the partners must be worked out in order to build effective transnational co-operation.

Considerable prior preparation of each partner during seminars and exchanges is required, together with effective organisation and support by the host country.

To lead a transnational partnership action also entails the players' being able to explain what transnational cooperation is on national level. Therefore, developing partnerships with impassioned people, whose interest is aroused by the subject matter and quality of the project, makes it easier for the transnational partnership to be properly managed. Sharing centres of interest, issues and reflections as regards values and practices is very positive for cooperation.

It is important for the success of the project to work on a common issue. The work themes that are established must therefore be appropriate for sharing by all the partners. The strategic and operational players are brought together around common actions and are given a specific, complementary role. This organisation element structures and reinforces the common work that is made effective by the formation of task forces which deal with specific issues.

The question of the choice of a common language makes it possible to structure the exchanges and facilitate communication. In the context of the "European Pathways to the Future" partnership, the common working language was not the native language of any of the partners, which brought them together around a "common effort", and in some cases reinforced links that were useful in constructing a common transnational identity.

Understanding each partner's social-cultural context facilitates exchange, beyond being simply proficient in the language.

6.3. Assessment

The setting up of an assessment device is a part of the method that makes it possible to establish the conditions conducive to implementing effective co-operation.

The assessment device, which is a support to the monitoring and regulation of the co-operation project, aims to measure:

- The results of the co-operation on a European level, with regard to the knowledge and skills acquired, in particular on the situation of the other countries, in the sphere of social and vocational integration
- The modification of practices, the results and impacts of co-operation on all the partners
- The knowledge transferred, the creation of output.

Assessment during the project makes it possible to:

- Re-focus the objectives; it creates stage points and emphasizes programming
- Synthesise the co-operation for the political players
- Bring together the good practices developed in each country.

6.4. Transnational cooperation tools

The “European Pathways to the Future” transnational co-operation was constructed around 3 clear stages, which are:

- Seminars
- Bilateral exchanges
- The website.

These transnationality tools were devised and structured to enable the co-operation project to be implemented among the partners, and to fulfil the objectives broadly outlined in the transnational co-operation partnership agreement. The implementation of these objectives entails obtaining resources for preparing meetings, for organisation and for reporting back.

The organisation rules for these tools must take into consideration the system of constraints inherent to the transnational nature of the activities: travel, language and differences in a social-political context and environment. Therefore, the duration of the meetings should be determined in terms of the objectives established in the context of the progress made regarding the issues at hand.

The existence of a hard core of strategic and operational players mobilised throughout the co-operation reinforces the effectiveness of these tools.

In order to avoid transnationality being a simple accessory to a national Equal project, it is necessary to establish a schema of the progression between the different meetings organised and to enable the results produced by these exchanges to be capitalised. The involvement of a hard core of players is therefore a means of fulfilling these objectives.

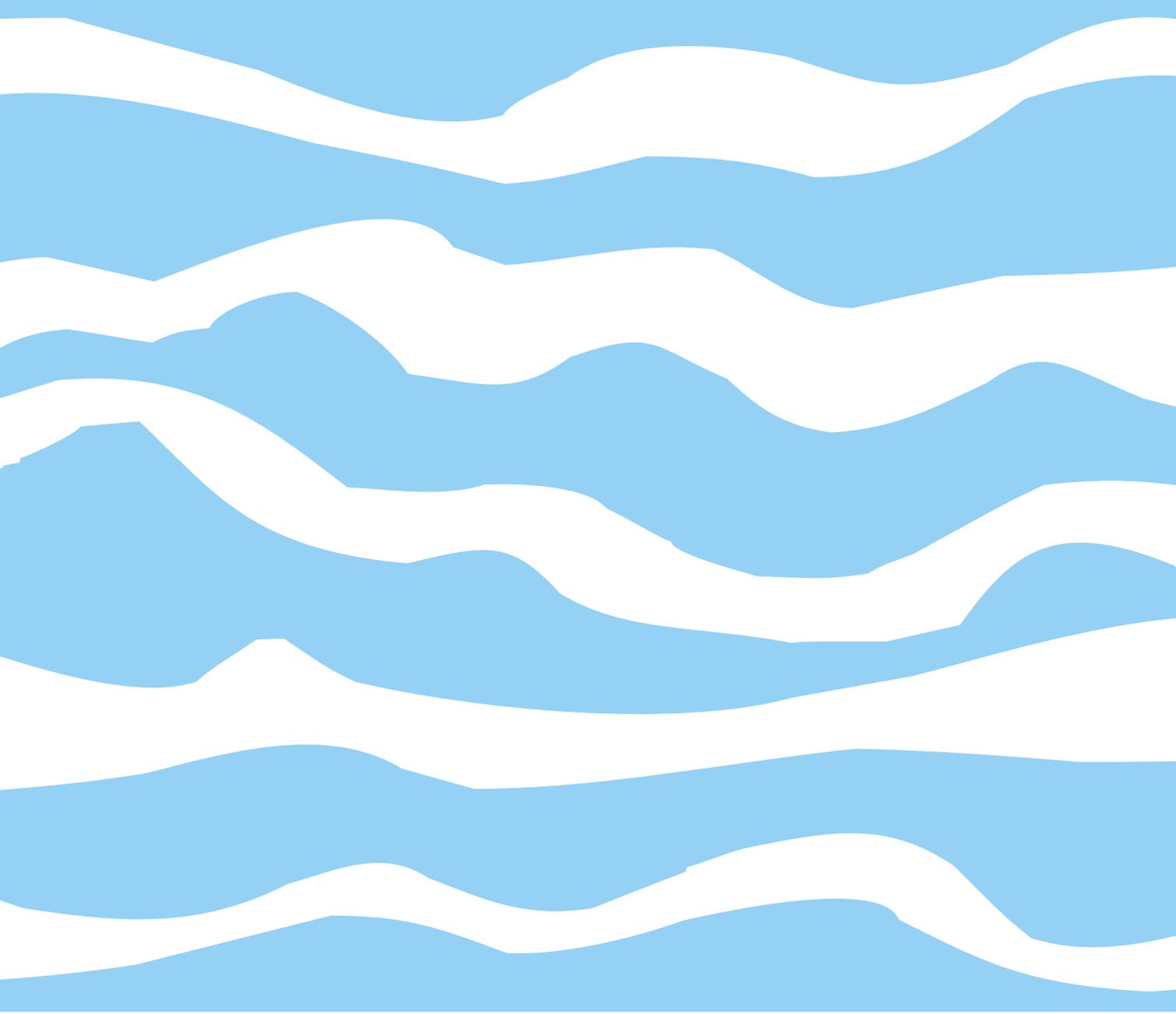
It is advisable for these tools to act in a complementary fashion. Bilateral exchanges among beneficiaries enable more individualised actions to be constructed, in response to the expectations expressed by each partner. It gives rise to restricted group work, which is conducive to going into greater depth on the issues being addressed.

Seminars and bilateral exchanges have facilitated the knowledge of the work and methodologies developed in each territory, which has been the basis for the adoption of new methodological approaches.

The use of information and communication technologies is an asset in managing the transnational cooperation project. The existence of a common website for all the partners is a tool that brings people together and helps construct a shared identity around the co-operation project. Its contribution to the effectiveness of transnational cooperation involves establishing it as an obligatory stopping place for information retrieval.

The transnationality tools were designed to encourage the development of common actions around a shared theme and for their positive impact on each of the national projects. Capitalisation on each meeting is therefore decisive. The drafting of a common synthesis document recalling the contexts and the nature of the stakes of the issues dealt with for each country is a reference tool to be promoted throughout the project.

In the end, transnational co-operation can only be effective if it enables good practices to be spread on the level of each of the national components of the transnational partnership, and new common actions to be developed among partners.



European Pathway to the Future