I - MoToLe

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Introduction

I-MoToLe is an Erasmus+ project which aims to develop the **intrinsic motivation to learn** of **adults** who are **at risk of social exclusion**.
In this respect the 'I' (of I-MoToLe) stands for:

→ I for intrinsic motivation
→ I for innovation
→ I as a learner, motivated to learn
→ I as an educator, motivated to motivate my adult learners to learn

Adult education for this section of the population is indeed struggling with **high drop-out rates**. In our first output Needs Analysis & Analysis of Good Practice (*Intellectual Output 1*; further referred to as 'IO1'), we found an average drop-out rate of 36.3% within the organisations involved in the project. Research shows that these rates can be countered by a heightened intrinsic motivation to learn, thus promoting social integration and socio-economic (upward) mobility.

The project was submitted and is being executed by seven **partner organisations**, all concerned with educational work with adults at risk of social inclusion:

ANI-International	France
CEPA Los Llanos	Spain
Agrupamento de Escolas 2 de Beja	Portugal
CVO LBC-NVK Sint-Niklaas	Belgium
Merseyside Expanding Horizons	UK
Inspira Plus	Macedonia
Kulturskolan/Stockholm School of the Arts	Sweden

Within this commonality, the partner organisations involved hold different positions:

♦ Some of them offer **formal**, others offer **non-formal education**. Indeed, the **courses offered** include language courses for foreigners, vocational courses, courses in basic competences and second chance secondary education, artistic, social and community learning, and training courses in coaching and life skills.

♦ The diversity of the partner organisations is also reflected in the **target groups** they reach: immigrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, inmates, vulnerable ethnicities like Roma, young adults living in socio-economic disadvantaged neighbourhoods, etc.

Some preliminary notes to the recommendations

After gathering the drop-out rates within the partner organisations, and analysing them in our first output **Needs Analysis & Analysis of Good Practice** (or Output 1, O1), we developed **a Training Package for Educators in Adult Education** which helps them foster the intrinsic motivation in their learners (or Output 2, O2).

Our validation **Portfolio** (or Output 3, O3) was concerned with using portfolio, not only as a means to enhance the learners' intrinsic motivation, but also to validate their competences. The activities developed for O3 have been extensively tested by adult learners during a week-long training activity (C2) at Beja, Portugal.

It is this trajectory, from O1 to O2 and O3, which has brought us to the formulation of the present output **Recommendations to Policy Makers** (or Output 4, IO4*).*

Although we are aware that the theme of our project, i.e. the intrinsic motivation of adult learners, is (already) on the agenda of some policy makers and institutions, we want to stress that the recommendations herewith proposed are fuelled by our extensive experiences with adult learners as adult educators and adult educational institutions. They can thus be considered as **guidelines from the bottom up.**

Not all recommendations listed might be valid (any longer) for your national, regional, or local situation. Inevitably, some or many of these may indeed already be being implemented in different member states with differing levels of success. Nevertheless, the list reflects the diversity of the partner organisations and therefore includes all our recommendations. It is moreover inspired by the best practices we have found in the policy contexts of our partners.

Some of the recommendations might at first sight seem not to hold a strong connection to the overall project idea of intrinsic motivation to learn. This is, firstly, due to the fact that they concern **the policy level** of education. IO2 and IO3 addressed respectively the educators and learners. The recommendations hint at problems which can't be solved by the educators nor by the educational institutions themselves. They are one step beyond the day-to-day practice of adult educators.

We have based on our own experiences and the literature on intrinsic motivation, including **all factors which impact the intrinsic motivation to learn, directly and indirectly**. One of the theoretical frameworks we have used to understand intrinsic motivation in our second Intellectual Output (IO2), is Self-Determination Theory (SDT). Research found (and finds) how 'autonomy', 'belongingness', and 'competence' are key to the quality of motivation of humans.

Motivated learners need motivated educators.
The recommendations take both actors into consideration.

Recommendations

1. AUTONOMY

a. Open curricula

Curricula shouldn't be overloaded with compulsory content provided by external sources. It stifles **self-initiative, creativity and interaction in the classroom**. It disregards the expertise and need for autonomy of the educator, and the participation of the adult learners in curricula design.

b. Trusting the teacher

Educators crave for **less paper work and administration**, so that they have more time to focus their efforts on improving the intrinsic motivation of their adult learners.

2. COMPETENCE

a. Time for the teacher

The time educators need for planning lessons, **developing learning content which is optimally challenging** should be explicitly valued. Sufficient time for planning proportional to their teaching hours should be provided to educators.

Active and creative teaching methods are paramount. Mentoring this intensively is time-consuming and demanding, but also rewarding. In order to be able to foster interaction between the educator and the adult learner, **small(er) classes** are a must.

Cutting down course length to minimum levels instead of allowing ample time to deliver such contents in an effective and flexible way stifles the inspiration which is crucial to the educator's job. There should be made explicit place (and time) for **sharing experiences amongst educators**.

b. Life-long learning (for the teacher too)

Best practices regarding educational systems and life-long learning should be shared and made accessible.

Educators should be trained to foster intrinsic motivation in their learners. Activities, like the ones developed for I-MoToLe, should be made widely available to them.

They should be appointed **a mentor**, i.e. an educator with years of experience and/or with the necessary training, to whom they can turn during their teaching career in case they want to get non-judgemental feedback about a certain issue they are faced with.

c. Andragogy in teacher training

Andragogy should be integrated in teacher training, since adults learn differently to children. They are more prone to fear of failing, therefore are less willing to take risks, explore, experiment, all of which can inhibit the learning process.

3. INFRASTRUCTURE

a. Accessibility of learning

The distance travelled by the learner should be taken into account. **Learning should be brought to the marginal adult learner** wherever possible.

The location of the training is an important element for the regular attendance of participants. It is recommended to **target the structures next to the training location** when the training is aimed at an unmotivated audience.

Vulnerable adult learners often depend on social welfare to varying extents. This reduces their opportunity for self-determination. They are in our experience quite abruptly moved around. This not only cuts the ties they have built up with difficulty, but also interrupts their education, with the result that they have to start all over again in a new place. We therefore plead for **the greatest possible stability** that can be offered to adult learners whose life is already lacking exactly this, indeed to a degree which makes learning especially hard. We should do everything in our power to reduce the problematic uncertainty in which vulnerable adult learners are living.

b. Digital infrastructure

Sufficient investment is needed in **digital tools and equipment** which enhance autonomy in learning. Adult learners should be offered channels for developing their digital literacy, and stimulating their self-learning potentialities.

For the adult learners, the **distance learning** which is made possible by this digital infrastructure, permits them to have a learning time schedule which allows them compatibility with their family and other professional needs.

4. SYNERGIES

a. Making school attendance possible

At the moment, adult learners are forced to choose between attending training courses or official appointments such as those of the unemployment agency, which means they put either social and economic situation or their education at risk. Others are urged to suspend or quit their education because of the requirements of certain institutions with

which they have to comply. In many cases, education and qualification is not valued by employers, and the two are incompatible.

A better synergy between institutions is a must, so that school attendance is made possible.

In this respect, **issues of diversity** should also be explicitly taken into consideration. Policy makers should be attentive to the fact that people, regardless of disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or gender get the chance to attend school without suffering prejudice. Reality shows that organised child care, awareness raising, and non-discrimination regulations can be important conditions for this.

b. Meaningful contents and curricula

Adult learners need **meaningful contents and curricula**. Synergies between different institutions can offer exactly that. It is, for instance, interesting to integrate language courses in vocational or recreational courses or on the job training. Educators can fulfill their role as a coach fully there.

5. ASSESSMENT

a. Product versus process assessment

Traditional (written) exams do little to motivate adult learners and don't always reflect everything that learners have learnt during a training course. Instead of resorting to the tick box or the drop down list, **the individual journey of the adult learner** should be taken into account, using assessment tools which respond to **the diversity of the learners**.

Key competences and qualifications should be validated, and **portfolio, self and peer assessment regarded as true assessment tools** to evaluate skills and competences. In our experience, and as a direct result of our piloting of IO3, portfolios which show adult learners' achievements in a personal manner, implicating learners in their own self-evaluation, are motivational. They serve as a personal record of all the progress done and learners have a constant piloting of the final goals. Portfolios help them value what they know and can do, enhance self-esteem and increase their desire to persevere.

b. Acknowledging the learning in non-formal education

In non-formal education, there is a need for formal recognition of what is learnt, thus guaranteeing **a greater permeability of non-formal and formal adult education**.

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