



eur-alpha

Newsletter

1 – December 2010

Hello.

We are happy to introduce to you the first newsletter of **Eur-Alpha**, the *Literacy and numeracy European network*. This first release gives us the opportunity to wish you all a fruitful year 2011 in the adult literacy and numeracy sector of your country.

Founded 15 months ago, Eur-Alpha aims to promote exchanges between field workers by disseminating literacy and numeracy practices facilitating learners self-determination and participation.

This quarterly newsletter was set up to fulfil this goal. It is mainly directed towards actors of the literacy and numeracy sector in the regions and countries of Europe: trainers, learners, manager of literacy organization, researchers and decision-makers.

This first issue is dedicated to a general presentation of the network, its objectives, its actions, its structure and an account of the accomplishments in 2010, works in progress and upcoming events.

In the future, the newsletter will be made up of practical information presented by people or organizations active in the different countries and regions of Europe: literacy practices, announcements and reports of activities, presentation of organizations and publications,...

The letter will be published in two versions (English and French) but some articles might be written in other languages; pictures, illustrations and short videos could be added as well as links to interesting web sites. A printable version is available on www.eur-alpha.eu/spip.php?article73 as a PDF file.

We cordially invite you to subscribe and to disseminate this newsletter as widely as possible.

Enjoy the reading.

The editorial staff

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www.eur-alpha.eu/spip.php?article73

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www.eur-alpha.eu and fill in the form on the left of the home page. You can choose to receive
this newsletter in English, in French or both.

Presentation of the network

Eur-Alpha is a **European network of exchanges between literacy and numeracy practitioners**: learners, trainers, researchers and policymakers. It was founded in 2009 and currently counts 15 partners managing the project coming from 11 different countries.

Eur-Alpha decided to insert an international symbol of literacy – the reading man – into a logo that represents the cooperation, diversity and exchanges this network wishes to develop.



Aims and goals

The Eur-Alpha network aims to **support and develop best quality practice in literacy and numeracy in Europe**.

By literacy, we mean the acquisition of basic knowledge necessary to develop active citizen participation, by adults who have never received schooling or by adults who, despite several years of schooling, cannot read or write, and understand, in whatever language, a simple text related to their everyday life.

For the members of the network, the development of adult literacy and basic training is essential in building a European society of knowledge. Therefore, they wished to create a structure where trainers and learners can meet each other, exchange and train themselves.

Eur-Alpha attaches much importance to the learners position and voice in the processes, organisation and purpose of the training. It is indeed fundamental that

people wishing to have access to quality literacy - that considers their needs and is based on their active participation - should be allowed to do so nearby their home.

That is why the network actions aim to

- improve the educational practices facilitating learners self-determination, citizenship and participation;
- develop and support the learners voicing of opinions and participation.

Actions

Eur-Alpha thus organised itself to

- collect, develop and disseminate practices that meet those goals of self-determination, voicing of opinion and participation of the learners;
- allow the learners on one hand and the trainers on the other hand to meet and to exchange.

The network implemented four initiatives:

- **presentation of good practices** regarding trainers training and learners participation: a lot of initiatives are taken by trainers, learners groups or literacy organization to improve the quality of training. To be able to share and present those good practices in an accessible way to other actors of the literacy and numeracy sector in Europe, a presentation sheet was set up. The good practices thus collected will be presented during the workshops and published on the website.
- **training workshops:** Both trainers and learners are invited to a training workshop every year. Trainers come to familiarise themselves with innovative educational practices facilitating learners self-determination and enrich their daily practices. Learners are pushed to become actors of their training, express their opinions, debate their status in today's society, learn the role they could play as citizens at the national and European levels and, above all, raise awareness of illiteracy and its consequences (see *Accomplishments*).

Those workshops are spaces of vivid teamwork among the actors of the literacy and numeracy sector, especially among the learners. This is an essential feature because people struggling with writing and reading are, in most cases, not familiar with international meetings and face many obstacles regarding their mobility.

- **a website:** for the network, the website www.eur-alpha.eu is a central space to communicate. It is currently under construction. It was created with two target audiences in mind. First, the mass audience, interested by literacy but not necessarily expert, who would learn more about Eur-Alpha and its actions. People could also discover a partner active in their country.

Second, actors of the literacy and numeracy sector in Europe, who will find good practices and pedagogical and reflective documents, useful for their daily actions. It will be also possible to find factual information such as dates of future workshops and the way to sign up, training opportunities in other countries, etc.

Available in the two main languages of the network (English and French), we will also publish documents in the original language and information presented in such a way that they are available to people struggling with writing and reading.

This site ambitions to become an exchanges platform among the literacy actors in Europe.

- **a quarterly newsletter** to present collected good practices, announce and report on activities organized by the network and every actors of literacy in the regions and countries of Europe and by doing so, create links among them.

In 2012, a conference will conclude Eur-Alpha first period of activity. Results will be published and disseminated. Projects will be implemented to turn Eur-Alpha into something durable.

Financing

Eur-Alpha is financed up to 54% of its budget by a European grant for a period of 3 years (October 2009 – September 2012). This grant covers the functioning costs of the network and the publishing costs of the results. The partners managing the project bring their contribution by taking charge of some organisational tasks and/or hosting a meeting.

The training workshops are financed by specific grants and the contribution of participants.

The partners managing the project

- **ACEFIR** – Associació Catalana per a l'Educació, la Formació i la Recerca (Catalonia – Spain) – www.acefir.org
- **AÇEV** – Anne Çocuk Eğitim Vakfı (Turkey) – www.acev.org
- **AEFTI** – Fédération nationale des Associations d'enseignement et de formation pour les travailleurs immigrés et leurs familles (France) – www.aefti.fr
- **ANOP** – Associação Nacional de Oficinas de Projectos (Portugal) – www.anop.eu
- **CAEA** – Cyprus Adult Education Association [Συνδεσμος Εκπαιδευσης Ενηλικων Κυπρου] (Cyprus)
- **CFAES Georges Rapon** – Cercle de Formation et d'Action en Économie sociale "Georges Rapon" (Guyana – France)
- **DIE** – Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung e.V. (Germany) – www.die-bonn.de
- **FACEPA** – Federació d'Associacions Culturals i Educatives de Persones Adultes (Catalonia – Spain) – www.facepa.org
- **Fédération Suisse Lire et Ecrire** (Swiss Confederation) – www.lesen-schreibenschweiz.ch
- **Lire et Ecrire Communauté française asbl** (Belgium) (*Coordination of the Eur-Alpha network*) – www.lire-et-ecrire.be
- **LTS** – Learning and Teaching Scotland (Scotland – United Kingdom) – www.ltscotland.org.uk
- **Queen's University of Belfast**, School of Education (Northern Ireland – United Kingdom) – www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofEducation
- **UIL** – Unesco Institute for Lifelong Learning (Germany) – www.uil.unesco.org
- **UOM** – University of Macedonia [Πανεπιστήμιο Μακεδονίας] (Greece) – www.uom.gr
- **WIT** – Waterford Institute of Technology (Ireland) – www2.wit.ie/SchoolsDepartments/SchoolofEducation/literacydevelopmentcentre

On a general level, the partners commit themselves to bring life to the network by taking part in the actions and works from the project. Furthermore, each partner is encouraged to take responsibility for some specific tasks. Coordinate a scientific Committee, host an activity in his country, write a report of one activity or coordinate a publication are examples among others.

Every partner also commits itself to participate to the Consortium meetings and to send participants to the scientific committees and the workshops. They assume a role of intermediary between Eur-Alpha and the literacy/numeracy sector of their country by disseminating information regarding Eur-Alpha workshops and reflection documents to the field workers, by collecting and translating good practices and by transmitting information relating to the literacy and numeracy sector in their country.

Structure of the network

The network is organised in three working groups

- The **partners Consortium**, led by Lire et Ecrire Communauté française, gathers all the partners managing the network and is responsible for
 - the management of the network activities, the preparation and evaluation of the workshops, the selection of the subjects of interest;
 - the network orientations, the follow-up of its evolution and the preparation of the future.
- The **scientific Committee *Learners Participation***, mainly made up of learners and led by FACEPA, has the responsibility to
 - collect good practices developed in Europe to promote learners voicing of opinion and participation;
 - pay attention to the editing of those practices so that they stay understandable for people struggling with writing and reading (intelligibility, accessibility, language, use of visual and oral forms)
 - make sure that the good practices are disseminated towards actors of the literacy and numeracy sector, with a focus on learners and that they are put in practice, notably during Eur-Alpha workshops;
 - collect addresses and telephone numbers of active learners groups and information about learners meetings; promote the participating of learners from other countries to those meetings.
- The **scientific Committee *Trainers Training***, mainly made up of trainers and led by AEFTI, has the responsibility to
 - collect good practices developed in Europe to promote learners self-determination, voicing of opinion and participation;
 - pay attention to the editing of those practices (intelligibility, language,...) and make sure that they are disseminated towards actors of the literacy and numeracy sector, with a focus on trainers;

- make sure that they are put in practice, notably during Eur-Alpha workshops;
- collect and disseminate information about training opportunities in Europe dedicated to those practices and promote the participation of trainers from other countries.

Lire et Ecire secretariat takes charge of the coordination and daily management of the network. The offices are based in Brussels, Belgium.

Accomplishments

Since October 2009, in addition to Consortium and scientific Committee meetings, the network organised two workshops, one for learners and one for trainers.

The learners workshop (April 2010)

“Literacy, let’s speak about it!” – Namur, Belgium.

Despite the language barriers, the cultural differences and the expected shyness, the first learners workshop was a huge success. By means of the Reflect Action methodology¹ or through writing and graphic expression, 27 participants from 8 European countries shared, among other things, their personal journey in literacy and numeracy and their vision of Europe. They also discovered the objectives of the Eur-Alpha network and had the incredible opportunity to meet 4 members of the European Parliament to present their claims to them. This week was an amazing way of experiencing first hand what Eur-Alpha is all about.



Learn more about the Namur workshop (EN-FR-SP):

www.eur-alpha.eu/spip.php?article65

The trainers workshop (September 2010)

“Reflective practice and technology enhanced learning (TEL) in adult literacy and numeracy.” – Belfast, Northern Ireland, UK.

Trainers discussed reflective practice and the possibility of extending the traditional models to include more creative approaches. Through interactive workshops and a study visit, they experienced how to integrate reflective practices into new technologies.



Learn more about the Belfast workshop (EN-FR):

www.eur-alpha.eu/spip.php?rubrique38

¹ Process that aims at the participation of all, literate and illiterate, to democratic life, to speak and stand. Each is enabled to communicate and to analyse the power relationships.

Work in progress...

- The **Trainers Training scientific Committee** wrote a reference document and is now collecting educational practices facilitating learners self-determination, citizenship and participation. The Committee is also collecting information about the way the trainers training is organized by each partner. It supports the preparation of coming trainers workshops.
- The **Learners Participation scientific Committee** is launching a participative process with local groups of learners in Europe in order to write a learners charter: "Manifesto". The Committee is also collecting good practices facilitating learners participation and voicing of opinion and supporting the preparation of coming learners workshops.
- The **partners Consortium** takes care of the orientation and organization of the network activities. He approves the projects of future activities and evaluates their carrying out; he manages the follow-up of the network (the functioning and sharing out of tasks for instance) and decides the allocation of the budget. The Consortium is currently working to set up a network of information spreaders in the different regions and countries of Europe. The welcoming of new members and the possibility of various ways of participation are under discussion. The consortium is collecting a detailed presentation of each partner to understand the literacy/numeracy field in the other countries and the target audience of each association (soon on the website).

Upcoming events

A second **Trainers workshop** will be hosted by AEFTI, in 2011 in Mâcon (France).

A second **Learners workshop** will be organized by FACEPA, in 2011 in Barcelona (Spain).

How to get involved in Eur-Alpha

According to your interests and the structure of your organization, several levels of participation are already possible.

- **Establish connections** between Eur-Alpha and the literacy/numeracy sector of your country:
 - *Disseminate Eur-Alpha-related information* to your contacts and the literacy actors in your country. It will be mostly made of information concerning dates and inscription to the workshops, pedagogical or reflection documents written by Eur-Alpha. This newsletter is a privileged way to transmit information. You can send it by email or print the PDF version available on the website.

- *Transmit information to Eur-Alpha* concerning the literacy/numeracy sector of your country. It might be announcement regarding local, regional or national events; training sessions opened to participants from other countries or good practices and reflection document that you want to share.
- **Take part in Eur-Alpha work** through the internet, for instance:
 - *Lead a learners group* willing to get involved in the writing of the Manifesto
 - *Present a good practice* in relation with learners participation or trainers training.
 - *Translate a document* in you language or to French or to English
- **Participate in Eur-Alpha workshops** and/or arouse the interest of learners and trainers from your country in participating in those workshops.
- **Become an associated member:** associated members commit themselves to cooperate within Eur-Alpha. This commitment could take different shapes, that have to be formalised by the current members. It could be, for instance, become an information spreader, participate in the workshops, collect good practices and translate them. The status of associated member must be submitted to the Consortium approval and is governed by an agreement between the applicant and the coordinator of the network (Lire et Ecrire Communauté française).

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Lifelong Learning Programme



Education and Culture DG

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Éditeur responsable (*Responsible editor*): Catherine Stercq – rue Charles VI, 12 – 1210 Bruxelles