

**External Evaluation - ACTVISE:**

**Forum Theatre – Actvise** LLP-LdV-ToI-2010/DK-1001

**Interim Report**

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**Report Summary**

This is an Interim Evaluation Report of ACTVISE - a multilateral project, funded by the European Commission under the Lifelong Learning budget, in the Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation sub programme, designed to help to spread the most promising new developments. The project runs from October 2010 to September 2012.

The report is informed by a review of a range of documentation and also draws on three evaluation reports of the ACTVISE Project – Meeting 1 – November 2010; Pilot testing March 2011 and Meeting 2 – May 2011.

*Documentation and materials reviewed include:*

* Background material, including the original application
* Written materials, including minutes of all meetings, materials developed, publicity materials, project newsletter, articles written by partners
* The web site URL for quality, completeness and usefulness[[1]](#footnote-1).
* Monitoring data collected to date
* The partnership Gantt chart for evidence of partnership activity and project progression

The report contains conclusions covering the partnership, management, innovation, transnationality, deliverables, dissemination and valorisation and concludes with a number of recommendations in three specific areas: Website access and navigation; Cultural activities and Dissemination. These are summarised below:

## Website access and navigation

A review of the website is undertaken with a view to improving accessibility.

## Cultural activities

Future partnership meetings to include specifically allocated time in the agreed schedules for cultural activities.

## Dissemination

Extending the ongoing dissemination with interested parties from eastern and / or southern Europe; ensure that all published material is fully branded.

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**Annexe 2 Summary of partners’ use of social networking sites**

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# 1. Introduction, context and methodology

## 

## 1.1 Interim report aims

* A formative evaluation providing an external and objective perspective on the achievements of the project to date, with a view to informing future activities.
* This report will form the basis for a summative evaluation to take place during the last three months of the project.

## 1.2 Background to the ACTVISE project

* A multilateral project, funded by the European Commission under the Lifelong Learning budget, in the Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation sub programme, designed to help to spread the most promising new developments.
* The project runs from October 2010 to September 2012.
* The total cost of the project over 2 years is 383,515 euro of which the European Commission is contributing 249,052 euro.

## 1.3. ACTVISE aims

* To adapt the Forum Theatre (FT) (Theatre of the Oppressed) methodology and materials developed under the Minerva project, with a view to developing counselling and teaching methods that motivate pupils to acquire the skills to learn.
* To improve the skills of career and guidance counsellors and teachers at both primary schools and secondary/vocational education institutions.
* To contribute to national and European strategies that aim to decrease the high levels of national dropout rates in secondary/vocational education by 2015, especially among the socially at-risk groups, including ethnic minority groups.
* To transfer experience across Denmark, (e.g. in UU Centres and public schools), and in UK and Finland.

## 1.4 Partners

Originally, there were five participating partners from three EU member states:

* P0 (the lead partner) - Videnscenter for Integration (VIFIN) - Denmark
* P1 - Ungdommens Uddannelsesvejledning Vejle (UU Vejle) – Denmark
* P2 - Forumteatret Replik - Denmark
* P3 - Suomen Humanistinen ammattikorkeakoulu (Humak)- Finland
* P4 - London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF)- UK

## 1.5 Partner roles and responsibilities

* **VIFIN (DK) – leading on Work Package (WP) 1 (Communication and management) and WP3** **(Development of IT and mobile platform and Social network)**; Partner management including meeting planning and reporting; financial management and communications; liaison and reporting. Involved in all stages of the project - i.e. providing up to date information on and contacts with, guidance counsellors in Denmark; providing inputs in the development of training curriculum and materials for youth counsellors and teachers; conducting usability testing of materials and pilot testing of the training course; conducting a seminar with a Forum Theatre Expert; holding the final conference; in charge of publication of the brochures and final product (Handbook for Guidance Counsellors); maintaining the website and social networking site; providing input into evaluation, participating in local and EU dissemination. Organising a pilot test; one partnership meeting and the final conference.
* **UU Vejle (DK) -** **leading on WP 2** **(Curriculum development and training courses**) including leading on the development of the training course and materials; needs analysis, content development and evaluation; conducting two training courses for counsellors and teachers and holding two Forum Theatre productions. In addition, they are responsible for networking among fellow counsellors in Denmark, assisting in evaluation and tracking of students who participated in the pilot testing, assisting in holding of the seminar with an expert; participating in transnational meetings and assist in the final conference.
* **Forumteatret Replik[[2]](#footnote-2) (DK) –leading on WP 4 (Dissemination and valorisation**) and for collaborating with Humak University in conducting a lecture on forum theatre, contributing to the development of the training course and materials, training counsellors in conducting FT production; leading the dissemination and valorisation activities; participating in transnational meetings and in the seminar and final conference and providing inputs for the project evaluation.
* **Suomen Humanistinen ammattikorkeakoulu (FI) – (Humak- not leading on any WP):** responsible for conducting a lecture on Augusto Boal's methods; providing inputs in the development of the training course and learning materials; training the counsellors on FT production; assisting in the conduct of training courses in DK and UK; conducting local training in Finland; providing data for the website; conducting local dissemination and valorisation work, providing inputs in evaluation and organising one partnership meeting in Finland.
* **London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF) (UK)** **- leading on WP5 (Evaluation and quality assurance**) including leading on the internal evaluation. In addition, they are responsible for contributing to the development of the training modules and materials, training local counsellors and teachers on FT production, running a course in the UK, engaging local partners and companies to implement the course for mentors; conducting local dissemination and valorisation; participating in the pilot testing; providing data for the website; attending partnership meetings and the final conference; and organising one partnership meeting in London.

## 1.6 Target group

* Primary beneficiaries will be counsellors, mentors and teachers, who will receive training and support to benefit young people more effectively.
* At least 50 participants are expected to attend the training from Denmark, and a minimum of ten Danish organisations would participate in the project; at least 20 participants are expected to participate in each of the training sessions in the UK and in Finland; and ten organisations from the UK and Finland (five from each country).
* Secondary/indirect beneficiaries will be young people considered to be socially at risk; they are likely to include ethnic minority groups, including ‘migrant’ groups.
* There will be a minimum of 200 members in Facebook network.

## 

## 1.7 Deliverables expected

* Training course – English, Danish and Finnish
* Learning materials – English, Danish and Finnish
* Handbook on the FT method for counsellors and teachers – English, Danish and Finnish
* Website for dissemination of the results of the project and where teachers and counsellors can access and upload their resource materials and share experiences.

# 2. Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation has been conducted primarily through a review of relevant documentation, including:

* **Background material,** including the original application sent to the European Commission in February 2010 which identified the rationale for, and expected activities and achievements of, the project.
* **Written materials**, including minutes of all meetings, evaluation of meetings, materials developed, publicity materials, project newsletter, articles written by partners
* **The web site URL** was provided to the evaluator, and the website has been reviewed for quality, completeness and usefulness.
* **Monitoring data** collected to datewere subject to scrutiny.
* **The partnership Gantt chart** was reviewed for evidence of partnership activity and project progression

In addition, a number of e-mail discussions and a telephone discussion were held with the project promoter to identify her views on the progress and success of the project to date.

# 

# 3. Achievements to date

## 

## 3.1 Management and partnership

*AIMS*

* To ensure effective partnership and communication

*CHALLENGES*

* At the first partner meeting in November 2010, Forumteatret Replik (FT) was found to be a challenging partner, cited in the external evaluation as *‘not being willing to co-operate’*. There were concerns that their interpretation and understanding of the work package and actions required to deliver it was at odds with those of other partners and the needs of the project. As result, the lead partner wrote to them on 22nd November 2010, asking them to leave the partnership. This was agreed by the National Agency, and the tasks were re-distributed.

*ACHIEVMENTS*

* Two transnational management meetings[[3]](#footnote-3) and two ‘local’ meetings between Danish partners have been held. Local meetings were used to discuss and develop the content of the materials and training course being developed.
* Communication between partners at transnational meetings is in English, which appears to be effective.
* The external evaluator attends all transnational partnership meetings, and undertakes a brief evaluation of the meeting, identifying problems and supporting partners to find solutions. Each individual evaluation is included as Annexe 1 to this report.
* The work plan has been translated to a Gantt chart, with each work package broken down into deliverables/milestones with deadlines. Partners are asked to upload the deliverable at the Yahoo platform. The calendar function of the platform is then utilised to remind everyone of the coming deadlines for the deliverables, which can be monitored. Regular reminders and personal emails are sent where problems appear or are foreseen; issues are addressed and agreed solutions implemented. This has been found to be an effective means of keeping the project on target.
* Partnership meeting agendas; papers and activity are consulted on in advance of the meetings and early suggestions from evaluation reports of meetings one and two have been implemented.
* Communication using the ACTVISE platform is open and transparent enabling all partners to contribute to discussion and activity.
* ACT! were subcontracted in December 2010; activity included a half-day orientation training in FT with UU Vejle and Vifin staff
* Comparison of the evaluation report findings between meetings one (November 2010) and two (May 2011) shows that by meeting two there were consistently very high levels of satisfaction for all elements of the meeting - between 75% and 94% with the exception of partner participation which was 69% (the lowest score). Constructiveness of the discussion was scored the highest possible at 100% - this compares to satisfaction levels at the first meeting which had ranged from 29% to 86%.

See Annexe: 1 Meeting and Pilot Testing Evaluation reports

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## 3.2 Innovation

*AIMS:*

* To adapt materials developed under a Minerva project for developing a curriculum usable by youth counsellors and teachers
* To integrate use of digital media and social network sites to reach young people.

***ACHIEVEMENTS***

* Materials have been developed and were piloted at a transnational meeting in Denmark in March 2011
* Piloting demonstrated that the innovation was ‘inspiring’ to most participants, most of whom were not aware of the potential of FT:
  + *“I was positively surprised to see to see how much it could be used in counselling”*
* Social networking has been integrated into the project and is accessible via the website, where it can also be used for dissemination purposes. At the date of undertaking this evaluation (September 2011), it had received 34 ‘likes’. Social networking has been the discussion of considerable debate, with different ethical and safeguarding standards applying in different member states and this has influenced the training module on the use of digital technology, with an agreement made that each partner should make the content of this module relevant for their country’s situation. This has involved each partner in undertaking research on the legislative and ethical standards governing the use of digital media.

See Annexe 2: Partner’s summary of the use of social networking site in their country.

## 3.3 Transnationality

*AIMS:*

* To bring together the expertise of the partners from three member states to develop strategies and utilise learning.
* To develop materials across three counties to build competencies of counsellors, teachers and mentors, so they can better address the problem of dropout and lack of motivation that is common in Europe
* To make the products more adaptable to other European countries, by considering the impact of national issues and national cultures.

*ACHIEVMENTS*

* **Transnational meetings**: Two management meetings and a two-day piloting of the training course have been held to date. All meetings were attended by all partners and by the evaluator and the training course was attended by a number of professionals from Denmark. Each meeting was evaluated and recommendations were made (Annexe 1– Evaluation of meetings).
  + Kick off Meeting in Helsinki (2nd – 5th November 2010)
  + Training course pilot in Vejle (16th – 19th March 2011)
  + Management Meeting in Vejle (16th – 18th May 2011)
* **Materials have been developed in three languages (Finnish, English, Danish)** - made possible through the commitment of the Danish partners, who translated and adapted both new and existing materials. In adapting the materials, the national contexts were taken into account.

Annexe 3: Training materials

* **Piloting the materials in three EU member states**: Materials have been piloted in Denmark and UK, and national adaptations are being made.
* **Cultural differences:**  Inthe process of adapting materials**,** cultural specificities have been identified where relevant**.** To date, the following issues have been highlighted:
  + In UK, it was suggested that the political aspect of Boal’s ideas need to be handled carefully. This might require not using the term ‘theatre of the oppressed’.
  + IT in FT was viewed as problematic in some contexts, where young people did not/could not afford smart phones, and had no credit on their phones.

## 3.4. Training course and training materials

*AIMS*

* To develop training materials and a training course in three languages
* To pilot and refine course content and materials

*ACHIEVMENTS*

* A ‘local’ meeting of the Danish partners (January 2011) agreed that a two day course would be the most effective and achievable means to develop the skills of counsellors working with young people. This should be supplemented by a further follow-up half-day, at which any challenges encountered could be discussed.
* Training materials and process manual in use of FT have now been developed. They include:
  + Background and rationale for the use of FT in education
  + Warm up materials
  + Value exercises
  + Information on the role of ‘the joker’
  + Rules and principles of FT
  + Technology and digital media in IT
  + Ethical and legal considerations within the different member-states. In the Danish context, this focuses on restrictions and protection according to the Danish Personal Data law. The UK and Finish versions have been developed according to their national data legislation.
  + A glossary and list of materials:
* Materials were piloted with the partners at a transnational meeting (16th – 19th March 2011).
* One partner (UU Vejle) delivered a ‘test run’ of the method with a class of 8th graders
* The course was revised and discussed at a meeting of local partners (UU Vejle and VIFIN) on 23rd June 2011. The subcontractor ACT! also attended the meeting. A revised draft was subsequently provided to partners for comments and discussed at the Yahoo platform before it was finalised.

Using the finalised materials courses are due to run in late summer/autumn of 2011. They will be evaluated by participants.

See Annexe 3: Training Materials

## 3.5 Handbook on the FT method for counsellors and teachers

* This is not due to be developed until August 2012

## 3.6 IT and mobile platform and social network

*AIMS*

* To use develop and maintain an IT multimedia platform
* To create and support an online Social Network (see 3.2 Innovation)
* To encourage active involvement of the youth in learning and seeking guidance through the exploitation of the digital/mobile platforms

*ACHIEVMENTS*

* The website is now available in three languages of the partnership

<http://www.actvise.eu>

* A discussion at the May 2011 management meeting identified the potential to use ‘LinkedIn’ as an option for partners not able to use Facebook.
* As identified in section 3.2, partners had different views on the effectiveness, options and restrictions for delivering this aspect of the project, and each partner has researched the legislative and ethical requirements in relation to using social networking.

See Annexe 2: Partner’s summary of the use of social networking site in their country.

## 3.7 Dissemination and exploitation

*AIMS*

* To share the project outcomes and process with other national and European career/guidance counsellors and teachers in primary and secondary education level
* To disseminate and exploit the training course and materials
* To develop and follow up on a commercialisation plan to ensure continuation of the project results

*ACHIEVMENTS*

* The project has a dissemination, exploitation and sustainable plan that identifies the target groups, key messages and dissemination tools to be used.
* An international seminar[[4]](#footnote-4), held in Denmark and attended primarily by Danish professionals and the project partners from Finland, Denmark and UK, was run to create interest in, and introduce people to, FT techniques. The seminar was evaluated by participants as innovatory, with a number of seminar participants saying that they were *‘inspired’* by the work.
* The project website is operational and contains information on the background to, and progress of, the project. Partners update it regularly in order to ensure that the website contains fresh news. Quarterly newsletters are being produced based on a standard format and these are available on the website.
* Three of the four partners provide monthly updates to Facebook. It was agreed that the UK would not be able to update using Facebook, due to national legislative issues.
* Each partner is responsible for valorisation within their own member-state and has identified and undertaken local plans. Plans have been received from each of the four partners which identify:
* What each partner has done in related to adding information regarding the project to their website
* Discussions related to the project:
* Participation in events where the project was promoted or presented
* Materials published in connection with the project, including press releases, newspaper and magazine articles etc.
* Any other valorisation information or activities

**The completed valorisation forms demonstrate that:**

* All partners have links to the ACTVISE website ([www.actvise.eu](http://www.actvise.eu))
* All partners have had discussions and conversations with stakeholders about the project. Stakeholders include those involved in education, youth work, the arts, media, businesses and local and national decision-makers
* All partners have participated in events where the project was promoted or presented. These include events for schools/teachers, colleges, youth workers, counsellors and local decision-makers in the field of cultural management
* Three of the four partners (in all three partner countries) have published materials connected with the project in newsletters, websites and blogs
* Other valorisation activities undertaken include updates on Facebook, a LinkedIn page, twitter account and Google account.
* Publicity materials include a brochure in all three languages of the partnership, a poster in Danish, and USBs and shopping bags with logos for all partners.

# 4. Conclusions

## 4.1 Partnership

* The partnership has encountered a challenging start and now appears to be working effectively and constructively.
* Personal relationships have benefited from, and management has been facilitated by, the small number of partners from three countries and using English as the working language.

## 4.2 Management

* Communication in English appears to be effective.
* Management controls are effective at ensuring that partners meet obligations. This is supported by each partner’s real commitment to the project and its success.

## 4.3 Innovation

* Innovation is inherent in the product and process, with the project potentially offering something new for those working with young people
* The innovation of using digital media in FT is proving to be effective in many situations. Piloting has identified that there can be limitations for some young people.
* The project has been adjusted to work around the legislative restrictions of social networking, using more ‘closed/private’ digital media.

## 4.4 Transnationality

* The transnational dimension currently lies with the three countries involved.
* There have been as many local meetings in Vejle as transnational management meetings. Given that two of the members are from the same municipality, this is inevitable. However, care should be taken that the project ensures that there are high levels of information and skills exchange at transnational level.
* To date itineraries of partnership meetings have not included specifically identifiable cultural activities which if included would be likely to provide added value to this dimension of the work. Enabling partners to be better acquainted with and informed about each others environment enhances the likelihood of achieving a better understanding of the impact on transnational understanding.
* The partnership exhibits a level of homogeneity, with all partners from member states in Northern Europe.
* To date, relatively few adaptations have been required to contextualise the materials.
* The transnational dimension is being used effectively to engender the enthusiasm of teachers, educators and counsellors who will use the materials to support and enable young people to achieve their potential.
* The transnational meetings have been evaluated by all the partners. A common theme is the need for the partners to get to know each other.

## 4.5 Deliverables

* All deliverables are on target, and it seems likely that the project will deliver to plan. The training materials have been developed and are of a high standard. The evaluation of their delivery will identify their potential impact on young people’s motivation.

## 4.6 Dissemination and valorisation

* The website is operational and rigorous maintenance required to ensure that is it fully accessible.
* Dissemination and valorisation is being tackled effectively by the partners, and documentation and material are branded with the required logos and statements
* Facebook group and other networking sites are being used for dissemination.

# 5. Recommendations

## 5.1 Website access and navigation

* A review of the website is undertaken with a view to improving ease of access and navigation. It is recommended that reference is made, including a web link, to each participating member state’s relevant legislation in relation to sharing personal data.

## 5.2 Cultural activities

* Future meetings should include specifically allocated time in the agreed schedules for cultural activities. This would not only meet the needs for partners to get to know each other in an informal context, but would significantly benefit the transnational dimension of the partnership, with partners gaining a better understanding of the context and culture of the member state in which the activity or meeting is taking place.

## 5.3 Dissemination

* Extending the ongoing dissemination with interested parties from eastern and / or southern Europe via e.g. e-mail/discussion to bring an extra dimension to the partnership.
* Continue to ensure that all published material – electronic and paper based - is fully branded and includes the required EU text.

1. <http://www.actvise.eu> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. As a result of withdrawal from the project this work package was subsequently agreed to be delivered by the PO VIFIN. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Both transnational meetings have been fully evaluated and the evaluation reports are contained in Annexe 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 17th May 2011 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)