

PROJECT ESPRIT

Experiential Supporting Programme for Innovation in Training

The **Project ESPRIT – Experiential Supporting Programme for Innovation in Training**, co-funded within the Leonardo da Vinci Programme Multilateral Projects on the Transfer of Innovation, aims at promoting the transfer and integration of innovative experiential education and training methodologies, based particularly on outdoor education, in education and training systems in Italy and Lithuania.

ESPRIT is based on the results of the pilot experience *NEXT – New Experiences in Training* (Leonardo da Vinci 2004-2006) and addresses the need to innovate education and training methodologies currently used by the education and training system in the partner territories. These systems are in fact still focused on traditional curricula and methods and therefore appears still distant from the social and labour world and cannot adequately foster change and development.

Specifically, **ESPRIT** intends to favour the valorisation and inclusion in technical/vocational schools and training agencies in the partner territories of **experiential methodologies based on outdoor education**, as these are particularly effective in helping young people develop transferable skills (communication and analysis abilities, ability to work in a team, self-esteem, etc), necessary to lead a positive social and working life.

ESPRIT works therefore directly with **teachers and trainers** as crucial players in innovating national education and training systems, in order to enable them to properly favour learning and to give effective answers to the needs of their pupils, personalising the educational processes and adapting them to the problems affecting young people.

The final beneficiaries of **ESPRIT** are the same **students/trainees** and especially those coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, considered more at risk of social exclusion, drop outs, etc., who require specific skills and abilities to improve their interaction within the context they live in and to learn how to better cope with the challenges of society and of the labour market.

Special attention will be given by **ESPRIT** to encouraging **co-operation** between schools, training agencies, universities, employers' associations and local authorities, so as to favour local coordination between the actors involved in the education and training system and strengthen the relation between this and the labour market.

ESPRIT has a duration of 24 months (November 2007 to November 2009) and foresees the participation of TECLA Association as project leader, the territories of Lecce, Teramo, Matera, Pescara and Potenza in Italy and of the Zeimaitija College in Lithuania, as well as of the scientific partners BSJ (Germany), Project Outdoor Education (Italy) and Threshold Consulting (United Kingdom)

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Transferring and encouraging the inclusion of **innovative experiential education and training methodologies**, based particularly on outdoor education and aimed at developing transversal skills in young people, in the education and training systems of Italy and Lithuania
- ✓ Encouraging the **cooperation** among the key actors of the education and training systems of Italy and Lithuania, thus promoting shared territorial strategies and actions

EXPECTED RESULTS

- ✓ Dissemination at European level of innovative experiential education and training methodologies, based particularly on **outdoor education**
- ✓ Providing teachers/trainers with **new supporting instruments and methodologies** and creation of a European network of schools and training agencies as an opportunity for exchange and dialogue
- ✓ Better capacity of the education and training systems of orienting education and training methodologies towards innovative and effective solutions, able to motivate **young people** to learn and to help them to face the challenges of society and labour market
- ✓ Higher **coordination and cohesion** among the different actors of the territorial education and training systems

ACTIVITIES

- ✓ **analysis of the education and training systems of the partner territories**, to identify critical issues, strengths, etc.
- ✓ **adapting of the experiential education and training methodology**, defined in the NEXT project, to the 6 territories and to their education and training systems
- ✓ **organisation of experimental workshops**, with the aim to transfer the adapted methodology to the teachers/trainers of the 6 territories
- ✓ **shared planning of training modules and extra-curricular activities** in the 6 territories and gradual integration in their education and training systems
- ✓ **institution of Local Committees and signing of Local Training Pacts** between schools, training agencies, employers' associations and local authorities of the 6 territories
- ✓ **valorisation, dissemination and communication activities**, including refresher courses on the methodologies for teachers/trainers, local seminars to raise public awareness and a final national seminar

PARTNERSHIP

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EUROPEAN CONTEXT

Leonardo da Vinci Programme

The **Leonardo da Vinci Sectoral Programme**, part of the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013, intends to:

- (a) support participants in **training and further training activities** in the acquisition and the use of knowledge, skills and qualifications to facilitate personal development, employability and participation in the European labour market;
- (b) support improvements in **quality and innovation** in vocational education and training systems, institutions and practices;
- (c) enhance the attractiveness of vocational education and training and **mobility** for employers and individuals and to facilitate the mobility of working trainees.

ESPRIT ACTIVITIES

LOCAL COMMITTEES

The ESPRIT project plans the establishment/strengthening of local alliances between key territorial actors, through six **Local Committees (LC)** in each of the territories involved in the project.

The LC represents an **alliance for territorial cooperation among local public and private stakeholders operating in the education and training system** and involved in the issues addressed by the project.

It therefore constitutes a meeting place and a working platform for schools, training agencies, institutions operating in the labour market (employees, employment agencies, etc.) and institutional actors which formulates policies in the field at issue.

It aims at improving cooperation and territorial coordination in the field of education and training, favouring the integration among the systems of education, training, vocational guidance and insertion in the labour market (in close connection with the currently existing territorial programming tools), raising awareness on the need for comprehensive and innovative educational modules for an effective introduction of students/trainees in the labour market and work environment and for the improvement of the levels of apprenticeship training (required for a successful transition from training to working); and fostering in the long term the formulation and implementation of concerted and integrated actions in the field of education and training policies and programmes.

The LC is chaired by the territorial partner of reference and is made up of representatives of organisations such as schools, training agencies, universities, not for profit associations, enterprises, regional administrations, local authorities, etc.

The **main activities** which the LC is responsible for are:

- a) support to the management and coordination of the project activities at local level
- b) establishing and/or strengthening relations with territorial public and private players involved in training and education, in order to raise awareness among local stakeholders on the issues addressed by the project, promote the exchange of views and proposals on teaching and training strategies, etc.
- c) supporting the Partner in the collection of data and information regarding the education and training system at territorial level and in the identification of the participants to the experimental workshops
- d) systematically organising feedback from the experimental workshops in the territories involved for the planning, adaptation and possible integration of educational modules and extracurricular training activities in the schools and training agencies belonging to the Local Training Pacts.

- e) coordination and management of the formulation and/or strengthening of the Local Training Pact
- f) widest dissemination possible of the information related to the project and its aims, activities, results and products

LOCAL TRAINING PACT (LTP)

The activities developed by the Local Committee (LC) are framed by the so-called **Local Training Pact**, a strategic document formulated and formalized by the members of the LC with the aim of defining a path for the promotion by different local public and private stakeholders of interventions and actions in the field of education and training at local level.

Specifically, the ESPRIT project foresees the formulation and drawing up of 3 Local Training Pacts in the territories of the Provinces of Matera, Pescara and Potenza and the valorisation and strengthening of the 3 Pacts already defined in the framework of the NEXT project in the territories of the Provinces of Lecce and Teramo and of the Municipality of Rietavas (in order to widen their aims, design new strategies, confirm existing commitments, etc.)

The **Local Training Pact** is a way to collect and gather energies, as well as to support the relations between public and private players involved in training and education, which thus fosters the setting up and supports an effective local organisational system among the different key actors of the territory.

Specifically, these actors negotiate and agree upon a shared set of objectives and strategies, to be reached with specific concerted tools and on the basis of a planned programme. These objectives refer to the integration of training in local development policies, involving, in a wide perspective, actions of dissemination, raising awareness, training, technical assistance, etc.

The actors subscribing to the Local Training Pact express their commitment to the implementation of the ESPRIT project's aims and the development of its activities, in order to promote in the long period the inclusion in the education and training systems of innovative informal/experiential methodologies and modules which help the development of transversal skills in young people, thus assisting them in the transition from school to the work environment and labour market.

Naturally, each Training Pact can also state additional objectives and propose further actions to carry on, even at an experimental stage, in order to improve the quality of the local education and training system, focus its attention on the need for innovative educational and training modules and methodologies, and therefore improve and valorise the transversal competences of young people in order to especially assist those coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Local Training Pact thus represents for its signatories an assumption of responsibilities and the sharing of goals and results, through concerted choices and



decisions, and a valuable opportunity to start and/or strengthen an integrated planning for new and experimental educational and training actions, as well as to sustain a real partnership among different local actors interested in the education and training system