

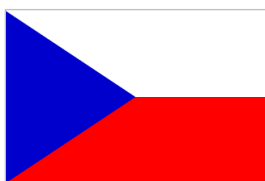


The Community Initiative Equal transnational project newsletter
Issue 3, December 2006



ENTRE

Transition towards entrepreneurship



Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Portuguese partnership, I would like to address the readers of this newsletter, welcoming them to our third edition, and enhancing the importance of the cooperation within the ENTRE Project.

Cooperation isn't just about meetings, seminars and workshops, it is also about links, sharing, exchanging and, last but not least, cooperation is about friendship. Besides all the exchanging of know-how, besides all the sharing of knowledge and besides all the tools that are being built within the ENTRE project, it is also important to notice that the bonds of friendship between the partners of this project are also building up.

After all, the whole of the European Union project is about common objectives and strengthening of friendship.

At the end of this year of 2006, and almost at Christmas time, our best wishes can be put into building up stronger links of friendship and sharing out the best of what we have in order to achieve our common goal, that is to improve the lives of the less fortunate. In doing this we are, for sure, creating a better Europe and a better world.



Joao Carlos Pinho – coordinator of ADRIMAG

Information from national development partnerships

Czech DP

The Czech project “Make Your Own Business” as part of the EQUAL Community Initiative, focusing on mothers on and after maternity leave who want to become entrepreneurs, has entered the second year of its existence. It is appropriate to make an assessment of the results which we have achieved and the extent to which we have met the project’s objectives.

The main task is to prepare and test training programmes for prospective female entrepreneurs. In accordance with the project, we prepared one-month and three-month courses, using CEPAC’s wide experience in this field. So far we have carried out two pilot monthly courses and are currently testing the first three-month course. All the courses have been thoroughly evaluated from the perspective of both the participants and the trainers. A major issue which, however, we

were aware of in advance is the lack of lessons in the short-term courses. The life of a mother who is still on maternity leave is, to a great extent, determined by her children’s biorhythms. In practice, the only substantial part of the day she can dedicate to her learning is the whole of the morning. Afterwards, the children must be fed and put to bed. Almost 100% of the mothers in all the courses that have taken place up to this day agreed on this routine, indicating that it is not feasible to count on all the days a week throughout the training. Therefore, in all the cases we have agreed on a compromise training schedule of four lessons, three days a week. However, this poses a problem, considering that the “short-term” course is designed to have 178 lessons. Furthermore, it is realistic to assume that during the course more lessons may be lost because of the illness of the child or the mother herself (despite all the efforts, no father on maternity leave has been recruited yet).

What we have found very useful in this respect is that the course as a whole has an e-learning version and the course participants may study

basically any subject matter in the quiet of their home and at the time they find the most convenient. They may then use the trainer to discuss problematic sections of the text. In addition, all those who do not have their own computers at home with internet access could borrow from us a laptop with a mobile internet connection. On completion of the training programme the participants receive, as a bonus, the entire course downloaded onto a CD for further use in their future entrepreneurial career. It has turned out, however, that more attention should be devoted to training in “computer literacy”, as the mothers entering the course possess rather varied computer skills in consequence of their previous educational backgrounds (ranging from vocational training to university degrees) or their opportunities to gain experience of the practical use of computers in their lives. But, to a great extent, these problems are addressed by the larger number of lessons in the “long-term” course, which may be a reason why we may recommend it more than the short-term course. The first revision of the textbooks has already been carried out on the basis of recommendations made by both the participants and the trainers. Understandably, the instructional materials must respond to the ongoing changes in the legislation regarding starting entrepreneurs.

During the first three courses, we also conducted practical testing of different types of baby-minding. In the first course, which took place in Vsetín, practically all the mothers needed to arrange for baby-minding and so we set up a “temporary day-care centre” on suitable premises just down the stairs from where the classes were held. There the children, even very small ones, were attended to by the staff of the liaising maternity centre. Another option, in the second course, was to provide baby-minding on the maternity centre’s premises, and we also tried to offer baby-minding in the home environment. Given the fact that since 2006 it has been prescribed in the Czech Republic that a mother on maternity leave may place a child in a pre-school for four

hours a day, some children attended those facilities. If we realise, however, that every pre-school may have a different timetable and that they are not usually situated near the place where the classes are held, which requires some time to be spent travelling, it is not feasible to rigidly insist on the mothers having four lessons a day. This is an issue we would definitely like to address as part of mainstreaming in association with the competent authorities, trying to slacken the scope of instruction a little while, certainly, keeping a weekly limit, for example. What also poses a problem is that the current baby boom (as a result of the shift in the age at which women are now having children as opposed to some 10-15 years ago) and many pre-schools having been closed down led to pre-schools not having the capacity for these “small-scale baby-minding needs” ensuing from the change in the law which makes it possible for mothers also to pursue certain activities while on maternity leave.

In response to positive feedback from the mothers and recruitment for courses on the part of maternity centres, further liaison with the national association of maternity centres has been established, and at the time of writing other maternity centres have shown interest in organising courses in partnership with them. This, of course, will no longer be possible as part of the EQUAL project, but will fall within the Human Resources Development Operational Programme, where the CEPAC association managed to receive a grant for a similar project, which will be implemented in the period 2007-2008, using, naturally, the methodology developed while working on this EQUAL project.

Thus, in the second year of the project we will finish implementing all the courses, review the methodology and texts as needed, and be prepared for using them in the next period. Subsequently, in the second half of the project we will focus on the mainstreaming necessary to ensure that these activities are put into practice in the best way possible. Nonetheless,

this will also be linked to the exchange of experience acquired from the international part of the project, particularly as far as entrepreneurial incubators/couveuses and entrepreneurial competences are concerned.

Author: Antonín Plíska

Flemish DP

Welcome to Brussels!

The Flemish DP has been continuing to further develop the products of our national project, but we also had the honour to welcome our transnational partners to Brussels.

Transnational days

From 11th until 15th October our partners were working in, and visiting and enjoying Brussels and other Flemish cities.

On the first day a seminar on train the trainers programmes for entrepreneurial trainers was organized. In this seminar both Flemish key organisations and the different transnational partners presented their programmes. At the end of the day the partnership was offered a walking dinner through Ghent, illustrated with old city stories.



The second day the working groups set to what they were supposed to do: work! These working groups were the usual ones: target groups, couveuses, entrepreneurial competences and training engineering.

On the last day, we took time to finalise this meeting in the steering committee.

A lot of work has been done, the contacts and networking provided added value to the partnership and we're looking forward to fly to our next meeting!



Further development in Flanders

Since the last newsletter, a lot of the planned project stages have been executed! In the beginning of October the electronic version of our screening instrument, called ENTRE-Mirror has been finished. This tool is a self-assessment instrument for individuals to detect entrepreneurial competences. The individual results of the candidate entrepreneur are compared (or "mirrored") with a norm score of the Flemish entrepreneur. The main aim of the instrument is to make the individual more conscious of the own competences and gives elements for further action in development. English reports on the entrepreneurial profile and the ENTRE-Mirror will be available within a few months.

In our SYNTRA training centres the experiments in competency based training have started. In January we will have a interim evaluation on these experiments.

Author: Cathy Camertijn

French DP

Focus on the study realised by APCE and RBG on unemployed entrepreneurs

The Observatories of APCE and RBG decided to bring together their figures to refine their

respective knowledge of the unemployed entrepreneurs supported by professionals (business creation support organisations). The population of unemployed entrepreneurs supported by professionals accounts for 35% of the unemployed French entrepreneurs and 11% of the total number of French entrepreneurs.

The unemployed represent nearly 90% of the entrepreneurs supported by the Boutiques de Gestion. The analysis of the APCE Observatory brings very rich qualitative data to the RBG Observatory, as well as a comparison between the unemployed who are supported and those who are not supported. The analysis of the figures of the Boutiques de Gestion brings a "ground" expertise to the APCE analysis, as well as data on the support before business creation, on the profile of the disabled unemployed, on the profile of the migrant unemployed, and on financing.

Principal data of the study

Both the APCE and RBG analyses reveal a very similar profile of the unemployed supported by professionals:

Profile: a man (67%), 38 years old on average, formerly employed (nearly 80%) and 1 time out of 3 the holder of a higher education diploma.

Motivations:

- will to be independent (75%)
- to ensure his/her self-employment (64%)

Business: Unemployed entrepreneurs create businesses primarily as self-employed (nearly 70%) and in the sector of commerce and services. There is a substantial difference between the share of the sector of services for people, which is more important for the public of the Boutiques de Gestion than for the public studied by the APCE (10 points more).

Financing: About half of the unemployed entrepreneurs raised over 8000 euros of start-up capital and nearly 10% of them exceeded 40,000 euros.

The trade and transport sectors required the highest levels of start-up capital (source:

APCE). Concerning the average financing plan, it is composed of 44% banking loans and PCE (business creation loan), 35% personal capital contribution and 21% solidarity financing (source: RBG).

Moreover, 72% of the unemployed entrepreneurs supported by business creation support networks benefited from ACCRE (partial exemption from social taxes) (source: APCE).

Support: The Boutiques de Gestion carry out complete support, which lasts 8 hours on average (except reception and training courses), spread over several months, as well as partial support according to the needs and the wishes of the entrepreneur. During these individual support sessions, the future entrepreneurs approach all the stages of a business creation project (market research, business plan, financing plan etc.). But, according to the level of knowledge or experience of the entrepreneur, the counsellor will deepen some stages more than others. Thus, entrepreneurs ask more for assistance in realising business creation files (business plan, file for ACCRE...) and for assistance with the financial part of the project (construction of the financing plan...).

Comparison between long-term unemployed entrepreneurs and short-term unemployed entrepreneurs:

- Larger numbers of long-term unemployed entrepreneurs state that they have created a business for self-employment.
- There are more beneficiaries of social minima among the long-term unemployed entrepreneurs.
- Long-term unemployed entrepreneurs are, on average, older.
- There are more women among long-term unemployed entrepreneurs.
- Short-term unemployed entrepreneurs create new jobs in their business more often but in smaller numbers than long-term unemployed entrepreneurs (1.9 jobs against 2.5).

- Long-term unemployed entrepreneurs more often work as self-employed people.
- Long-term unemployed entrepreneurs create businesses more in the sphere of services for people.
- Financing by means of a bank loan is more frequent for short-term unemployed entrepreneurs.

To conclude this study synthesis, the principal points of comparison between supported and unsupported unemployed entrepreneurs, pointed out by the Observatory of APCE, are the following:

- Access to bank loans is more frequent for entrepreneurs supported by professionals.
- Entrepreneurs supported by professionals gathered more significant start-up capital than those who were not supported.
- Larger numbers of entrepreneurs supported by professionals benefited from public assistance or exemptions.
- There are more women among the supported entrepreneurs (33% against 24%).
- There are more supported entrepreneurs on courses of professional reorientation.
- More supported entrepreneurs are self-employed.
- Supported entrepreneurs create businesses for the first time more frequently than the entrepreneurs who are not supported (23% against 28%).

Author: Virginie Dantard

Portuguese DP

CRER METHODOLOGY

The Portuguese DP has finished the CRER methodology for use in the new structure created during the project: CRER – Centre of Resources and Experimentation. Initially, the objective of the CRER project was to transfer the couveuses methodology to Portuguese territory.

During the study visits made by representatives of the CRER DP, where the Portuguese technicians had the opportunity to

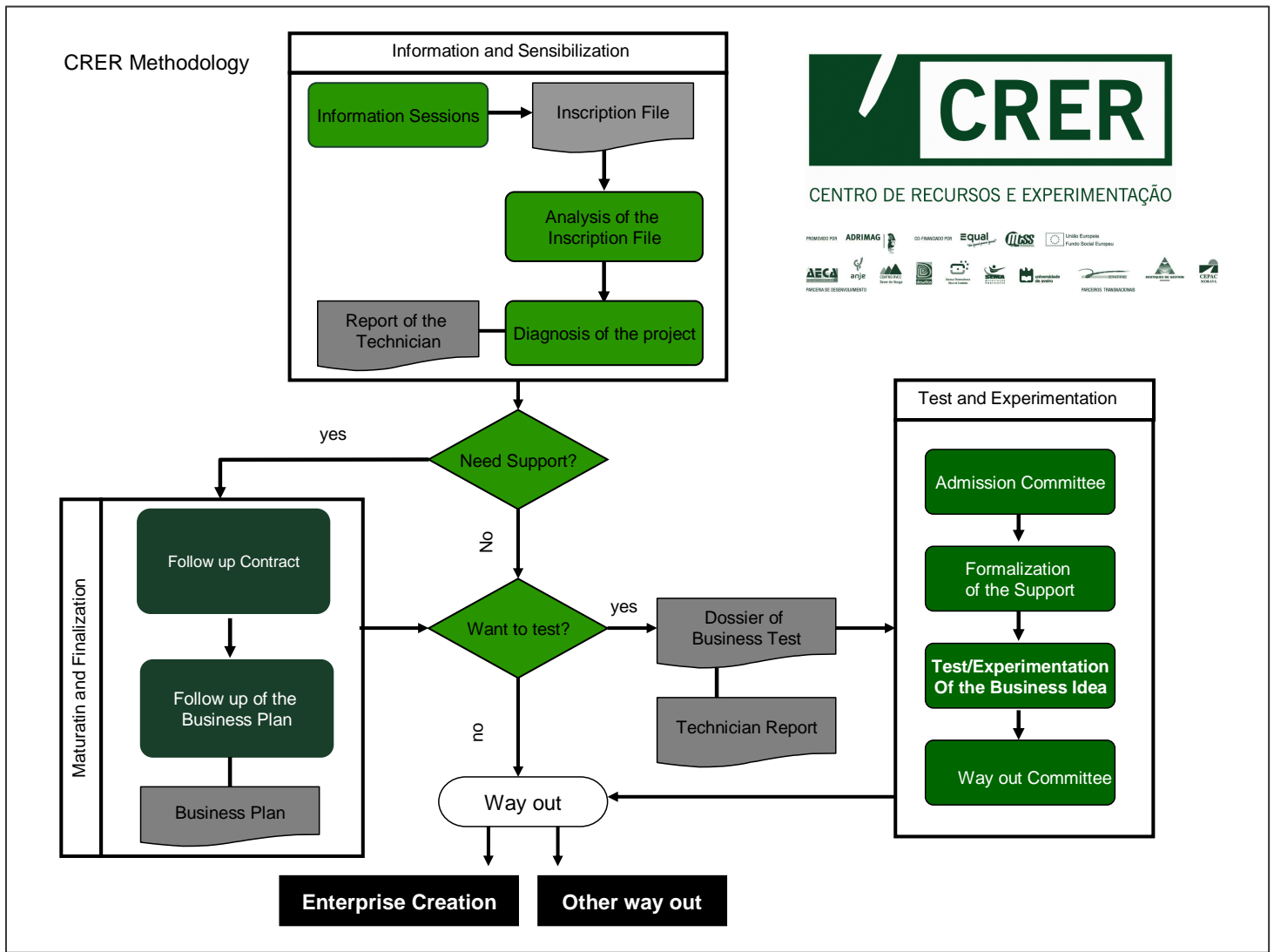
see in loco the development and activities of Couveuses and Boutiques de Gestion, the DP concluded that the transference and incorporation of the couveuses methodology was not sufficient to implement a couveuse in Portugal, because the methodology was linked with Boutiques de Gestion, entities that help the entrepreneur with the elaboration and finalisation of the business plan. We decided that “our couveuse” will also need to integrate a support methodology to help the entrepreneur with the definition and development of the business.



The CRER methodology integrates the entrepreneur support methodology for the elaboration of a business plan, developed by the Boutiques de Gestion, and the methodology of testing of and experimentation with businesses before the creation of an enterprise, used by the couveuses. The Portuguese DP has also incorporated some attributes of SISE – an integrated system to support entrepreneurs – developed by a Portuguese EQUAL project – GLOCAL. This system is necessary to develop a micro credit system – SIM – in order to help entrepreneurs with the finance for the creation of the enterprise.

We can say that the CRER methodology is a result of the combination of three distinct methodologies:

- Boutiques de Gestion
- Couveuses
- Glocal – SIM/SISE



This methodology, developed by the partnership, has three different phases:

- Information and Sensitisation to entrepreneurship and business creation
- Maturation and Finalisation of the Business Plan, with individual support in the development of the business plan
- Testing of and Experimentation with business ideas, with support for the testing of a business idea, without the creation of the enterprise.

For the implementation of all processes, the Portuguese DP developed several support instruments and the procedures and the competences needed to develop the actions.

The methodology will be tested during the CRER project and the application of the methodology and instruments will start in December.

For more information about the CRER methodology, please contact Susana Martins by e-mail: susana@adrimag.com.pt

CREATION OF CRER ASSOCIATION

The development partnership of the CRER project will constitute an association to implement the CRER methodology. The specification of the test phase demands the creation of a new structure to experiment with the project. The structure will be created in January 2007.

The main objective of the association will be the establishment of the necessary conditions for the creation of enterprises promoted by entrepreneurs, in order to develop a business, in a sustainable way, through support for the elaboration of a business plan and through the testing of and experimentation with Business Ideas.

The attributions of the structure will be:

1. To foster entrepreneurship
2. To provide resources and the acquisition of competences
3. To test and experiment with business ideas

CRER will give support, from the idea to the creation of the enterprise. The structure will be located in the municipality of Castro Daire.

Author: Susana Martins - Adrimag

Third International Project Meeting - Belgium

From 11 to 15 October the third international project meeting took place in Belgium. It included a conference on “The Training of Trainers to Train Starting Entrepreneurs”, held on 12 October 2006 and, naturally, the regular sessions of the four working groups and the meeting of the project steering committee, which took place on the next days of the talks conducted during the convention.

Various models of preparation for trainers leading courses for starting entrepreneurs in the project member states were introduced at the “Training of Trainers to Train Starting Entrepreneurs” conference.



Papers were presented by Syntra Vlaanderen, for example. The conference included a site visit to one of 22 training centres – the Syntra

Midden – Vlaanderen Training and Requalification Institute in Sint Niklaas – which organizes training programmes and field training for a range of participants, including starting entrepreneurs, young people from 15 to 18 years of age, and people over 18, as well as tailor-made courses for companies.

Other presenters from Belgium included UNIZO – an employers’ organization providing guidance and coaching to starting entrepreneurs – and VLAJO – an organization providing coaching to student companies.

In addition, the Portuguese partners presented papers on the implementation of their national CRER project at the conference. Similarly, the representatives of the Czech and French development partnerships, “Make Your Own Business” and RBG, respectively, provided information about the development of their activities.



The working group sessions were held on 13 October and, as usual, were conducted in four task forces – Entrepreneurial Competences, Couveuses/Incubators, Fragile Target Groups Entrepreneurship and Training Engineering.

As part of the entrepreneurial competences working group, a method used by the Syntra organization to analyse entrepreneurial competences was introduced. This method is particularly useful in identifying areas which a starting entrepreneur should explore. Other techniques that were presented included the MECENE method used in France and a method applied in Portugal in order to gather

as much specific information on the personality of the starting entrepreneur as possible.

In the Couveuses/Incubators group, the French partner presented their experience of the operation of a couveuse in Avignon established in 2004. Then the Portuguese partners provided information about the establishment of a couveuse in Portugal. Their first experience and the outcomes will be presented at the next international meeting, planned for spring 2007.

The objective of the Fragile Target Groups Entrepreneurship working group is to create a catalogue of successful projects carried out by TCA members. Each party presented such projects at the session and it was agreed that they should be included in the catalogue in an integrated form in order to facilitate the inspiration they may provide for other TCA members.

At the Training Engineering working group, the team led by CEPAC-Morava presented the recently implemented e-learning methods used in the CEPAC courses, as well as two newly introduced methods – video and web casting as part of e-learning – which enhance the potential of e-learning in the training courses.

At all the international meetings, the final activity is the steering committee session, during which the activities ensuing from the

Transnational Cooperation Agreement are assessed and planned for the future.

The Steering Committee meeting provided new ideas on the development of international cooperation at the level of the project partners, as well as at the level of top-level agencies, such as ministries. The French partners introduced the new design of the ENTRE project website, which may be visited at <http://www.boutiques-de-gestion.com/entre/index.html>.

To conclude, the steering committee agreed on the date of the next international meeting, which is to take place in France in April 2007.

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