Key words on the Salt Experience in Xploit

Intro

Catalan Xploit coordinator Mireia Masgrau identifies key words on how the Salt community experienced the Xploit project, and what has come out of the more than 3 years of hard work…

Read more…

Motor Team at work in Salt

Contact

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Xploit !

Local learning centers and partnership are yet to be built into a coherent lifelong learning policy.
Despite the numerous partnership and network initiatives of recent years, they remain occasional, interest-driven and short-lived. Policy development and local implementation are still lacking.
The European Association for the Education of Adults, 2006

About Salt...

Salt has always been a community linked to migration. The city has grown during the twentieth century, as the population tripled, and today it is the most densely populated municipality in the province of Girona. The reasons ranged from the prosperity of the textile industry, the improvement of the communications and Girona's city saturation. Slightly over 7000 population in 1960 reaches 11,477 in 1970, as the result of the wave of immigration mainly from Andalusia. At the beginning of the XXI century, the population reached 30.000 people from over 79 nationalities, meaning about the 44% are foreigners especially from Morocco, Gambia and Latin America.

As the immigrant population increased, the Spanish population declined.
Managing the situation becomes difficult for the public authorities.
Despite previous experiences, the community faces an unprecedented challenge.

This singularity makes difficult the management of the community and causes the creation of many individual educational and networking activities by stakeholders trying to solve the most pressing social and educational challenges.

Salt is an open minded society with citizens accustomed to deal with changes, integration and coexistence but without long-term strategies to give long-term sustainability solutions to the challenges.

2010: presentation of the Xploit project to the Municipality

When the Xploit work started Salt was a community with a multitude of local initiatives trying to provide ad hoc solutions, a city of a pool of initiatives, networks, resources, etc.
A society heavily dependent on public authorities with a strong conviction that public resources are the best way to get funding and solutions.

The orientation, mentality and strategic, towards working at European level and for a learning community, didn't exist. Perhaps some isolated European project and the intention to be a learning city but not linking them as a sustainable plan to build up the community.

Iolanda Pineda, Mayor of Salt 2010

Creating solutions…

The immigrants are in a disadvantaged situation because of their lack of knowledge of the Catalan society and its laws and also their own lack of basic language skills. Thus, we need to articulate the needed mechanisms to facilitate an inclusion process in the shortest time possible to ensure fairness and equal opportunities for all our citizens regardless of their origin.

The sooner as we accept that immigration is here to stay, the sooner we can meet the great challenges.

We must avoid the "soft policies", those that treat immigrants as people to protect. These policies create discrimination.

We work to recognize two different communities living in the same space. Our own intercultural model…

The intercultural approach does not prevent conflicts. When we promote the contact and interactions spaces we are causing the appearance of every day conflicts. But the conflicts must be accepted and we need to work to solve them.

I promote the need to respect fundamental and democratic values shared by all.

May 2011: municipal elections - the municipality changes

The political instability makes the difference when describing a community work process, especially if the community is not able to work independently.

Within the Salt framework the project was initially used as a starting point to describe the community and its resources.

The Xploit team started working on a "field work", a work of research, exploration based on:

- The elaboration of the community profile, describing the resources and the most urgent priorities of the community

- The elaboration of the "training map", to describe all educational resources, formal, non formal and informal in the community

- The elaboration of the "market map" to link the trainings and potential job offers

- The elaboration of the total budget required to roll out all described in the maps

The aim of the work was also to use the results at political level, making the politicians aware of the existing resources, the budget spent for the community every year, with the idea to get their support and consensus to start the development of a sustainable community work plan.

Big challenges that the Xploit team had to face:

- Making decisions about the next steps for the team

- Focusing on the priorities of the community

- Becoming aware of the importance of developing motivation, ideas and competences among the community workers

- Being very aware to work at a community level is necessary the establishment of some conditions: institutional changes to facilitate the development; the open-ended and horizontally participation, not hierarchical and vertical; the collaborative work in partnerships

Xploit Motor Team: JOINING FORCES FOR YOUTH

Step by step and with the support and guidance from the project, the most significant change Xploit has brought is the creation of the "motor team", a community work team. The project has been crucial in joining forces from different institutions, private and public, representing the community to create the Joining Forces for Youth network.

In view of the seriousness of the situation, to face the constant increase of drop out youth, the Joining Forces for Youth agreed that one of the main priorities to work in the community was the young people, the so-called NEET youth, to create new opportunities for them.

2013: Increasing needs, more challenges, more steps
- Salt towards a learning community…?

Three years ago the community had many needs to face and with the global crisis those needs have grown. The difficult situation is causing big and fast changes at community level. These changes affect the way to work with and for the community.

From 2011 the Municipality is partner in a new European project: LAB*learning*.

The increasing mentality about the importance of involving private enterprises, sponsors in the community networks as resources for sustainable and long term solutions is now a reality.

The base, the platform, for new ways of working at community level has been established.

The attempts to consolidate Joining Forces for Youth in a formal network: the last months of Xploit the network raises the need to become in a formal network.

In connection with the 2013 European LLP Call the municipality is a partner in 3 new applications.

Impact of Xploit

YES:
- Acquiring of important information revealing the community gaps

- The understanding of new ways to proceed

- The creation of a strong network: Joining Forces for Youth

- The understanding to provide sustainable and long term solutions to the needs is necessary to change mentalities, to join forces with the private, public sectors: to join forces for real…

- The increasing interest of the Joining Forces for Youth to bring to the community the exchange of experiences between communities across Europe to raise awareness, stimulate the motivation and learning from other models

- The understanding that to work at European level is necessary some kind of learning

- The increasing learning from some members of the Joining Forces for Youth network, enabling them to be the next future community guides

BUT:

- The need for politicians to be involved in all decision making, which produces a lot of talk, no further action and a lot of human resources frustration

- Lack of continuity: resources are not stable, neither financial nor human resources; continuity in the work is very difficult; many professionals are involved in community work for shorter periods, which makes progress difficult

- The community processes tend to stop when the funding ends

- The low European competences of the community players

- The lack of human resources

- The lack of quality in managing of resources; the lack of a direction, being clear on objectives, to have a vision, a strategic plan for the city

- The challenges of sustaining interest and motivation

- The need of funding to maintain the Joining Forces for Youth network: volunteering is not enough, it is not sustainable

After the Xploit experience in Salt one has the conviction that each community has its own process and it's difficult to work on general theories, perhaps impossible, because each case must be based on its own reality.

[The photos illustrate Salt community workers in action in the different Xploit communities across Europe]