

Salt Catalonia Joining Forces

Intro

The key players from the Salt Catalonia community in Xploit describe in their own words how they experienced the Xploit project.

Read more...



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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



When the project was presented to the Municipality of Salt in 2010 the community had another political color, a very different from it has now. 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.

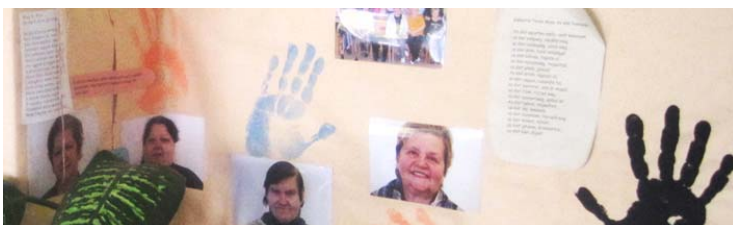
Salt has always been a community linked to migration. The city was created in the 60 for the migrants from the south of Spain and in the last 15 years the community is facing the impact of its three waves of migration which have led to 30,000 inhabitants from over 79 nationalities.

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

Within this framework it might draw the profile of the Salt community: an open minded society with citizens accustomed to deal changes, integration, and coexistence but without big long term strategies to give long term sustainability solutions to the challenges.

In the beginning the Xploit project was used as a starting point to describe the community and its resources. Salt was a community with a multitude of local initiatives trying to provide quick solutions for increasing problems and needs. A community without a sustainability mentality. We could call Salt as a pool of initiatives, networks, resources, entities, Institutions, authorities...working with the best intentions but without a strategic plans, a sustainable plans and consequently losing many opportunities, resources and funding possibilities.

A community where the lack of resources, human and economic resources, did not allow finding and getting solutions, and being the human factors very complicated to cope, because we are talking about fatigue and the feeling of impotence to cope the enormous challenges. A society heavily dependent on public authorities with a strong conviction that public statements are the best way to get funding and solutions.



Therefore and taking into account the background of Salt, one could say that after all these years the community should have taken advantage, be ahead, in front other communities where migration changes arrived later and slowly, but that is not the case of Salt.

For these reasons when the Xploit arrived to Salt the connection, mentality, plans, to work at European level and for a learning community, didn't exist. Perhaps some

isolated European project and the intention to be a learning community but not linking them as a new and sustainable ways to build the community.

Europe and other kind of private solutions were treated as potential solutions, but still a long way to go: Joining forces yes, but carefully and slowly.

In Salt and taking into account all said above the process has been long also because during all the Xploit way, the tools, the human resources, have changed several times due to the political changes.

The non-political stability makes the difference when describing a community work process, especially if the community is not capable of working independently.

Given the characteristics of Salt and within the Xploit process, especially in the beginning, it was decided that the most efficient way of working was the realistic one, being aware of the resources available and also knowing that it could mean a step back for the rhythm of the project.



Therefore the process 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 goal was also to use the results obtained at a political level, to make the politicians aware of the resources, the budget spent for the community every year without sustainable results, making them aware of the urgency to consider their different roles and to get their support and consensus to start to elaborate a community sustainable work plan.

(All documents were presented to politicians, but we never got an answer).



Reached that point and without the strong support of the public authorities, it was necessary for the Xploit team to make some decisions about the next steps about the team and about the need to be focused on priorities for the community.

Step by step and with support and guidance the most significant change Xploit have 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 who have not been graduated, to create new opportunities for them. Being well aware of the need to offer strong and attractive opportunities to empower them, and to develop and re-motivate their interest in education and labour market.

To emphasize that Salt have been experiencing a lack of opportunities, not of wills. If learning projects are not successful due to the many closed doors, there are no places, no jobs, and no real options...the consequence is collective frustration, non-confidence, and finally dropping out.



The description of the final impact in the community of Salt could be summarized through two different readings:

IN the process:

- 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** and its attempts to consolidate in a formal network: the last year of Xploit the network is working on the idea to change in a formal network.
- The understanding to provide sustainable solutions to the needs of the community is necessary to incorporate also the private sector: the real **Joining forces**.
- The increasing interest of the **Joining forces for Youth** network 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 to work at European level is necessary some kind of learning.
- From 2011 the Municipality is partner in a new European project: LABlearning.
- 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 decision making, what produces a lot of talking, no further action and a lot of human resources frustration.
- The community processes stop when the funding ends.
- The lack of competences of the community players to be at European level.

- The lack of human resources.
- To sustain the interest and motivation in the network is a hard work.
- The need of funding to maintain the network: the volunteering doesn't work, is not sustainable.

After the Xploit experience in Salt there we have the conviction that each community has its own process and the difficulty to work on general theories; each case should be based on its own reality.



The work done with the Xploit project has given to the **Joining Forces for Youth** network a closer approach to the European dimension and different ways to work, to face the local needs to find different solutions.

The involvement and strong collaboration of the network ensures its sustainability and its willingness to continue working.

The cooperation between the Institutions representing the **Joining Forces for Youth** and the conviction that Joining forces is the only way to find sustainable proposals.

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

The Xploit influence and the LABlearning project experiences have been taking into account and used for the Municipality in the writing of the new Local Youth Plan 2012-2015, providing a European Perspective: this influence denotes the beginning of new ways of thinking and working.

In the last European Call -2013- the Municipality is partner in 3 new applications.

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

Institutions-members of the Joining Forces for Youth:

Municipality of Salt

ERAM College

Casal dels Infants

Fundació Ser.gi

Institute Vallvera

During the last year and half the Xploit project has been invited in several dissemination events to explain the European experience and implementing work in the community of Salt.

The aims of the project have been spread during all the community Xploit process in several private and public institutions with the aim to involve them in the Joining forces aims and network.

- The development of new community initiatives not linked to existing projects but inspired by the European way of working

- The strong involvement of the different Institutions in the **Joining Forces for Youth** network and the work done with them
- The desire of the network to continuing working for the community and to involve in it more new institutions
- Working with the **Joining forces for Youth** to further disseminate the **NEW WAYS** of working in the community and for the community

