



The TAS for AGRIFORM methodology
(resource for the inclusion of difficult target within Vocation Training systems)

Abstract Version

*This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.
This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.*

Improving the competitiveness of the Small Agricultural Entrepreneurship in Europe working on an Innovative Training properly designed for Farmers.

This is the aim of the Pilot Project "TAS for AGRIFORM" experimented in the same time in Spain, Bulgaria, Poland and Italy by Serifo srl and allowing to conceive a real International Research Laboratory, unique in Europe. A lack within the Vocational Training for the Fruit & Vegetable Sectors has been overcome thanks to new training approaches and pathways addressed to over 50 y. o. and low educated European Farmers; their needs of refreshment and re-qualification have specifically been addressed. So, new development and reflection pathways have been open on the inclusion, within training processes, of targets that are really difficult due to their age, their cultural background and their personality really aiming to realise concretely a continuous dimension of the learning.

The professional development of an agricultural entrepreneur takes always place within an community (small or bigger) situated in a territorial context, participating in experiences, traditions, operational models transmitted from generation to generation, in forms of knowledge (often implicit and tacit embedded in the practices) which mark in a specific way the entrepreneur's practices.

One of the essential elements in professional training and professional development is the process of apprenticeship intended as a process of peripheral legitimate participation to practices which have been considered as effective and valid within a professional community.

This requires that new learning and understanding (in terms of knowledge and competencies to be acquired and developed) should be proposed first of all as practical forms of knowledge legitimated and acknowledged within a community of practices.

Professional training and professional development should be considered not as processes of de-contextualised introduction of new knowledge and competencies within an individual repertory, but should be conceived as a process of negotiation of new knowledge and competencies within a community.

*For these reasons within **Tas for Agriform** Project, the educational and training intervention has been developed in a contextual perspective, focusing on the educational and training needs of a specific community of practices, involving all its members within a negotiating process.*

*The educational and training methodology developed within the **Tas for Agriform** project has been designed in order to be used within a non formal educational and training context, which is representative of the real practical contexts where entrepreneurs interact with other professionals in a framework of shared experiences and knowledge on the basis of acknowledged repertories and consolidated practices, legitimated roles and positions constructed through shared learning stories.*

This requires a preliminary exploration of territories, communities, practices and knowledge in use, in order to construct bridges and interface devices with the new forms of knowledge introduced with educational and training curricula.

Educational and training devices have been developed in order to pass new knowledge and competence in a way that can make them immediately acknowledged and transferred according to a practical basis. So the curricular contents are proposed on the basis of a problematic experience emerging within a context of professional practice and focusing on the actions and practices to be used in order to manage those experiences. Thus they are supported with materials to be used and transferred within a community of practice so that professional communities can grow and be developed through new models of practice and new tools to be acquired and reflectively used.

Communities of practice evolve through shared learning stories (Wenger, 1998), therefore it is very important to track the stories shared within a community and to confront them with other stories, which represent new and different ways of problem posing and of problem management and solving.

This would lead to the construction of a new and different repertory of stories, which will feed up the cultural background of the community, and will represent a platform useful to knowledge transfer from older to younger generations.

For these reasons the learning materials used within the educational and training methodology Tas for Agriform have been developed using a narrative format. Problematic situations in professional practice have been presented as war stories to confront with, within a community of practitioners which represents a wider territorial community.

The impact with "war stories" has elicited the emergence, construction and sharing of personal and community stories, which have fed up and sustained inquiry and reflection processes on professional practice problems and have supported transformative learning processes on an individual and communal basis.

In order to be properly used with the Tas for Agriform methodology each narrative unit has been developed according to the following procedural framework:

- describe a professional practice context.
- allow the identification of a professional practice problem;
- offer the presentation of mistakes or difficulties in the management of professional problems caused by a lack of specific knowledge and competences;
- allow the opening up of possible alternative solutions.

Narrative units have been therefore conceived as a stimulus material which can activate reflection and problematisation processes referred to some specific themes and learning contents and which can support the encounter of professional practical knowledge and expert knowledge.

In order to achieve the above mentioned goal, narratives have been articulated in sequences and supported with images in the form of comic strips in order to catch and maintain the learners' attention and to provide alternative and supportive learning materials according to a case study methodology.