



## C-xtra EU retention and guidance website for students and tutors

UK/08/LLP-LdV/TOI-163\_160

<http://www.adam-europe.eu/adam/project/view.htm?prj=4581>

## Project Information

Title: C-xtra EU retention and guidance website for students and tutors

Project Number: UK/08/LLP-LdV/TOI-163\_160

Year: 2008

Project Type: Transfer of Innovation

Status: completed

Country: UK-United Kingdom

Marketing Text: The C-Xtra EU project transferred an innovative, award-winning web-based questionnaire and toolkit, developed in the UK, to improve student retention rates in vocational education and training.

Summary: This project transferred an innovative web-based questionnaire and toolkit, developed in the UK, across the EU to improve student retention rates in Colleges and Learning Providers.

Description: This project transferred innovation from the UK to three partner countries across the EU, through the translation and cultural adaptation of C-xtra UK, to improve retention rates in colleges and learning providers thereby contributing to improved skills levels across the EU

### Objectives

- To complete further research into the key issues underlying retention in the partner countries
- To use this research to adapt C-xtra UK into an on-line EU retention toolkit, translated into European community languages and adapted according to cultural differences
- To train tutors in the use of the toolkit and share good practice regarding retention strategies
- To pilot and trial the toolkit in the partner countries to validate the amendments
- To establish distributor agreements with partners to ensure sustainability and use across colleges and providers in each of the countries post-project

As well as linking directly to the Lisbon strategy

"to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion."

(strategic goal for 2010 set for Europe at the Lisbon European Council - March 2000)

C-xtra EU offers tailored advice and guidance to young people on a range of retention issues including self esteem, self efficacy, motivation and perceived support needs etc. Equally, the website develops the learning environment for teachers, supports diverse groups of students and is steeped in intercultural dialogue to consider core and diverse EU retention issues.

There is evidence of need in the form of global measures of retention rates supplied by the OECD, and country specific issues and needs e.g. the Portuguese report on increasing participation, whose messages reflect those in the UK report 'Raising Expectations: Staying in Education post 16', the department for Education and Skills, March 2007. In the Portuguese report, as in the UK report, the Minister of Education considered the retention of students in vocational and professional education as a core political priority. This was also mirrored in the need for Sweden to adopt different strategies for improving retention, and for Austria to improve their retention rates.

Martinez and Munday's research for the National Learning and Skills Council (1998) underlined the lack of recording systems in vocational education for students who have dropped out and claims that there were no systems that supply a self-report questionnaire for students which analyse 'drop-out' risk. The study and subsequent

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research by CXL and our partners had shown that there are no systems in place that were able to collect data for individual students own reports nor class averaging for retention issues to support teaching staff in improving retention and completion rates. C-xtra EU built on projects such as the Personal Profile and support for learners project ([www.p-p-s.org](http://www.p-p-s.org)) by offering innovative class averaging, advice and guidance for students as well as class teachers and guidance professionals. It also transferred the innovation to countries that had not been involved in this previous project. Swedish organisations had previously been involved in training initiatives to support drop-out students on a previous European project called 'Retain', however this was clearly not a website diagnostic tool. A search on the Leonardo project website offered in the guidance document did not find any project that shares the innovation of C-xtra EU's website. Offering a diagnostic website for teachers and students moved pedagogical materials forward in a culturally relevant way to each partner as well as addressing core EU retention issues.

This pedagogical initiative offered award winning innovation and robust research design and methodology. C-xtra UK was developed in accordance with psychometric principles by professionally qualified Occupational Psychologists, employing statistical analysis using SPSS (software for social science research). C-xtra UK was grounded and developed in accordance with psychological theories of motivation and self esteem, both in questionnaire design and written content for tutors and students. In the development of C-xtra EU partners researched and considered cultural issues regarding retention to ensure robust product development.

Students from a range of vocational courses were given the tool to test in order to give a representative sample in relation to both geography and course. This approach enabled psychometric principles to be followed to ensure that the measure, which formed the core of the toolkit, is reliable. Support to students, as a result of the assessment, were tracked and retention strategies adopted analysed for effectiveness. Feedback from tutors and students were integrated into the final adaptation of the system. Countries supplied students and IT systems for testing of the website during regular teaching time.

Students on vocational courses participated in the testing in partner countries, and short term support was offered for those identified as 'at risk' with long term opportunities for training providers to use the innovation again in their institutions (and institutions across the partner countries, and others, post-project) through distributor and licence agreements, and best practice derived from successful intervention strategies. C-xtra EU had an impact on students by offering direct advice and guidance to individuals and by giving tutors intelligent data to support students to complete courses; thereby up-skilling them to contribute to the EU economy.

A clear workplan was developed with smart targets and outputs, against a realistic timeline which was based on the academic year in each of the participating countries. Regular Management meetings had been planned into the workplan to ensure that performance was monitored effectively. Careers Europe have over 15 years of experience of managing European projects and were responsible for co-ordinating activities to ensure tasks were completed within timescales set. Each work package had distinct outputs, with partner responsibilities clearly defined. Progress towards outputs was monitored regularly to ensure that deadlines were going to be achieved, and so that issues or problems could be discussed at an early stage to overcome barriers.

In addition the partnership also employed an independent evaluator; this aided progress, and provided regular feedback on processes and impact, which enabled continuous development throughout the project.

Themes: \*\*\* Lifelong learning  
\* ICT  
\* Vocational guidance

## Project Information

- \* Continuous training
- \* Initial training

Sectors: \* Education

Product Types: website

Product information: The C-Xtra EU tool is a web-based questionnaire and toolkit, developed in the UK and transferred to Sweden, Portugal and Austria to improve student retention rates in vocational education and training.

It offers teachers, guidance professionals and students a series of questions followed by advice and guidance based on key retention issues specific to these countries.

The tool was developed by psychologists at CXL (now 'Via Partnerships') in the UK.

Projecthomepage: [www.c-xtra.eu](http://www.c-xtra.eu)

## Project Contractor

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## Partner

### Partner 1

Name: INSTITUTO DE ORIENTAÇÃO PROFISSIONAL  
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Country: PT-Portugal  
Organization Type: university/Fachhochschule/academy  
Homepage: <http://www.iop.ul.pt>

### Partner 2

Name: STIFTELSEN KURSVERKSAMHETEN VID LUND UNIVERSITETET/FOLKUNIVERSITETET  
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Country/Region: Sydsverige  
Country: SE-Sweden  
Organization Type: university/Fachhochschule/academy  
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### Partner 3

Name: BEST Institut für berufsbezogene Weiterbildung und Personaltraining GmbH  
City: Vienna  
Country/Region: Vienna  
Country: AT-Austria  
Organization Type: continuing training institution  
Homepage: <http://www.best.at>

## Products

- 1 C Xtra EU Online tool

## Product 'C Xtra EU Online tool'

Title: C Xtra EU Online tool

Product Type: website

Marketing Text:

Description:

Target group:

Result:

Area of application:

Homepage:

Product Languages: Portuguese  
Swedish  
English  
German