

Result N° 10

Fine tuning report and program

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INTRODUCTION

This document is aimed to describe the design and adaptation of the Complex Learning approach for refugees and asylum seekers' trainers training.

The general pedagogical model is here fine tuned with the specification of:

learning goals based on needs analyses and the specific scenario;

learning activities and interactions;

functionalities and tools;

guidance and tutoring model;

evaluation approach.

The Model setting represents the base for the didactical design of the training course for trainers dealing with refugees and asylum seekers. A Program setting proposal is then described, specifying the formative pact, the learning activities of trainers, the structure of training for trainers pathway and suggested topics.

ABSTRACT

The Complex Learning approach is introduced within the framework of the DEEPER project aims with reference to the specific training system of refugees and asylum seekers. DEEPER piloting experience of the Complex Learning approach is then presented highlighting features and constraints emerging from critical remarks on the experimental results.

DEEPER Model Setting follows on the base of the collected information, describing requirements for its implementation through a contextualized:

pre-design: needs analysis, context constraints, organizational issues, time-planning of development of a complex community;

methodological design: aims, evaluation approach, didactic methods;

technical design and learning environment.

Finally a Program setting is proposed, with a proposal of a training pathway framework, a description of topics and activities and operative instructions for each phase.

SCENARIO: WHERE THE COMPLEX LEARNING MODEL DEVELOPS

In the last few years some new learning models have been developed to address the paradigm of complexity, conceiving the learning environment as a flexible space; one of these innovative models is Complex Learning. Under this term we can recognize various visions and interpretations, referring to common principles and realizing practices in different ways. We intend Complex Learning as an approach where learning space is composed by multiple components (communication means and tools, codes, languages, training aids, resources) that are in an interactive and complementary relation; a social and cultural space where learner moves, explores, draws on the surrounding opportunities to create his own experience, adapting the acquired knowledge to his previous representations.

Complex Learning is a blended model in a wider sense: it not only integrates the two dimensions of face-to-face and distance, but it also expands the learning perspective enriching it with a multiplicity of actors, resources, communication forms and means, where the result is bigger than the sum of its components. Different e-learning typologies, new languages and new interaction modalities are in a continuous reconfiguration, and therefore in “remediation” [8]; the virtual non-places are in a constant overlapping to the real places. The learning environment is active and ubiquitous; learner builds a personalized space using the web tools and resources for research of information, communication, publishing, collaborating, and acting in the communities of experts.

In Complex Learning the term “complex” refers to the problematic nature of reality and, consequently, of knowledge: according to complexity and chaos theories, human cognition can be viewed as a complex system, that interacts with its environment and can be modified by it.

Complexity in education designates an open, dynamic and flexible system, constantly self-generating and self-organizing. It means that the learning outcomes are unpredictable a priori, and that traditional learning approaches can't adequately address the complex and multi-dimensional nature of cognition. It's impossible to predict trajectories in a learning process. Complex Learning reflects the complexity of reality without simplifying it; the learner can take hold of it and live it from its inside. The improvement of his self-directed learning and critical thinking competences

makes him no more a passive user but a creative, reflexive and conscious co-designer, able to move in the liquid continuum of the age of knowledge. The learning process is connoted by non-linearity, holism and serendipity, in which the social, collective and connective dimension represents a vital factor.

This approach appears particularly consistent with the specific features of the training system addressed to refugees and asylum seekers and above all with reference to the wide and heterogeneous system of recruitment and training for trainers.

Complex learning approach can integrate the multiplicity and complexity of diverse systems in a common flexible program of intervention, without decreasing its own richness, through the start up of a permanent, active and participated European network, based on a collaborative process of sharing of experiences and solutions.

The Complex Learning approach has not been applied in the DEEPER experience directly to the training of refugees or asylum seekers, but to their trainers.

Nevertheless the direct experience of Complex Learning represents for trainers the only effective training necessary in order to apply later on this approach with learners. Indeed Complex Learning approach well answers to the specific needs of learners having a migrants background. Due to the different needs and lifestyles of migrants, training delivery has to be flexible, sometimes really brief, and adapted to learners' schedules and location: this means promoting learning when/where possible, acknowledging learners' social, work, and family commitments, involving learning at a distance, trying to meet different levels of literacy and of education.

Complex Learning approach allows indeed to enhance and support a variety of teaching/learning methods thus catering for diverse learning styles, for instance allowing visual learners to see videos and presentations, and auditory learners to listen to a wealth of both original and designed material (news, videos, movies, songs, or role-plays and dialogues). It also allows for different paces in a group and a variety of learning activities which make the lessons and self-study more engaging and varied, for example alternating watching a video with social interaction at a distance; assigning different tasks to different learners, encouraging peer to peer support for specific project work sessions, in the classroom or in the web forum, combining 'learning on their own' with 'learning with others', and so on.

THE DEEPER PILOTING EXPERIENCE

The DEEPER piloting experience has constituted the effective base for the adaptation of the Complex Learning framework to the specific context of training of trainers dealing with refugees and asylum seekers.

The Monitoring Report has recorded the interactions realized in the virtual Deeper Community during the WP4 “Pilot run”, for a period of six months, the interaction analysis aimed to give a contribution for the improvement and transferring of the Complex Learning Model to the Training refugees System, by identifying the strength and weakness of the implementation process of the Complex learning dynamics among trainers dealing with refugees and asylum seekers within the Deeper Community.

The development of the Complex Learning Community of Deeper was planned according to the standard phases of development of a Complex Learning Community defined in the Complex Learning Model.

Complex Community construction and development stages can be summarized as follows:

PHASE	ACTIONS
ACCESS	<p>information about : aims, times, ways</p> <p>adhesion to the complex learning proposal through a learning agreement</p> <p>registration to the community</p> <p>access to the web environment of the community</p>
SOCIALIZATION	<p>exploration and familiarization with the web environment of the community</p> <p>profile description</p> <p>self introduction to the other members of the community explicating motivations and expectations</p> <p>lurking</p>
INTERACTION	<p>First interactions with the complex tutor during the welcome phase</p> <p>first interactions with the other members of the Community through</p> <p>Happening of cognitive conflict through the interactions with the other members of the Community around themes of discussions</p>
COLLABORATION	<p>Sharing of experiences, of representative biographies, knowledge thanks to the cognitive conflict</p> <p>Sharing of common problems, doubts, solutions, tools</p> <p>Development of peer to peer supports dynamics</p> <p>Complete adhesion to the aim of the community and knowledge sharing consolidation</p>

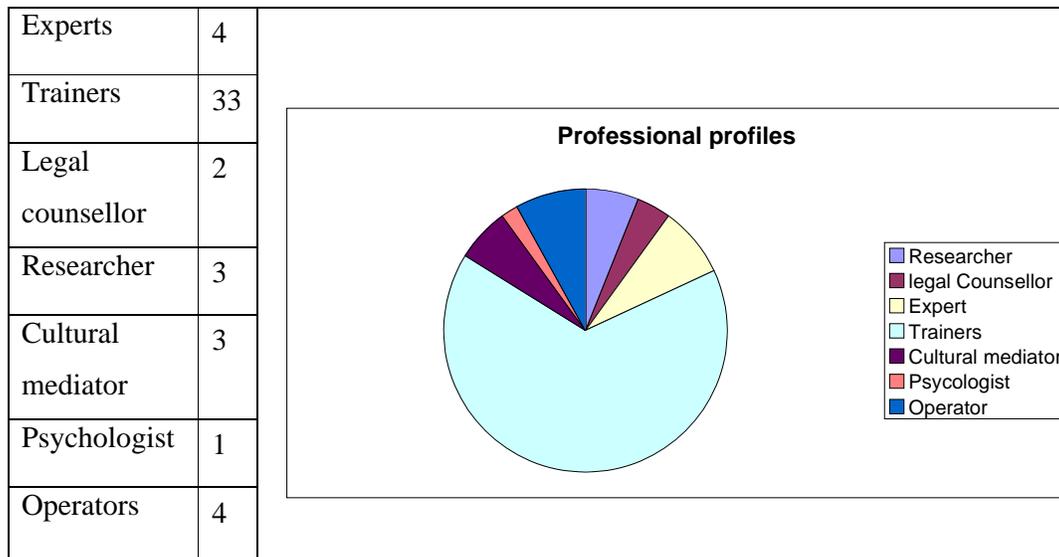
DEVELOPMENT	Request of transformation of the learning environment Identification of experts de facto improvement of the autonomy of the community in the problem finding, problem setting, problem solving, developing of a dynamic leadership, growing of the networking with other communities having similar interests and aims
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One year is the basic time required in order to observe the beginning of typical dynamics of a Complex Community:

- decreasing of oppositions and mistrust,
- consolidation of the sense of belonging and membership,
- establishing of a logic of reciprocity,
- growing of the disposability to knowledge and experiences sharing,
- development of peer to peer supports dynamics.

In its six months lifecycle the Deeper complex community has involved 117 members, 94 of them as active participants. Of these 117 members, 17 belong to the partnership and 79 are trainers; 28 persons have spontaneously adhered to the community. The professional profile of the member is represented in the following chart:

Professional profiles



Critical remarks on the experimental results

The piloting took place in the period of time of six months, that is the minimum time to accomplish the access and socialization phases and the first actions of the interaction step; so, the results of the piloting can give a feedback focused on the initial steps of the building of the complex community and a partial overview on the participants needs and behaviours. These remarks represent a decisive repertory of information in order to carry out the fine tuning of the experience approach and to design the Model setting following described.

The critical aspects can be summarized as following.

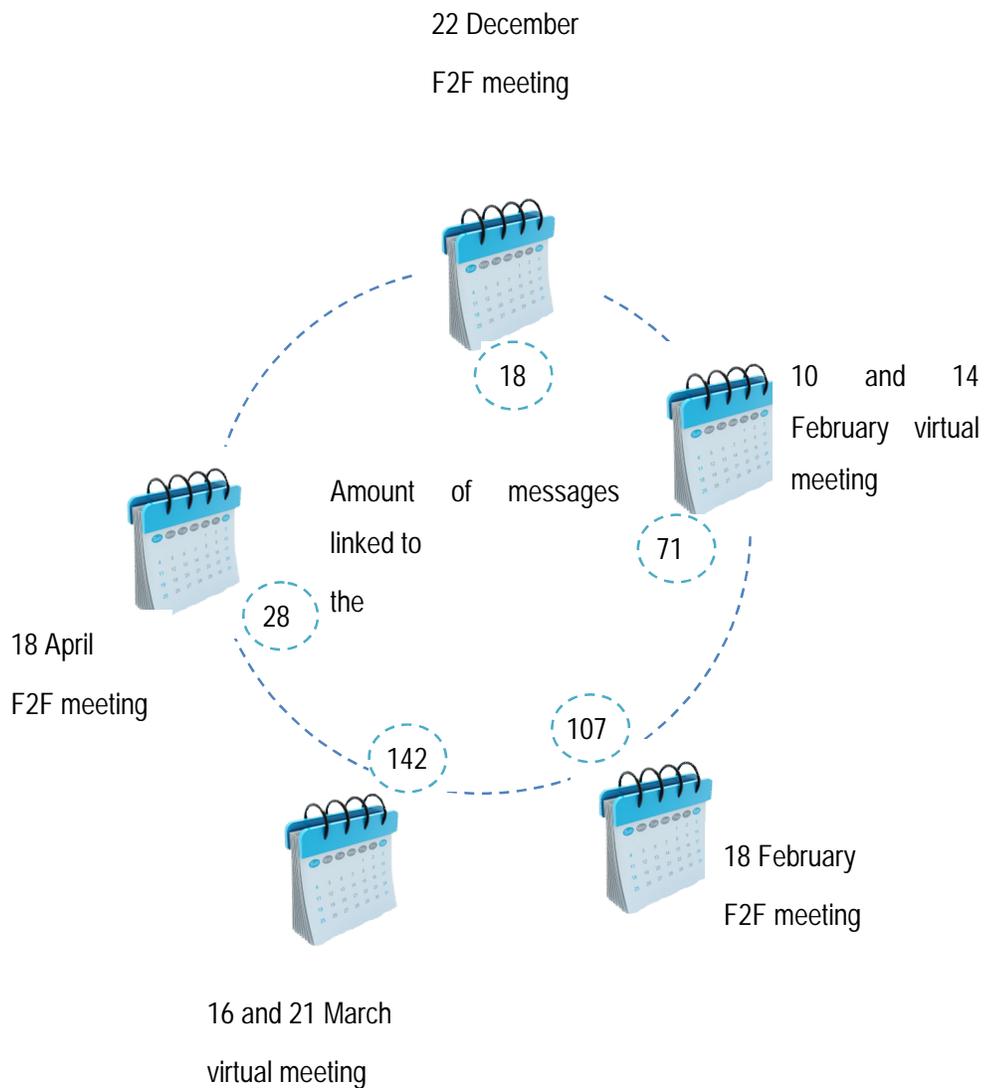
1. The lacking of the self-presentations in the public profile. Only 11 of 57 Trainers' web profiles completed: one the first task trainers were invited to accomplish was their description through the personal profile. Many of the participants have not filled the profile field in the platform; anyway, a self-presentation was solicited in an informal thread in the group discussion. The overlapping of the two different spaces and the non-redundancy in asking each participants to add information about their selves could be the reason why the appropriate space was not used to complete the personal profiles.

2. **The low number of messages.** 166 of the 333 messages were posted by the partners of the Deeper project, that is the half of the whole number of messages. Since the Deeper community is the starting of the development of a complex community, the core circle of the community is represented by the partners, who act as animators and scaffold the interaction. The number of the messages is quite low; the Community started in December 2010 with a preliminary face to face meeting with a group of about 10 trainers from Rome. In the beginning the online interaction has been not really active and intensive, with just 18 messages from 13 of December 2010 to 13 of January 2011. Roughly half of these 18 messages were posted only after the meeting in presence.

In the first steps, participants have not still clear what to do and how to do it, since the complex community is an innovative learning environment and a innovative learning experience where known training routines and usual communicative models doesn't work.

3. **The reluctance to use the asynchronous tools.** Trainers have found difficult in using the asynchronous discussion forum: at the beginning, they didn't post or answer to other contributions. To support the online interactions, face-to-face and virtual meetings have been organized in February 2011. The meeting consisted in inviting participant to use the asynchronous tools as a chat, beside the chat itself: in fact, the trainers have shown to prefer the synchronous conversation instead that the typical forum interaction.

The following chart shows the general progress of the interactions within the Community of Trainers, with a gradual increasing of messages, to underline the importance of these events in order to support the online interaction.



The peak of the interaction is reported after the second “face to face” meeting. At this stage the community was enough internally differentiated (geographically, for background, in terms of age, etc), the number of members was increased, people have had time to familiarize with the communicative rules and technical functions of the Community.

4. **The tendency to interact one-to-one.** One of the characteristic of the complex learning model is the many-to-many interaction, open not only to the circle of the members of the community but also to the external world (experts, institutions, groups and communities). The trainers who participated to the piloting did not leave their habit to dialogue in one-to-one modality to enter in the logic of the group interaction.

Participants are bound to “face to face” model of interaction; they prefer virtual synchronous meetings and rarely use the web forum interacting autonomously; they mainly adopt a “one to one” model of communication, principally in order to post messages with the staff. This verbal behaviour reflects a “online” childish attitude to a sort of “collective monolog”: participants still not interact each other in a “many to many” collective perspective. They really share experiences and knowledge, make questions in order to deepen some issues, but still not exchange this knowledge each other in a collective, collaborative approach. There are no disagreements, debates, or flaming interactions producing new knowledge.

5. The poorly user-friendly platform. The virtual environment was chosen in order to implement the different functions and communication channels and tools as requested in the complex learning model. The deeper community has been implemented on an Elgg platform (<http://www.elgg.org/>). The interface of the chosen web space is not user friendly: it was difficult also for the animators of the community to adapt and gradually implement the already set. environment A contextual help or technical support was not directly available. The URL itself, for the access to the Trainers Deeper Community is too long, making it difficult to digit or memorize the address. The pages of the virtual environment do not respect a help-logic; for example, the basilar functions (membership, the answer button or add a topic...) are not differentiated by secondary functions. It is often necessary to scroll the page to find the button associated to the function. There is not an automatic system to inform users if there are new messages and to highlight news. A brief list of last messages appears only at the page bottom.

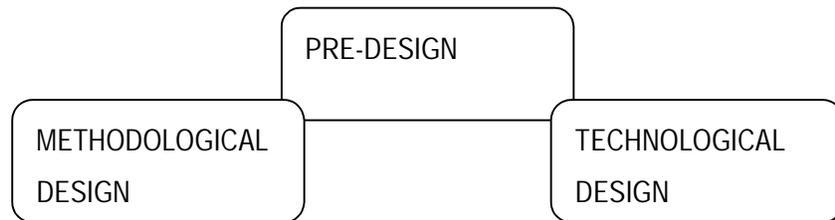
Many time occurred problems in uploading or downloading files. Particularly in a community oriented to the complex learning logic, this definitely limits one of the most important mission of this experience: sharing of best practices in professional and personal environment.

DEEPER MODEL SETTING

Critical remarks, emerging from the experimental results, offer the base for an effective Model setting, with specific reference to the particular context of refugees' trainers Training System, as it has been shown by the did experience. The Pre-design phase, following described, is the right phase to include and valorize the acquired information and highlighted remarks.

The Complex Learning Model integrates three dimensions: theoretical model, pedagogical model and technological model, setting at these three levels the theoretical paradigms, approaches and scenario, the didactic strategies and techniques and the technological environment. To plan a complex learning experience it is therefore necessary to operate at three design levels:

1. a pre-design phase: a scenario overview and the organizational issues;
2. a methodological design: a definition of strategies and didactic approach;
3. a technological design: a description of the learning environment and its tools.



	Organizational	
Aims and objectives	issues	Virtual learning environment
Didactic strategies	Needs analysis	Interaction and communication tools
Contents	Project constraints	
	Resources	

In the pre-design phase, the organization of the course takes place (logistic, times, schedules, etc.), with the definition of the users profile, the needs analysis, the project

constraints, the financial and human resources, the alignment of the staff (especially the supporting figures).

The methodological design is the phase in which must be defined the methodological approach (methods and strategies), the aims, the objectives and the expected results, the didactic interactions and activities, the materials and tools, the evaluation issues, the support to learners.

The technological design consists in the design of the virtual learning environment; it is appropriate that the material implementation of the technological platform is respondent to the peculiarities stressed by the theoretical model. The indication of the technological tools to support the learning experience is the minimum base required for an appropriate operation of the proposed model. Web-based communication tools are to be matched to knowledge management e knowledge sharing tools in order to enhance the strategic role of the participants know-how and skills.

Pre-design: the organization

The DEEPER experience has highlighted some decisive elements, useful in order to set a pre-design aimed to enlarge the Complex Learning model application to the refugees' training system, starting from the trainers' training.

The first step of this pre-design is the trainers' alignment to the innovative training approach of Complex Learning. The better solution to realize this first task is to directly experience on themselves of it. DEEPER started this process creating a multi-actorial Community of 110 operators, low officers, experts and trainers dealing with refugees and asylum seekers, coming from North, Centre and South of Italy and, actually, from Spain. The realised informal complex learning experience created, thanks to DEEPER project, a common background that represents a precious starting point for the development of this previous learning experience towards the empowering of the trainers competences through a common framework, common tools, competences, and so on.

Of this alignment is part also a digital familiarization and an improvement of the digital competences of trainers. The common habit is to live the learning experience in a "protected" space – the learning platform – moving in a structured learning environment and regarding knowledge as an individual property rather than a collective and connective asset. The tendency is to search for synchronous and "one to one" or "one to many" formative communication model. Therefore it is necessary to

develop a new repertory of competencies to afford the learning experience: meta-cognitive competencies (e.g. self-evaluation, self-assessment, self-guidance, attitude to research, problem setting and problem solving ability), collaborative competencies, ability to dialogue through many-to-many communication models, attitude to recognize that an outcome is always the starting point of a new learning experience.

Implementing an innovative pedagogical model requires to act on a threefold levels:

Organizational level;

Teaching level;

Learning Level.

The organisational level involves the System capacity to coordinate and integrate human and economic resources, creating synergies among the multiplicity of actors operating in the wide and complex System of welcome, training and assistance addressed to refugees and asylum seekers. DEEPER has faced this challenge thanks to the cooperation and the agreement with Associated partners like for examples ANCI (Associazione Italiana Comuni Italiani) and Ministry of Interior Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration, and thanks the agreement with local networks like for example the “Rete Scuole Migranti” of Rome.

From the organizational point of view also calendar, courses’ time tables, courses duration, recruitment of teachers and trainers, teaching methods, etc. represent a decisive elements. As concern the specific context of DEEPER experience, the specific complexity and the lack of systematic organization of these aspects represented the starting point of the project initiative. The DEEPER Trainers’ Complex Community has experienced a preliminary process oriented to create and build the necessary synergies.

The teaching level involves the competences of trainers.

The learning level involves the competences of learners: learning skill set, learning attitudes and styles, attitude toward self-learning, previous learning experiences, and their potential areas of improvement.

DEEPER experience acted on the level of Teaching, but in a wider intervention of pre-design, it is necessary to include all the three levels.

The time planning and duration setting is of course part of the pre-design. It is absolutely necessary to take in consideration a duration of at least three years. That is through that creating a Complex Learning Community is a time expensive approach,

but it is the right investment in order to implement the process that deal to the creation of a autonomous, aware and productive Community of Practice, able to face critical events, to share good practices, to support new actors and members.

According to the Plan of development of the TRAINERS DEEPER COMMUNITY this was the suggested timing.

From one to nine stage:

information about : aims, times, ways;

adhesion to the complex learning proposal through a learning agreement;

registration to the community;

access to the web environment of the community;

exploration and familiarization with the web environment of the community;

profile description;

self introduction to the other members of the community explicating motivations and expectations;

lurking;

first interactions with the complex tutor during the welcome phase;

two months.

From ten to fourteen stage:

first interactions with the other members of the Community;

Happening of cognitive conflict through the interactions with the other members of the Community around themes of discussions;

Sharing of experiences, of representative biographies, knowledge thanks to the cognitive conflict;

Sharing of common problems, doubts, solutions, tools;

Development of peer to peer supports dynamics;

eight months.

From fifteen to eighteen stage:

Complete adhesion to the aim of the community and knowledge sharing consolidation;

Request of transformation of the learning environment;

Identification of experts *de facto*;

improvement of the autonomy of the community in the problem finding, problem setting, problem solving;

twelve months.

From nineteen to twenty stage:

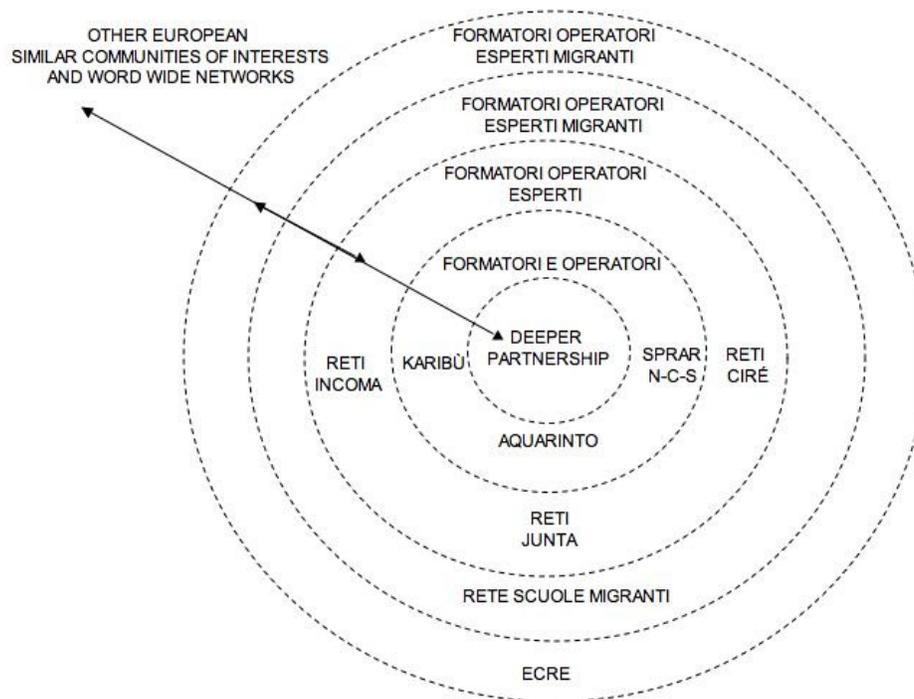
developing of a dynamic leadership;

growing of the networking with other communities having similar interests and aims;

twelve months.

The pace of development of the community through the described stages depends on the reactivity of the community members, on the efficacy of the complex tutor feedbacks, on the reactivity and collaboration of the partnership members acting as hidden tutors.

The members of the DEEPER partnership constitute the core of the DEEPER Complex Community. Actually in the DEEPER project are potentially involved several interacting communities. The following picture shows the planned progressive enlargement of the DEEPER TRAINERS Community, including the European perspective.



Finally it is decisive to plan the Technical features and support. From a technological point of view it is important that the virtual environment of web-mediated interaction is simple, usable and intuitive. The idea of Complex learning Environment is the progressive and flexible implementation of new resources and tools by the participants who are guided to “furnish” the learning environment with the necessary and useful materials and resources. Then in the pre-design phase it is important to organize the technical support and to build a “tool-box” easy to be used.

Methodological design: activities, tools and support

In the Complex Learning environment informal and non-formal learning are valorised in a holistic vision; the learner customizes his space according to his/hers needs. The result is an hybrid place, characterized by the interaction of multiple actors, the digital integration of different codes, the openness to creativity. All these features contribute to build a shared knowledge and to realize “learnativities”, activities aiming to realize learning in action, situated, authentic and collaborative based [7].

AIMS

As specifically concern the DEEPER Community the Complex Learning approach is applied in order to reach the following aims:

to support trainers in order to face diverse learning styles and behaviour of people with different cultural background and psychological meaning related to the refugees experiences;

to adapt teaching behaviour and integrate innovative methods (such as informal, collaborative) that can foster a learner centred approach and continuity in learning;

to differentiate delivery organization in terms of curricula, tools and programs employed in each local area;

to address the rising need for innovative (taking into account potential of informal, learner centred, behavioural learning) and common framework training (tools & programs as well as trainers community) which fulfil the requirements of refugees learning needs, styles and integration processes;

to support and guide trainers to share competences and experiences;

to support and guide trainers to share innovative methodologies, results and practices.

DIDACTIC STRATEGY

For the training of trainers dealing with refugees and asylum seekers, in the specific experience of the DEEPER project, the didactic design of the proposed Complex Learning experience emphasizes and valorises the participants’ responsibility in the self-control of learning process; involving and supporting participants to be co-designer in the decisional processes concerning the expected outcomes, the activities and the assessment strategies. The DEEPER Complex Learning experience design is based on a holistic approach presupposing a continuum among the elements, differently from atomistic approaches of traditional learning courses.

The fulcrum of the planning process moves from the instructional agent to the learner, who assumes a wider control of the process: he now can express functions of choose, scheduling, self-assessment, identifying and development of resources: in other words, a personalized learning process. Complex Learning is a learner-centred model based on the knowledge sharing in the community of learning and practice, where the interlocutors and the actors have the opportunity to express their potentiality, their inclinations and attitudes, their personality and their previously acquired knowledge.

The complex tutor has performed the task of “cultivating” the community keeping track of its development process through assiduous and continuous interactions, offering scaffolding and well-timed feedback to motivate students. The complex tutor facilitates the transition among different environments, guiding and orienteering the learner in the liquidity of the educational experience. In this context a traditional e-tutor would be insufficient: in e-learning courses there isn't the habit to blend different environments, tools and actors integrating the learning community with the whole web community.

The complex tutor should have indeed strategic soft skills, particularly about social support: emotional, affective and motivational scaffolding, safeguard of a reciprocal trust climate, stimulating collaborative activities, analysis of interpersonal relations, conflict resolution. But he should be also skilled at a technological level, with the digital competences to use the tools and services of semantic web. He should be able to manage the wrong-footing sensation and the cognitive dissonance encountered by learners.

The role of the complex tutor has not been static, but changeable in relation to the tasks he performs from time to time in the learning environment and in relation to the course stages and the development of the community. So, it can happen that the tutor has been guidance at the very beginning of the learning experience, becoming a support and more and a community animator more than a simple learning assistant.

EVALUATION

The complex tutor has a decisive role also in the evaluation. Evaluation must be coherent with the Complex Learning approach: the reciprocal learning based on the

social construction of new meanings and the reconstruction of the experience in a individual perspective, the deepening and the consolidation of the acquired knowledge through the collaboration in the Learning Community. The focus is on the group learning as a result of a longitudinal process of acquisition of learning autonomy.

As concern the evaluation approach the following assessment approaches are used:

self-assessment: the student reflects on his learning process and on the achieved result;

peer assessment: every member of the group assesses others members and their contribution to the job of the whole group;

external-assessment: the tutor (or the teacher or the experts) assesses the group and its members, in particular from the point of view of interactions and collaboration;

group assessment: the group reflects on its learning process and on the achieved result from the point of view of the social acquisition of new knowledge and from the point of view of activated collaborative dynamics.

These assessment activities are fully part of the learning experience. Indeed meanwhile people go through the complex learning process, from the access phase to the development phase, evaluate the result of the interaction in a continuous comparison with the daily real work activities and results. The evaluation feedbacks comes from several sources: the dialogue with other participants, the experience of suggested solutions in the daily work activity, the self-reflection and the collective reflection in action, always recalled in the forum discussions. The tasks and the results of the evaluation are widely distributed: the tutors guide and orient the group to focus on some results or critic points by time to time valorising critical events. Tutor and experts, of course, give constantly feedbacks, answers and remarks. The learning outcomes are tested through the real improvement of effectiveness of the solutions applied in the daily work activities. All the traditional and innovative tools can be applied here, both by tutor and participants, in order to measure and codify these results.

In order to estimate in what measure students have participated in the learning process, there are strategies like the analysis of messages, the tracking of the visited pages, the participation to the discussion within the asynchronous web forum. The analysis of the interactions concerns various degrees, from the simple interaction

between student- teacher, student-resources, student-contents, until the complex group interaction in the learning collaborative community.

Group collaboration includes various dimensions, like: ability to interact with the other members and to work in group; quality of the participation; relationship between teacher/tutor and students; quality of the group activities; collaborative strategies in the virtual learning environment. The analysis of the interactions answers to the requirement of monitoring the course processes and the activities, and allows to have a continuous and meaningful feedback.

The Formative pact, introduced and explained to participants from the very beginning of the learning experience, well summarizes all these methodological issues:

WHAT IS THE TRAINERS DEEPER COMMUNITY

TRAINERS DEEPER COMMUNITY is a web community aimed at:

encourage, support and valorize collaborative learning processes of operators dealing with refugees and asylum seekers;

enhance competences, tools, practices of training of refugees and asylum seekers;

support the continuous training and refreshment of competences through the sharing of knowledge, practices, tools, contents, solutions;

build integrated models and tools of work;

share, build and re-build roles and professional identities;

generate and share competences, innovative models, tools and contents for the training and the assistance of refugees and asylum seekers;

encourage and support the dialog and comparison among the main actors of Planning, realization and evaluation of training activities addressed to refugees and asylum seekers.

WHAT IS NOT THE TRAINERS DEEPER COMMUNITY

It is not a training course. There are no trainers. There are not didactic materials.

Each component of the DEEPER community is considered, as well as the other components, a “trainer”, since each member is an expert “de facto” of some specific aspects related to the training and to the integration of the specific target of refugees and asylum seekers, and is owner of relevant experiences useful to be shared with the group.

Resources, materials and contents are not pre-defined “a priori” by some external experts. They are chosen, built, proposed all together by the members of the DEEPER COMMUNITY. It means that there is not a initial repertory of didactic materials to be studied. The learning environment will gradually enriched with studying resources really useful for the daily work and effort of people dealing with refugees and asylum seekers.

The database of resources will be as reach as more each member will be willed to be involved and to interact with others sharing experiences, materials, work supports and solutions.

There are not evaluation test, nor formal assessment sessions. Self-evaluation activities will be proposed in order to:

enhance the awareness of owned and tacit competences;

evaluate the efficacy of the shared materials, solutions, strategies in the daily work activity;

monitor the satisfaction of the community experience.

There are not didactic units. Topics of discussions will be the background of all the activities of the community. For example:

Theatre as training strategy;

That time it worked!

Expectations and training needs of refugees and asylum seekers;

Expectations and training needs of trainers dealing with refugees and asylum seekers.

Each member is encouraged to suggest themes of discussion.

WHO IS ADDRESSED THE DEEPER COMMUNITY

All the operators and trainers dealing with refugees and asylum seekers are invited to join the DEEPER COMMUNITY.

DEEPER COMMUNITY is addressed to: whom is at the very first experience, senior professionals, experts, it addressed to whom is discouraged from the daily work activity and to whom wish to propose and suggest positive and innovative solutions; to people that the members of the Community consider authoritative interlocutors, stakeholders, key informants, a crackerjack colleague.

WHAT IS EXPECTED

Participants are asked to:

introduce themselves and describe who they are;

share experiences and practices;

collaborate to build and generate of work supports of common utility;

share tools of work;

actively interact, meet other members trough the web support and asynchronous communication tools, give suggestions, make questions, share doubts and solutions;

offer time and experience.

Technological design: the environment

According to the concept of ubiquitous learning [11], the learning environment is the result of an integrated building realized through different technologies and media; this allows to mix different learning strategies and communication codes in a complex learning environment, a personal and customizable space, where the subjects, contents and services exist in a synergic relation. The learning process is no more developed on the e-learning standardized and packed platform (the learning management system), or within the classroom's boundaries, both limited to static functions, predisposed by someone other, and impossible to be modified by the student. The learning environment is open, characterized by its liquid nature: it's composed by different and complementary spaces and non-spaces, inside which the complex learning community develops. The heterogeneity among the environments is a dimension of the complexity that the model tries to interpret: this complexity is not an obstacle but a wealth of places, spaces, and resources.

The picture in the following page exemplifies this idea of a dynamic and ubiquitous learning environment.

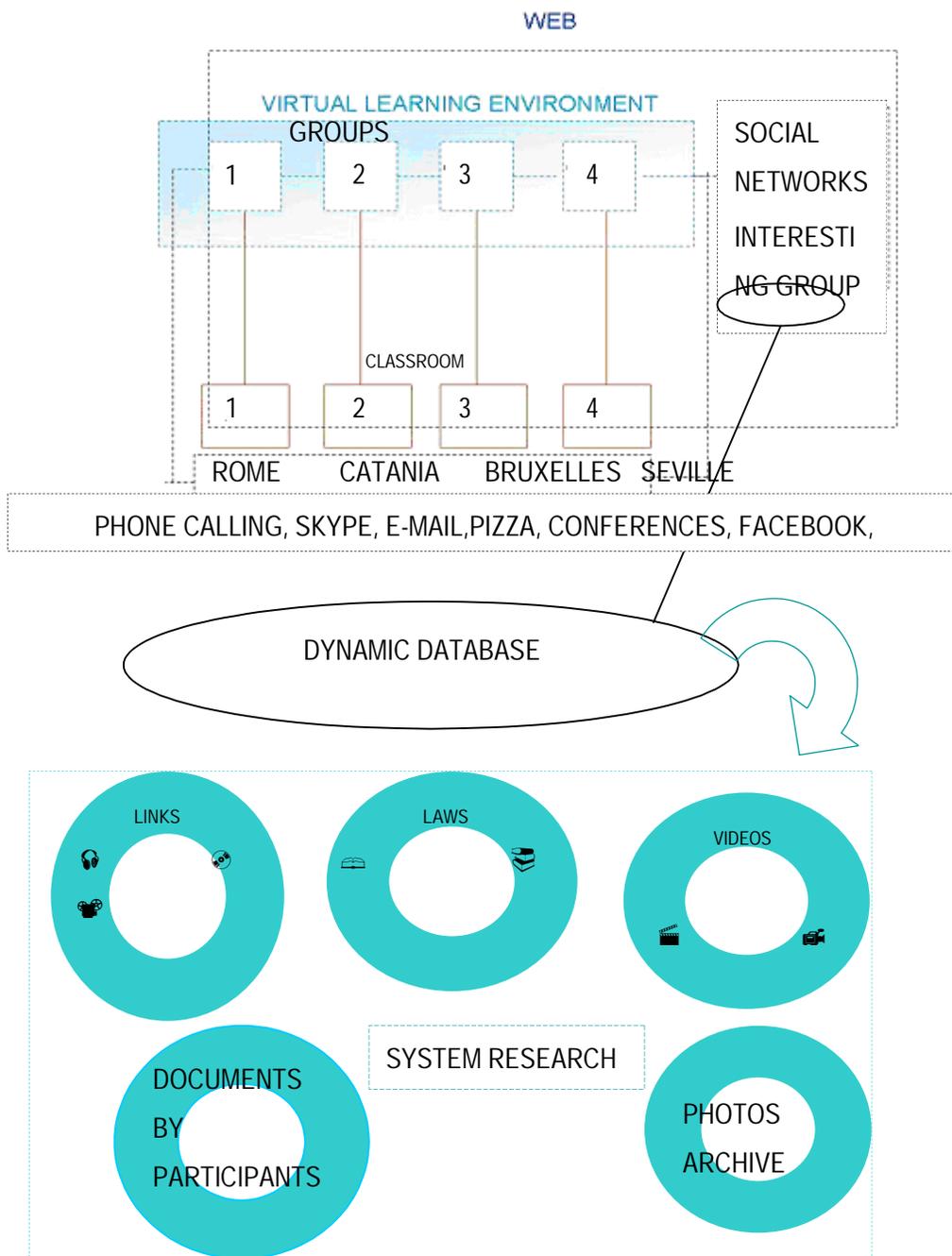


Figure 1. Progressively increasing dynamic database

PROGRAM SETTING

The program setting describes, on the base of the realised DEEPER piloting experience, the suggested training pathway framework for the continuous training and refreshment of competences of trainers dealing with refugees and asylum seekers. A brief introduction of the training pathway framework is preliminarily offered, followed by a description of suggested topics, activities, operative instructions, with specific reference to:

Who;

Where;

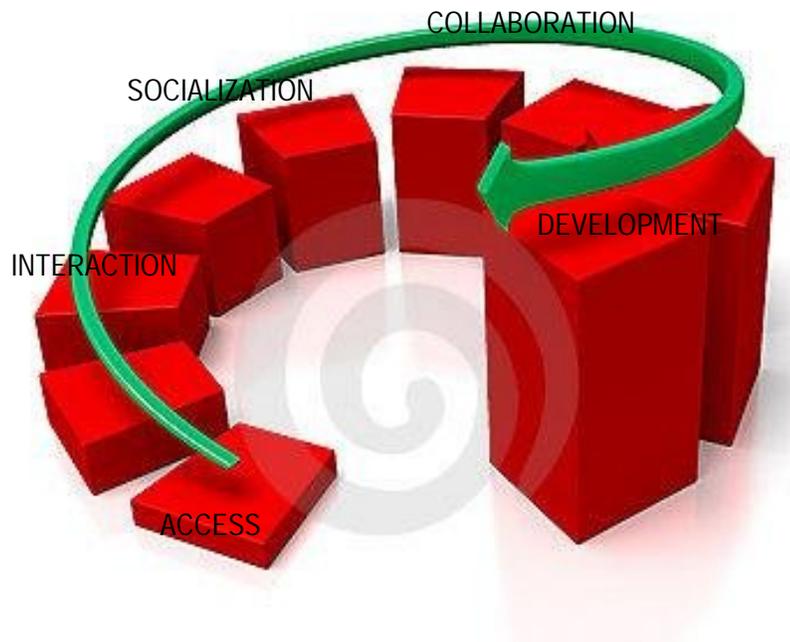
What;

How;

When.

Training Pathway Framework

The learning experience is structured in five phases as shown in the graphic:



The first step is **ACCESS**: the Complex tutor welcome and guide participants, giving key information, reminding aims, times, ways and resources. This phase is decisive and support the complete adhesion of members to the proposed complex learning experience that is presented in a “learning agreement”. The space where the ACCES happens is the both the classroom, where the members are introduced to the use of the technological tools and web learning environments, under the guide of the Complex tutor, in order to acquire confidence with the digital environment where they will work and interact also at a distance. During this phase the registration and login actions are completed. The activities in this phase are oriented to start sharing information and ideas, in order to define the common target of the community. It is then decisive in this phase to encourage the self-presentation and informal interaction or jokes.

The second step is **SOCIALIZATION**: it happens in the web with the exploration and familiarization with the web community where the members get to know each other through the reading of profile and self introduction description, exchange informally their motivations and expectations. The members have time to acquire the necessary competences for the use of the web space and of functions useful in order to realize workgroup at a distance. In this phase complex tutor encourages discussions in order to focus on the themes of interest, recalling also the discussions started in the previous phase in presence, dealing the group to debate and propose new arguments, exchanging ideas or information.

The third step is **INTERACTION**: normally the interaction starts according to a “one to one” dynamic between each participant and the tutor and gradually it enlarges to the other members of the community. In this phase the sense of belonging to the community starts to be built : the members are invited to discuss common themes and problems and to share experiences related to these topics exchanging resources, solutions, ideas. The members learn that they can use their own repertory of experiences as well as all the web as a source of information and examples, progressively increasing a shared thematic database of resources, selecting what they consider best for their own needs and expectations. The Complex tutor encourages the interaction among participants, orient the identification of materials and examples, guide the population of the thematic database. Experts and stakeholders can be invited to join the group for some thematic virtual or face to face meeting, to discuss themes of common interests.

The fourth step is **COLLABORATION**: when the membership is consolidated thanks to the sharing of experiences, representative biographies, common problems, doubts, solutions and tools, when the group has acquired awareness of owned competences, it is possible to start with some collaborative activities of project work. The choice of the artefact to be built is commonly shared and clearly referred to daily work needs and activities. In this step the most important role is held by participants that are considered like experts and cooperate to achieve the planned results. Project work activities can be realized both in classroom or at a distance, with the support and the guide of the Complex tutor. Experts and stakeholders can be invited to join the group to give feedbacks about the realised artefacts. Tutor encourages the experimentation of realised products in the daily work activities, organise workshops, in order to collect feedbacks and remarks about the effectiveness of what has been realized. This is time for benchmarking and for self evaluation sessions.

The final step is **DEVELOPMENT**. The necessary time to reach this phase it is not pre-defined. It depends on the reactivity of the group. When the Community reaches this step the group has acquired the right awareness in order to autonomously define its own activities, identifying new aims or challenges. It is also time to enlarge the interaction with other existing communities at a national or European level. Of course, in a complex, recursive and circular perspective it can be already happened or started in previous phases and now it can be consolidated and expanded with new activities . The tutor shows and helps the group to retrace all the path in order to guide the community to consolidate the acquired identity and competences. It is again time for collective self-evaluation sessions. The final step is also the beginning of a new cycle of learning experience. It depends on the capacity of the group to re-define new common objectives and challenges to face.

TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Each of the above introduced phase include some specific activities, following described.

Access

Preliminary step: Information, sensibilization, motivation, adhesion.

WHO: tutors and course organizers, participants.

WHERE: in presence, in a classroom with computers and web connection.

WHAT: description about aims, tools and objectives of the learning experience and contents. Presentation and explanation of the formative pact, discussion with the participants about the expected engagement and about the available resources and support.

HOW: seminars, presentations, conferences, meetings.

DURATION OF THE FACE TO FACE ACTIVITY: one/two hours.

DURATION OF THE PHASE: one two months according to the number of people to be involved.

Operative step: Access, instructions about the use of the web learning environment, introduction of the rules of interaction, registration and log-in.

WHO: Tutors and participants.

WHERE: in presence in a multimedia classroom.

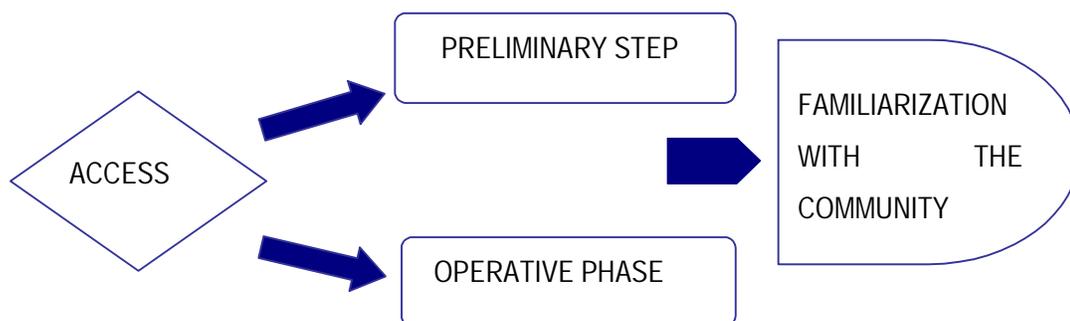
WHAT: Recall of aims, tools, calendar and objectives of the learning experience. Tutors welcome, gives operative instructions and supports, encourage members to propose questions about the technical use of the web learning space of the community, to highlight problems and doubts in order to start sharing information. Tutors show and guide the members in the first access within the web learning environment in order to familiarize with it. Members are invited to do the self-introduction face to face and to create a personal profile in the web community. Tutors create their profile and self-introduce themselves to the community in order to stimulate the other members to do the same. One of the first suggested on line activity is the creation of a topic of discussion where the participants are invited to share information and debate about solutions of common problems connected to the use of technical functions of the web learning environment, eventually surfaced also in a

previous face to face discussion. The formative pact is also discussed and questions are encouraged.

HOW: Computers, the web learning environment, digital pictures, text descriptions, support materials like: formative pact, guidelines to access, netiquette, guidelines to the main functions of the web platform, timetable.

DURATION OF THE FACE TO FACE ACTIVITY: Four hours.

DURATION OF THE PHASE: One two months according to the number of people to be involved.



Socialization

WHO: Tutors, participants.

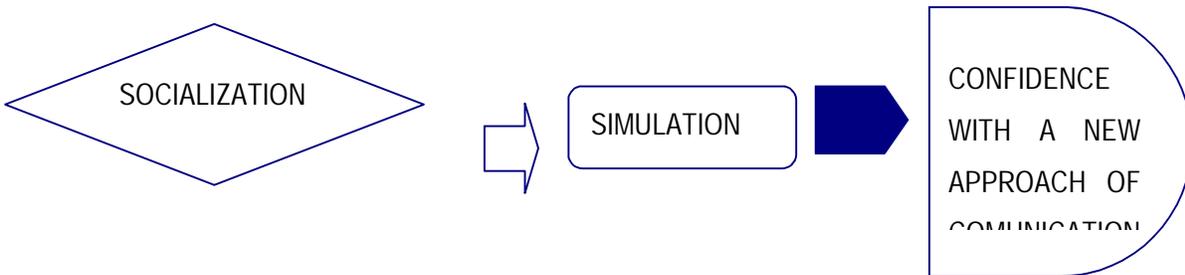
WHERE: In presence and on the web.

HOW: Web learning environment, documents, links and videos all over the web.

WHAT: Tutors create an informal environment and interaction climate in order to make easy for participants the interaction within the web learning environment and over cross resistance and troubles. Tutors encourage informal interactions focused on the solution of games, riddles, greetings, wishes and support socialization. From the very beginning participants are encouraged to suggest and activate discussion topics focused on their daily life and professional activity, to share solutions and information necessary to solve common critic points. Tutors involve participants in a simulation in presence of a web distance interaction in order to allow them to acquire confidence with the new method of communication. Tutors assign the project work of a common glossary in order to start acquiring a shared language and to encourage the collaborative interaction. The activity prosecutes at a distance supported by the constant feedback of the tutors.

DURATION OF THE FACE TO FACE ACTIVITY: Four hours.

DURATION OF THE PHASE: From two to four months.



Interaction

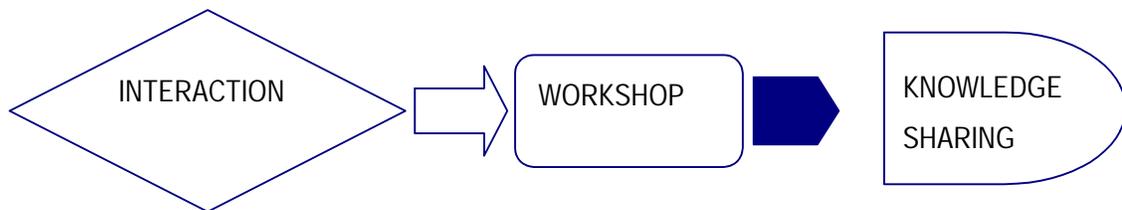
WHO: Tutors, Participants, experts.

WHERE: In presence and on the web

HOW: Technological tools, workshop face to face, virtual synchronous meetings, on line debates, materials produced or found by each member.

WHAT: Tutors propose themes of discussion, introduce stimulus of debate, inviting experts to interact with the group in virtual synchronous meetings, or encouraging participants to present in a virtual workshop their good practices. Each participant is considered “Expert” since time by time each member can assume the role of expert “de facto” with reference to a specific topic. The members are invited to suggest themes of debate and are free to choose the group of discussion they like. These topics are a pretext to encourage the sharing of experiences and of representative biographies, information and knowledge. Tutors animate and orient participants to use web resources; in order to support this process they propose to participants to build and enrich progressively a space where they can share resources, both uploading and downloading them, from the Community and from the web: links, documents, archives etc. from the web, or materials produced by other members, like didactic materials or support materials, daily used with the target group. Tutors encourage this process starting with examples and suggestions. Participants are involved to propose and choose, from time to time, the themes and problems they are interested in and that will become the common aims of the community. According to the acquired level of development and of autonomy of the group, the tutors can encourage the enlargement of the interaction with other communities, both in presence or on the web, of common interest, of course inviting also participants to suggest authoritative interlocutors.

DURATION: Eight months



Collaboration

WHO: Participants.

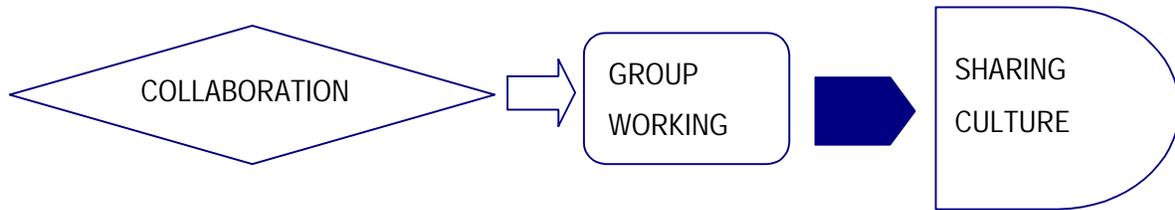
WHERE: In presence and on the web.

HOW: Project work, Workshop, web learning environment, materials produced by each member, web resources.

WHAT: Participants are at this stage ready to start a collaborative project work, aimed to realize work supports of common utility. That can be realized both in presence and at a distance. All the produced materials, information, resources and shared experiences can now be collected and integrated for a common aim chosen by the group(s). Now tutors moderate, give feedbacks to the works, in order to empower the autonomy of the community both in the organization and the management of the work. Tutors encourage the group to apply the realized products in the daily work and organize final workshops inviting to present the results of the work and to discuss their effectiveness in the daily work. According to the acquired level of development and of autonomy of the group, the tutors can encourage the enlargement of the collaboration with other communities, both in presence or on the web, of common interest, prosecuting the started interactions in the previous phase.

If participants are from different geographical areas, they can be divided into sub groups, but this division must not be rigid. It is important the people is encouraged to interact and work in open learning space without geographical boundaries. No “virtual classrooms” nor virtual “groups” must be created, participants belong to one unique learning environment and experience, in a dynamic aggregations.

DURATION: Twelve months.



Development

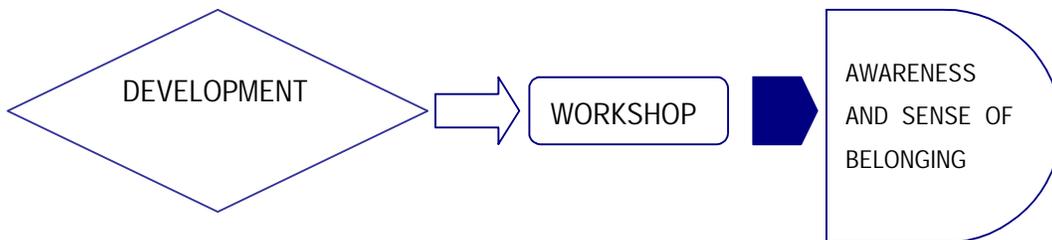
WHO: Participants.

WHERE: In presence and on the web.

HOW: Workshop.

WHAT: The community, once acquired awareness and sense of belonging, become more autonomous and able to choose new aims, to manage the work organization. Tutors as “primus inter pares” are fully part of the community and continue to interact and animate the group. In this phase it is possible to suggest activities oriented to enlarge the virtual community to other communities of common interests, to enlarge the network with the aim of System integration of the numerous actors operating, at different levels, in the training System addressed to refugees and asylum seekers.

DURATION: at least twelve months.



SUGGESTED TOPICS

The following suggested list of topics results from the:

- initial context analysis;
- focus group results and needs analysis;
- piloting activities.

Topics can be organized in four macro-groups:

- reference context of National Asylum System;
- target group features;
- training methods.

In the Complex Learning perspective it is senseless to indicate a propaedeutic list of contents. They are the general background of the activities and they emerge time by time on the strength of the needs and interests of the Community. The suggested macro-areas emerge from the Deeper Community piloting experience and they are referred to the Refugees and Asylum Seekers field.

It is important for trainers to have a clear vision of the of National Asylum System, to have awareness of reference context where they act and where target group is welcome. It is important, for example, to know the duration of staying of people in the welcoming Centres, to know the difference among existing services of assistance, etc.

As concern this first macro-area, the topics can be referred to the:

- National and European Asylum System,
- National and European Referential Law,
- National and European Fund, Resources and Financing
- role of Third sector and the multiple actors of asylum seekers and refugees' assistance.

The trainers should know also the cognitive profile of their particular learners, taking in consideration, for example eventual memory resistance attitude or learning weariness. It is useful to have some knowledge also about the cultural background of learners, in order to better adapt the communication style or to choice critical incidents or symbols to be used during explanations. Learning needs analysis

strategies, above all based on competences and biography, appears as a decisive topic to be included in the list. It is indeed common for trainers to face in the same group of learners different levels of literacy, as well different level of motivation and learning attitude. Accordingly it is necessary to focus on flexible and not traditional didactic methods. During the Deeper experience some suggestions are surfaced from the debate about effective training methods. One of them is the biographical approach, that concern the personal history or travel history of the persons; secondarily the contextual method and situational approach has been remarked. Particular attention has been addressed to the theatre technique that seems to collect all these elements, including at the same time the situational and biographical approach, allowing both the oral expression and the non-verbal expression. Moreover theatre seems to support a sort of psychological scaffold to take distance from traumas and start to express and learn. It appears particularly suggested for the socialization, for the language learning, for the facilitation of experiences sharing. Great attention has been devoted to the adoption of “brief methods”, based on essential learning units because the available time is always variable, inconstant and some time really brief. As concern the evaluation methods, the recognition of competences is again a recurrent issue. Also peer to peer support and evaluation is identified as an effective strategy in order to encourage and motivate the participation to the learning experience. The digital competences are finally embedded in the whole experience that has highlighted the need for trainers to empower, above all for themselves, the knowledge and the use of these important resources.

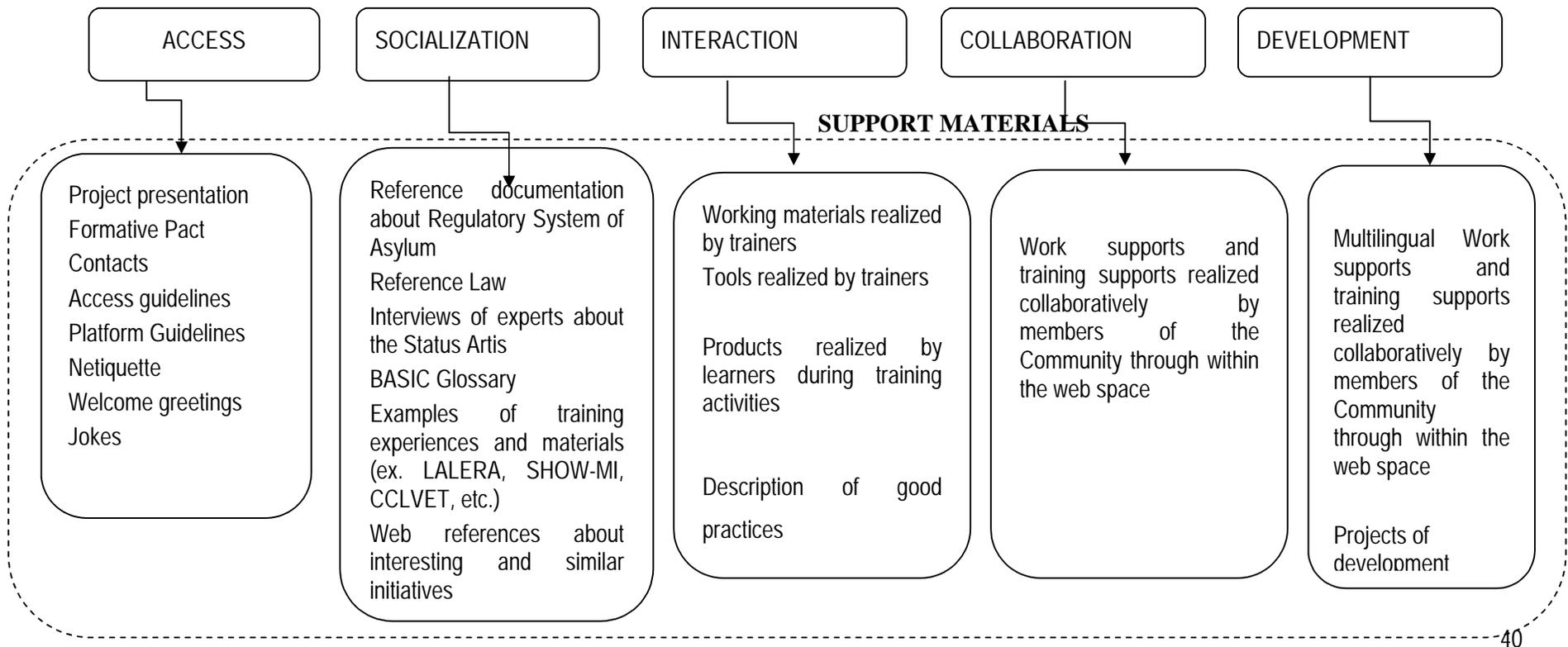
EXPECTED EMPOWERING OF COMPETENCES

The proposed macro groups of topics can be related also to specific competences, as summarised by the following table.

SUGGESTED TOPICS	COMPETENCES TO BE EMPOWERED
Reference context of National Asylum System	To orient themselves in the: Asylum System; Funding opportunities; Networks of Institutions and Organizations delivering services for Refugees and Asylum seekers Regulatory system and reference Law To give suggestions and orient refugees or Asylum seekers where/whom to refer to
Target group features	To apply: Needs' analysis; Balance of competences; Learning Skills-set analysis; Narrative and biographic approach; To express cross/cultural attitudes; To understand cultural habits of Countries of origin of the audience and their cultural symbols; To choice and use examples, symbols fit with the audience and the different situations
Training methods	To apply: Personalized learning strategies; Contextual and situational didactic approach; Collaborative and collective learning approaches; Modular approach with brief, transversal and self consistent learning units; Artistic approaches (theatre, painting, photography, etc.); Web learning and web formative “many to many” collective collaborative communication strategies; Use asynchronous tools and learning networks for formative communication; Self-evaluation approaches; Peer to peer support strategies.

PROGRAM SETTING OUTLINE

Matching together the proposed Training Pathway Framework, the described training activities and suggested topics with the related competences, the Program setting ought assume the following outline.



BARRIERS TO BE OVERCROSSED FOR AN EFFECTIVE APPLYING OF THE PROPOSED PROGRAM SETTING

The proposed model and the related program setting is based on the assumption that a Community of learners need time to acquire awareness of being a group with common aims, resources and opportunities resulting from a deep and real collaboration. More over is based on the assumption that learning processes need time to be realised and consolidated. Consequently, time is the first barrier to be overcrossed. Web and digital technologies support the overcrossing of this first barrier. Indeed, thanks to asynchronous communication devices, it is possible to virtualize time constraints or at list to manage them more flexibly.

To take advantage from this precious support, coming from technologies, it is necessary to over-cross learning routines barriers, that often lead people to search in their consolidated attitudes of learning in presence, all the answers to any kind of new learning experience. Web learning spaces indeed require new attitudes like self-learning, self-orienteing, research, collaborative approaches, collective communication strategies, etc. The proposed Program setting and the suggested tutor strategy give the necessary support to over-cross this barrier.

A further barrier to be pulled down is the resistance to the sharing culture and the collective approach to the solution of problems. People is mainly and often accustomed to solve one alone learning activities, working troubles or any kind of effort related to the solution of a problem. Normally when the solution is found out people do not think that it could be useful for someone else or prefer to take it for themselves more than share it with other people. That happens also with the exchange of a resource in foreign language. To translate one alone the meaning of the found learning or working support, that seems to be of practical interest, is the more diffused attitude. Less diffused is the approach of asking for a language support to other members of the community. Actually, language can represent a further barrier. In a range of solutions of this real difficulty for the effective collaborative interaction and knowledge sharing, the basic one is the peer to peer support offered by members knowing more than a language. That is the solution used in the done experience. It

was not important to translate everything, but just the meaning of some relevant elements, it was enough to allow the development of a common dialog in different languages. The advanced solution could be a technological device supporting a simultaneous translation of more than a language at the same time. Between these two solutions a lot of alternatives can be explored.

Finally there are Geographic and Cultural barriers. Once again technology can help to trim physic distances. Cultural barriers can be afforded only thanks to the common work for common aims, in a reasonable elapse of time, recalling the first cited barriers. The proposed model suggest how to over-cross all these barriers, focusing the solutions on the decisive role of the animator(s) of the Complex Community.