

DIGITAL LATIN QUARTER



Final Evaluation Report

October 2011 to December 2013

Future In Perspective Limited



Lifelong Learning Programme

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Partners	Centre for the Advancement of Research & Development in Educational Technology (CARDET), CY Kolping-Bildungswerk Württemberg e. V. (KBW), DE IDEJU Centras (IC), LT Timesnap Productions Ltd (Timesnap), IE Innoventum Oy (Innov), FI

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Introduction

This is the final external evaluation report of the Digital Latin Quarter project. This report marks the end of the project lifecycle and presents an assessment of the project development and implementation phases. This report has been informed by on-going observation of the project, questionnaires completed by all project partners, and a review and analysis of internal evaluation surveys conducted with project target group members throughout the project lifecycle. This report also incorporates a review and analysis of the principal project outputs. In the course of conducting this evaluation there have been regular meetings and interviews with the project lead partner, MCRSDP. The function of this report is to capture the outputs and impact achieved by the project consortium during the different phases of the project.

The Digital Latin Quarter Project

Funded under the Grundtvig measure of the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013 the Digital Latin Quarter (DLQ) project brought together a diverse consortium of partners representing 5 Member States. Under the guidance of Meath Community Rural & Social Development Partnership (MCRSDP) who acted as lead partner and project coordinator, the participating organisations have worked diligently to:

- address the need for specific, targeted training in new digital media technologies
- enable youth workers engage effectively through digital media channels with their target groups
- support youth workers in maximising the potential of ubiquitous digital media environments

The consortium as a whole was conscious of the continuing difficulty that many young people experience in completing formal education. While the EU-average of 12.8% early school-leavers in 2012 is down from the 17.6% in 2000 it is still well above the 10% target originally set as part of the Lisbon strategy and now once again in focus as one of two key Europe 2020 educational priorities. The high levels of early school-leaving continue to place considerable burdens on formal and informal second-chance education providers and youth workers play an important role building key competences for the re-integration of early school-leavers into formal education structures.

The consortium partners were fully aware of the versatility and willingness of youth workers to adopt different teaching and learning techniques that function particularly well in the less formal educational environments they manage. As most youth workers use different techniques like experiential learning, intuitive learning and embedded-learning to stimulate learners and support their personal, social and educational development they were regarded from the outset as the main pedagogic target group for the DLQ project.

Youth work is typified by its progressive and innovative nature with many new approaches in second-chance education deriving from the experimentation and piloting of new approaches in the youth work arena. While most youth workers are qualified to degree or higher diploma standards many of the pedagogic interventions that form such an important part of their daily work are based on intuitive learning rather than specifically tailored continuous professional development supports.

The youth of today are exposed to media in every situation. Observing their hair styles and dress codes, the language they use, the behaviour they exhibit, it is clear that modern media has a significant impact on who they are, and who they want to be. DLQ partners believed that the interest youth-at-risk show in media; the influence it has on their behaviour; and their positive disposition to media in a range of formats

could be harnessed for the purpose of developing key competences for a changing world. From the evidence collected from the youth-at-risk involved in the DLQ project it is clear that the consortium partners have picked a formula for success.

The main innovations within the DLQ project were:

- The design and delivery of accredited training in digital media production for youth workers from 4 partner countries and continuous online support to facilitate their work with youth-at-risk
- The development of bespoke key competence learning resources based on embedded-learning techniques and incorporated into the production of a series of TV programmes by youth themselves. These embedded-learning resources will address a wide range of competences including literacy, numeracy, social and civic competence and cultural awareness and expression
- The development of a bespoke, hands-on experiential learning programme to develop digital competences
- The development of a range of media-based, interactive, guidance resources to support their personal and career development
- The creation of DLQ-TV – an Internet TV Station for broadcasting programmes produced by youth themselves as part of their training in 4 partner countries
- The creation of www.digital-latin-quarter.eu as a social networking site for youth engaged in the DLQ project facilitating collaborative trans-national project work and interaction to enhance their understanding and awareness of the real and virtual worlds they now live in.

In the evolving knowledge-intensive economy, typified by ubiquitous media platforms, opportunities to harness the pervasiveness and potential of media applications for developing key competences of groups on the margins of society abound. What stifles development in many cases is the reluctance of educators to engage in new environments that undermine their perceived role as educators and the lack of appropriate training to support their integration into these new learning environments. By their very nature, second-chance education and youth development support programmes differ considerably from mainstream provision and are often places where real educational innovation takes place.

The aim of DLQ was *“to support innovation in education for youth-at-risk by harnessing the potential of ubiquitous media platforms to develop key transversal competences of the target group supporting their re-integration to formal education and their personal progression and continued engagement as valued members of European society”*. As a transnational project focussing on digital media DLQ responded to the challenge of ensuring that all those with a non-traditional educational history can benefit from innovative technology based interventions to acquire the key competences for active citizenship and personal development.

The objectives of DLQ were:

1. to design and implement an accredited media production training programme for youth leaders and second-chance education workers to support their use of new digital media platforms as robust, pertinent and highly attractive learning tools and environments creating a cascading model of training;
2. to design, develop and deliver a comprehensive suite of media based, traditional and embedded-learning key competence development resources for youth-at-risk to include;
 - a. *ab initio* instruction in video and audio production for web based platforms to support their engagement with the embedded-learning key competence resources and develop their digital competence
 - b. a range of bespoke media based, embedded-learning curriculum resources addressing social and civic competence; and cultural awareness and expression
 - c. a range of enquiry based learning resources essential for media production like research, planning and budgeting to address literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking competences
 - d. a range of bespoke, blended learning personal development and career guidance supports presented within a 'Digital Media Skills & Opportunities Road-map' that identifies further learning opportunities, key skill requirements and potential careers in digital media production to support the development of personalized learning pathways
3. to provide a series of virtual collaborative environments;
 - a. linking youth-at-risk from 4 Member States to raise awareness of cultural diversity and stimulate collaborative endeavours promoting creativity and self-confidence
 - b. linking youth workers and other professionals working with youth-at-risk to create a supportive trans-national environment facilitating exchange of best practice
 - c. to create a model for an innovative 'augmented reality' language learning resource based on media productions created by youth-at-risk themselves

The Digital Latin Quarter Project was developed over a 27 month timeframe which started on October 1st 2011 and ended on December 31st 2013. There were six participating organisations representing five Member States. The agreed work-programme was elaborated in eight sequential and/or overlapping work-packages with appropriate partners taking responsibility for leading each different element of the development process.

Project Partners

The consortium of partners responsible for the instigation, promotion and development of the Digital Latin Quarter Project represents a good mix of education providers with varying degrees of experience in the development of EU funded trans-national projects. The profiles clearly demonstrate that partners involved had the required access to the key named target groups and the technical and pedagogic expertise at their disposal to deliver a high quality outcome that provides significant added value to the educational landscape in their local regions and beyond. Partners have good networks of providers to aid dissemination and support exploitation and are regarded as leaders in the field where the use of the latest technologies in education is concerned.

The work programme was designed to bring teams of partners together to develop individual work-packages to help support capacity building of those organisations with lesser degrees of experience. This also assisted efforts to localise outputs by ensuring that structural and cultural differences were taken into account in the design and development stages.

Meath Community Rural & Social Development Partnership Limited (MCRSDP)

is a county-wide partnership organisation with responsibility for the design and implementation of all local, rural and community development programmes in Meath. It is directly funded by the Irish Government and has extensive links both in Ireland and throughout Europe gained through the LEADER Programme, EQUAL and Interreg.

MCRSDP works with marginalized youth groups, young people and early school leavers within the most disadvantaged communities targeting those furthest from access to education, training and employment, particularly youth at the highest risk of social exclusion. They foster an integrated and coordinated approach by bringing together people, groups, agencies, voluntary and statutory organisations to make a positive difference to endemic or temporary social problems and issues affecting young people engaging with a wide variety of actors across the youth spectrum and developing strong local, regional and national links with key stakeholders in this sector. They have developed and delivered a number of successful and innovative youth projects dealing with issues of mental health, self-expression, communication and employability skills, career guidance and cultural awareness and there are a number of youth groups directly linked to their organisation. MCRSDP also provide training, capital assistance and mentoring support to approximately 20 external youth organisations.

MCRSDP deliver a variety of accredited and non-accredited training and up-skilling courses aimed at improving the skills, capacity and employability of young people, early school leavers, low-skilled workers, jobseekers and older workers living in County Meath.

Centre for the Advancement of Research & Development in Educational Technology (CARDET) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental, research and development organization based in Cyprus with partners around the world with a stated mission to inspire next generation education, and promote research, innovation and development through evidence-based practices, cutting-edge research, and empowered people. CARDET brings together an international team of veterans with decades of global expertise in research, evaluation, instructional design, education and training, e-learning, and human resource development.

CARDET's core-strength is their ability to carefully plan, implement, execute and evaluate projects in various contexts bringing together some of the best minds and deepest experience from around the world with a highly energetic and passionate operational team composed of world experts who have international expertise in designing and implementing projects. These individuals have contributed to a wide range of professional and scholarly organizations as office holders, board members, and active participants; such organizations which count CARDET team members among their most respected contributors include the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), UNESCO, American Education Research Association, International Council of Educational Media (an UNESCO affiliated organization), and the European Association for Research in Learning and Instruction.

CARDET is one of the premier education organizations in Cyprus with extensive experience developing and implementing education programs. Their team has developed and delivered approved courses to youth, early school leavers and a wide cross section of disadvantaged groups. All these courses are available through CARDETACADEMY.org. Furthermore, they have developed and implemented several training programs for low skilled workers and are currently developing and offering training courses for migrants, including young migrants both within and without the formal education system, funded by the EU Solidarity Fund and the Government of Cyprus.

Kolping-Bildungswerk Wuerttemberg e. V. (KBW) is an important provider in the field of vocational training and further education in the German federal state of Baden-Wuerttemberg employing a total of 260 members of staff and operating in ten training centres and further additional locations in Baden-Wuerttemberg. Experienced and qualified teachers supervise extensive further education opportunities – from schools of the second-chance training route via vocational education, general and vocational further education and social work through the area of training courses which are funded by the Federal Agency of Employment and the EU.

KBW runs more than 10 schools in Baden-Wuerttemberg and has access to local, regional and national networks and stakeholders with on-going interaction with the target groups of the project.

IDEJU Centras (IC) is a not-for profit, non-governmental organisation, which aims to stimulate the development of lifelong learning systems through the use of new technologies in non-formal adult education. The organisation aims to be a democratic and competitive adult education and training institution, whose activities are based on humanistic principles and general human values. The organisation also aims to foster the intellectual freedom and tolerance in the society.

IC mainly practices in project development, communication, non-formal adult education and training and social media optimization fields. Through its activities IC represents education and enterprise interests of society taking into consideration economic, social and politic change of Lithuania, expands the innovative activities of the information society and improves the accessibility of qualification development. IC's activities include communication between different social media channels, promotion and development of different actions in virtual environment: web-based communities, hosted services, web applications, social-networking sites, video/music-sharing sites, wikis, blogs, virtual mashups, etc.

IC's activities include: computer literacy training courses for adult learners; actions for expanding the use of ICT and other new technologies in education; actions to support the integration of youth-at-risk; actions to ensure the quality of professional training; actions to strengthen social partnership in the society; public relations and dissemination activities; research; project management and administration. IC has direct and established working histories with the project target groups and uses media resources extensively in its trainings.

Timesnap Productions Limited (TIMESNAP) is a multimedia development and production company specialising in the design and production of a wide range of educational and informational content for governmental, third sector and educational organisations and have been commissioned to produce educational media pieces for organisations such as the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland and the Irish National Training Agency FÁS. Timesnap have produced a wide range of audio-visual career guidance tools including music videos, situation comedies and comic sketches. These tools were produced in a range of formats for web and social networking, TV and mobile devices. Timesnap has consulted on training programmes run by the national training agency and have created a model for early school leavers which involved film and tv production training in an IT environment with incredibly positive results.

Timesnap works in a non-linear digital environment throughout all disciplines of traditional and contemporary media.

Innoventum Oy (INNOV) has strong experience in developing easy-to-use web-based applications for purposes ranging from e-learning to online shopping and live video streaming. They have a product base that suits many different needs, built on

a highly flexible and efficient framework and for the past decade, their personnel have been involved in developing video streaming and e-learning tools and platforms for such clients as the University of Eastern Finland, the City of Joensuu and numerous public companies.

Their CMS (Content Management System) has many benefits compared to other similar systems, including intuitive user interface with content editing views familiar from word processing programs, and a flexible interface for exchanging data with external systems. Innoventum also provide a series of online tutorials for all project partners to support their engagement with the website as administrators beyond the project life-cycle.

Partner Feedback

At the conclusion of the project all partners were given the opportunity to make known their opinions and provide feedback to inform the evaluation process. Questionnaires were circulated and completed by all partners. A summary of partner responses is provided below.

Question 1. Please evaluate the management of the project under the following sub-headings.

	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very poor	Total
Overall project management	42.86% 3	42.86% 3	14.29% 1	0% 0	0% 0	7
Financial management	42.86% 3	57.14% 4	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	7
Support from the lead partner	57.14% 4	42.86% 3	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	7
Support from other partners	28.57% 2	42.86% 3	28.57% 2	0% 0	0% 0	7

The following comments were also provided by partners:

“We've received excellent support from the lead partner throughout the project in all matters where we have requested for support or the lead partner has seen that we are in need of it. Communication between the curriculum implementation and technical implementation could have been more regular but I feel this has more to do with ourselves than the others”.

“This project has had a positive sense of control throughout. The experience of the lead partner and the expertise around the table from other partners has helped with this, I feel. The system of communications has been effective. Unlike other projects I've been involved with there isn't a lot of confusing superfluous contact. Messages are targeted so that the correct recipient is reached. I feel that the project has provided a good model for future projects I may be involved with”.

“Overall the project consortium worked very well together. Communication was a little difficult during busy project periods, but the partners continued to work together very effectively”.

Findings

Although the consortium had to seek an extension to the active programme period of 3 months from the Executive Agency the feedback from all partners regarding project management and support from the lead partner is very positive. The project was based on a very tight and integrated sequential work-programme where any delay

would likely have a significant knock-on effect. As the work-programme was closely aligned to the academic school year there were certain scheduling difficulties that were not foreseen when the project application was being prepared. There are always unforeseen circumstances in projects of this nature and it would appear that all partners are satisfied with the management and administration of the project as a whole.

Question 2. Please evaluate each of the following project outputs.

	Very good	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor	Total
The partner site as an internal communication portal	42.86% 3	57.14% 4	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	7
The project website as an external communication platform	0% 0	85.71% 6	14.29% 1	0% 0	0% 0	7
Dissemination tools and resources developed	57.14% 4	42.86% 3	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	7
The project quality plan	57.14% 4	28.57% 2	14.29% 1	0% 0	0% 0	7
The valorisation plan	42.86% 3	57.14% 4	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	7

The following comment was also provided by one partner

“The project website has not been used as an external communication platform as much as it could have, since there could have been a lot more information provided about the progress made during the project”.

Findings

There is a wealth of information collated on the partner site which was more than satisfactory as an internal communication portal. There is still some work needed to streamline access to all materials and the lead partner has undertaken to oversee this task before the end of the project lifecycle. The project website itself offers a wide range of functionalities like video streaming and web 2.0 facilities and also supports access to the full suite of materials developed. Once again the website needs to be tidied up to ensure ease of access to the materials developed and this will also be addressed before the project ends. The quality of the documents produced and the widespread participation in dissemination events would support the view that the structures developed during the project lifecycle have been more than adequate to support the successful implementation of the project.

Question 3. What would you consider to be the main successes of the project?

"I would say that the main successes have to do with the whole idea behind the project. It is a very interesting project and the outputs of the youth (especially their special characteristics) are in my opinion a great success; the fact that we were able to involve these youth in this project and get them interested has been very satisfactory".

"It engaged at-risk youth in a project they found interesting building teamwork and friendships among them. Some of the films they produced were quite interesting and they were clearly very committed and in making them. DLQ should give them a worthwhile experience and in some cases lead them on a path to a fulfilling career. The youth workers meanwhile have the tools and skills to carry the project forward and carry on the good work. So overall I am quite proud of our work!"

"The great partnership of the project and collaboration between the partners".

"The learning material developed seems high quality in regarding both the content and its visual design. The skills matrix system for evaluating the learner's abilities and strengths is a usable tool for both the learner and tutor. Based on the reports from the Acting partners it seems that the target groups have found the curriculum useful".

"I think that a very pertinent, effective package has been developed that can be used and adapted for use by parties outside the project. The engagement of the target audience has been all that we hoped for. The use of audio/visual tools in an IT environment has reached young people in a way that makes sense to them".

"The resources developed within the project seem to be well suited for the target group; especially the idea of passing education with the method of shooting films. This method will have a high success if applied in the work with disadvantaged young people".

"I think the ACT Curriculum has achieved everything that was originally anticipated by the partners. It delivers bespoke training in a highly specialized area, in a fun and innovative format, while also improving key competences of young people, and key skills including team work, negotiation, and communication. I think the most successful element of this project, was the implementation of this curriculum with local film crews, and the production of the videos. The feedback from the youth professionals and young people involved in this training was very positive, and all wished to stay involved as a film crew into the future, which is a very positive result of the project".

Findings

There is overwhelming evidence that partners feel a great sense of achievement at the conclusion of the project. In reviewing the project it is clear that there have been

a significant number of successful process and product outcomes. From the early and ongoing engagement of youth workers and disadvantaged youth to the design and production of the curriculum resources the DLQ project has achieved most of what it set out to do and to a very high standard. Looking at the project from a distance there are certain elements that stand out as best practice for example from a process viewpoint the transnational training workshop and the resulting local cascading model of training has worked really well; from an output point of view the ACT curriculum is a high quality curriculum resource and offers clear demonstration of the benefits that can be achieved when industry experts and educationalists work together.

Question 4: What would you consider to be the main failings of the project?

"I would say that the main failures have to do with so many tasks and deliverables being late throughout the duration of the project. Especially when we depend on other partners to do their part so that we can proceed based on a pre-set time frame, it is frustrating to have to reschedule everything because of some of the partners not keeping to their deadlines. At the end of course the work is all completed, there is no doubt about that; it's just that it would have been more efficient to keep to the time frame that we agreed upon".

"Perhaps inter-partner communication in the beginning was a bit difficult as every email went to every individual whether you were involved in the topic or not which meant every individual in each partner had to read every email about everything, which was difficult. But when this was changed to more targeted communication system it was much better".

"The timing of some activities had to be adjusted to school year and that ended up in being late according to project plan".

"Some of the technical features developed for the on-line environment were never used in the actual implementation of the training. This could be partially due to some delays in the development schedule as well as for example the on-line version of the Skills Matrix having been defined later in the project - though this could have been a useful tool creating possibility to make use of the collected data as whole instead of single excel sheets. There could have been more interaction between the Acting partners and the technical team during the technical development to make sure the features match the needs".

"I feel that some broader reaching possibilities for offering the DLQ model to other players in this field have yet to be fully explored though it's quite likely that this will happen after the contracted business of the project is completed first".

Findings

By and large all partners who expressed an opinion highlighted delays in partner input and communication difficulties to be the main failings of the project although no

partner suggests that the final outputs were compromised as a result. The main impact of the failings of the consortium was actually borne by the partners themselves who had to re-schedule workloads and make up for lost time. It is hoped that partners learn from this experience and that the scheduling of tasks in future projects might be more carefully considered at the project writing stage.

Question 5. How would you evaluate the quality and usability of the complete suite of tools and learning resources developed?

	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very poor	Total
Train-the-trainer courseware	57.14% 4	42.86% 3	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	7
ACT Curriculum	100% 7	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	7
Guidance resource suite	42.86% 3	57.14% 4	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	7
Digital media skills opportunities road-map	66.67% 4	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	0% 0	0% 0	6
Induction programme for educators	57.14% 4	42.86% 3	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	7

Findings

It is clear from the above table that partners place a high value on the suite of learning materials developed. Once again the ACT Curriculum stands out from the other resources with all partners convinced that it is of very high quality with very high usability. While this particular output is definitely of the highest standard from an external evaluation point of view the most impressive aspect of the project is the consistency of high quality and usability across the full suite of tools and learning resources developed.

Question 6. How would you evaluate the quality of the training and production outputs achieved?

	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very poor	Total
Implementation of DLQ training with target groups	50% 3	50% 3	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	6
Implementation of training of professional tutors and youth workers	66.67% 4	33.33% 2	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	6

	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very poor	Total
TV programmes produced	50% 3	50% 3	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	6
DLQ TV	28.57% 2	71.43% 5	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	7

Findings

All partners believe that the training and production outputs achieved were either very good or good with the implementation of training for the youth workers and professionals achieving the highest evaluation. From an evaluators perspective it is clear that the success achieved is very much down to the initial conceptualising and design of the training. Beginning with the transnational training workshop in Ireland, followed by the ongoing online support for tutors and culminating with the cascading model of training at local level partners have managed to create a training model that would have been beyond the scope of any individual partner and this model bears witness to the added value that can be achieved through transnational cooperation projects of this nature. In addition, it is worth noting that the consortium benefited from the inclusion of a specialist media partner. The participation of Timesnap, who are an award winning private media production company and highly respected in their field, brought media expertise to inform the pedagogic design process and to ensure the quality of the audio-visual outputs.

Question 7. How would you evaluate the quality and usability of www.digital-latin-quarter.eu as an interactive online learning environment?

“It is a friendly and easy to use environment. At different points we had technical issues with it, which were promptly resolved. The main issue has been with files being moved or deleted and not being able to find them on the site, but this has also been resolved”.

“I think like any tool it works well as long as it's promoted and explained well to the target audience”.

“The quality is quite good, however I don't think it is going to be used a lot by teachers, as they will be using the printed curriculum more often”.

“Some of the features intended specifically for the kind of training given within this project were not activated in the implementation. I believe there's room for improvement but the main features serve their purpose allowing for uploading, reviewing and commenting on the produced TV Programmes”.

“I feel that a platform with tremendous possibilities has been developed here. As is often the case, I find, the scope and intricacy of the architecture supporting the portal

is not visible to the general user so this may not be apparent to them but the interface works well from my experience with it”.

“It will depend on the number of people using it - if there will be a sufficient number of applicants, it might have a high impact and help to promote a creative learning setting with people from all over Europe”.

Findings

It is fair to say that the jury is still out on the quality and usability of the website as an interactive online learning environment. It is clear that those professionals working with youth at risk who are comfortable themselves with technology environments will take full advantage of the online facilities while those who feel more comfortable with more traditional teaching methods will use the hard copy versions of the curriculum resources developed. There is also an additional factor worth considering and this is the attitude of the youth target group engaged by the local partners. Most of the youth involved preferred to communicate through existing social media channels like Facebook, Twitter and sms messaging. They were not really interested in registering with or engaging with the DLQ alternative social network provided. With very few target group members interested many of the tutors and youth workers also lost interest. Despite this failing, one can say without equivocation that the online resource created is capable of functioning as was intended and is a long-term repository for the tools and resources developed. It also provides the perfect platform for streaming the videos produced by the youth at risk and this can be used to inspire other groups of youth at risk in the future.

Question 8. How would you evaluate each of the following dissemination actions to date?

	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very poor	Total
Newsletters	28.57% 2	57.14% 4	14.29% 1	0% 0	0% 0	7
Promotional materials produced	50% 3	50% 3	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	6
Project branding strategy	66.67% 4	33.33% 2	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	6
DLQ short film festival	33.33% 2	66.67% 4	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	6

Findings

The DLQ project benefits from a very strong brand identity that befits a project of its kind. This brand has been used extensively throughout the project lifecycle to great effect. Promotional materials produced were both eye-catching and carefully

conceived. The production of DLQ T-shirts with the word “CREW” on the back was a positive visual signal that sent a positive message of inclusion and belonging to youth at risk that one rarely finds in educational settings. The branding of all project outputs has been striking and powerful throughout the project with a considerable effort made to engage with the target group. The use of phrases like “...will the next Spielberg please stand up” and the involvement of the youth at risk target group in the production of the last newsletter were also positive outputs of the project and a demonstration of partners’ commitment to engaging with the target group and stimulate target group interest through all phases of the project.

Question 9. Has your organisation learned anything new from your participation in the DLQ project?

“We have been very lucky to be part of the DLQ project. We have learned a lot by working with the group of youth we had and we also learned a lot regarding digital media production”.

“Yes. We have learned that new technology, good organisation by the lead partner and the strong level of proficiency in English among our fellow partners can facilitate the success of a project involving many countries across Europe with a surprising degree of ease in an organisational sense. At the beginning I was quite sceptical that this could be achieved but it was”.

“Our organization achieved a lot of practical know-how in project management as well as development and usage of innovative tools in the field of education”.

“DLQ along with one other project starting at the same time has been the first transnational EU project our organisation has been involved with from the start. We have learned a lot about this type of project work and having partners from different countries and regions has given us the opportunity to learn about the special needs it creates in regard to the technical environment. We have also had the opportunity to gain insight into the learning process relating to the curriculum and inspect options of technically supporting blended learning in these settings”.

“I've learned the value of engaging with the right partners and the essential role that the lead partner plays in not only orchestrating the meeting of project targets but ensuring that good communication is maintained throughout the project life”.

“We received a new method that we will apply in our work with youth-at-risk. Since we are working a lot with this target group, we are always eager to learn to ways of re-integration them in a formal learning environment. The social workers and teachers we employ are currently evaluation how these materials may be integrated in their everyday work”.

“Through our participation in this project, we have learned a lot about project dissemination and exploitation. When you are developing something which is truly unique and innovative such as the ACT Curriculum and the media-rich Guidance

Resource Suite, people are very eager to get involved. For this reason, there has been interest from local secondary schools to adopt the ACT curriculum as part of their Transition Year syllabus. The integration of the ACT Curriculum into a formal education setting is something that the consortium would never have thought of, but because of its modular format, and the fact that it quickly generates really unique outputs for participants, it is the ideal curriculum to be implemented as part of formal project work. This option for exploitation of the ACT curriculum would never have been possible without local dissemination of the DLQ project outputs, and networking with local stakeholders”.

Findings

From discussions with the lead partner it is clear that the DLQ project has leveraged new ways of thinking and working in all partner organisations involved in the project. Partner learning has occurred in many different areas including; the basic methodologies employed to ensure the smooth running of the project; the close working relationship with youth workers and youth at risk that the project demanded; the integration of digital media production into the training environment; and the extensive use of embedded learning methodologies to support the development of key competences. From an evaluation viewpoint it is interesting that the learning has occurred at so many different levels. This obviously reflects the diversity within the consortium; the different starting points of the partner organisations; and the different local realities in which partner organisations work on a daily basis. It is the sign of a really well developed and managed project when all partners can learn at their own level.

Question 10. Based on your experience in the DLQ project what recommendations would you make for the development of future transnational projects?

“I would say, as above, that the main issue has been with the project management not being up to date with the deadlines set. The project would have run much smoother if that had happened and we hadn't been rushed with short notice on tasks to be completed”.

“I think a more targeted communication system would be good, where partners are not bombarded with emails about every item and only those that they are involved in. This was achieved on DLQ to an extent early on but on other projects it remains a problem. It creates a tendency for some relevant emails to be missed”.

“The major factor is the partnership/team of the project. From all our experience in previous transnational projects, if the partnership is solid, the project is successful. Everything else is details”.

“There's always a learning curve to new type of work methods. Engagement from the beginning, sufficient planning, communication across the fields of responsibility, and

when needed, controlled revision of the plans, and prompt control of the schedule seem like keys to success”.

“I would strongly recommend picking partners with the correct range of skills and a track record in inter-organisational cooperation such as was apparent in the DLQ project. I would ensure that a clear communication model, such as that used by DLQ, was in place so that partners are not getting emails that are not relevant to them and their role”.

“I think in future projects, it will be important to encourage target groups to interact with their European counterparts through the social networking site. This is something that is taking off later on in the project, but it could have been useful for film crews and youth workers throughout the development phase of the project and could have added an extra dimension to the work of the film crews. I also think the language learning lab should have been finished earlier in the project so that end users could have availed of this sooner”.

Findings

There are some pointers for future projects in the comments provided by partners with the majority of comments relating to improvements in the performance of the consortium as a whole. Better communication, more use of online facilities and more timely communication by partners are common issues in projects of this nature. In looking at the project as a whole the main feedback from an evaluator’s point of view would focus on the sequential scheduling of actions in a closely integrated work programme. The fact that a 3 month extension to the project lifecycle was required to complete the work programme highlights the over ambitious scheduling of actions and outputs in the original project plan. There is no doubt that partners were stretched to their limits to try and keep the project on track and this can leave a negative feeling towards the project on its conclusion. In future projects there should be greater consultation between partners when the work programme is being defined.

Target Group Feedback

Throughout the project lifecycle a series of internal evaluation surveys were conducted by CARDET who were leading the quality management aspect of the project implementation. These internal evaluation surveys were directly addressed to the project target groups and end beneficiaries who were assembled to form Research Control Groups in Ireland, Cyprus, Germany and Lithuania. The reason for establishing these Research Control Groups was to provide feedback on various aspects of the project throughout its duration and to ensure that the development process was informed by the needs of potential end users.

The surveys consisted of a series of close-ended questions for which participants had to provide their opinion, based on a 5-point Likert scale composed of the following categories: Strongly agree (SA); Agree (A); Neutral (N); Disagree (D); Strongly disagree (SD). These close-ended questions were followed by a series of open-ended questions, which the participants needed to answer in full. All the internal evaluation surveys aimed to capture the opinions and feedback of target group members and end beneficiaries regarding the project as a whole and its objectives, as well as validating the various phases of the development work being completed by the project partners. In all there were 3 internal evaluation surveys conducted in months 6, 12 and 18 and the purpose and the outcome of each survey is summarised in the following pages.

Internal Evaluation Survey 1

This survey was completed by youth workers, who formed part of the Research Control Groups established in Ireland, Cyprus, Germany, and Lithuania. The main objective of this first internal evaluation survey was to capture the opinion of the youth workers and to examine whether the project as a whole, and the initial work that had been undertaken by the project partners, was appropriate to the youth workers in each of the different countries involved. The overall objective of the survey was to inform the future development of the project, as well as providing a course of action for the project, as is deemed to be appropriate to the local culture and practice in each country. A total of 28 completed surveys were collected: 5 from Ireland, 8 from Cyprus, 5 from Germany, and 10 from Lithuania.

The following table presents a summary of the quantitative data collected through the close-ended statements for all participants from all countries.

Total

Statement	SA %	A %	N %	D %	SD %	Mean
The overall scope of the project is comprehensible.	53.6	39.3	7.1	0	0	4.5
The objectives of the project are clear.	53.6	42.9	3.6	0	0	4.5
The orientation workshop that I attended was helpful.	78.6	17.8	3.6	0	0	4.8
My responsibilities in this project have been explained clearly to me.	39.3	53.6	7.1	0	0	4.3
This project is relevant to my education/work.	46.4	35.7	17.9	0	0	4.3
This project will contribute to my personal development.	64.3	35.7	0	0	0	4.6
My participation in this project will contribute to my professional development.	50	46.4	3.6	0	0	4.5
Learning about digital media development is important.	57.1	39.3	3.6	0	0	4.5
Developing media and film production skills will help me professionally in the future.	35.7	39.3	25	0	0	4.1
The project's aims are relevant to the context in my country.	39.3	50	10.7	0	0	4.3

Overall, the majority of answers were in the range of “Strongly agree” to “Agree”, indicating that participants were in general aware of the scope and objectives of the project, were informed about their responsibilities, and believed that the project’s initiative, especially regarding media development, was worth investigating and would most probably have a positive impact.

Some variation can be noticed in the statements that are related to what is available in the different partner countries and this can be explained by the fact that the innovative areas on which the project focuses are developed to a different degree in each of the four countries.

In the open ended questions participants were asked to identify the main benefits that the project might leverage and the main challenges the project might encounter. The following list gives an overview of the responses provided:

Benefits:

- the ideas being explored by the project are innovative in all countries involved
- not many projects have addressed the needs of youth workers and youth-at-risk, and the fact that the project gives voice to these people is a positive step
- the acquisition of new knowledge and skills in the areas of digital media production, movie-making, film production, and film editing
- the acquisition of skills to effectively use all the equipment which plays a vital part in the production of films
- the potential for the professional development of youth workers involved
- the opportunity for personal development by attaining new knowledge, skills, aptitudes, and competences
- the project implementation process provided an opportunity for all target groups to work as a team and learn to collaborate in a group in order to produce an outcome
- the project's activities allow for a fun, innovative way to integrate youth into an educational setting and involve ideas and topics which interest young people and activities such as acting and role-playing which are entertaining for youth and help ensure that they complete the project
- involvement in the project will allow teachers to get closer to their students and gain a better understanding of their needs

Challenges:

- finding enough participants willing to take part in the project's activities and with sufficient interest in the activities to remain involved in the project for its whole duration
- finding enough time to complete all of the project's requirements and activities
- managing the whole process and addressing technical, content, budgetary and coordination issues that might arise
- the current lack of experience and skills in the fields of media production and film-making
- the ability to effectively pass on the knowledge gained by teachers and youth workers to their students

It is clear from this internal evaluation exercise that after 6 months there was an overall positive approach towards the project, its requirements, and its relevance to the participants' needs in the specific countries. As a result of this evaluation exercise a number of steps were implemented by partners to ensure that the challenges facing the youth workers were addressed as follows:

- project partners agreed to take the necessary steps to provide participants with specific and accurate information outlining exactly what is expected of them at each stage

- youth workers were to be given adequate time to plan activities well in advance and to allow them accurately project the time commitment expected of them; the specific procedures to be followed; and familiarise themselves with the resources available to help them during the project's implementation

Internal Evaluation Survey 2

This survey was completed by youth workers, and youth at risk who formed part of the Research Control Groups established in Ireland, Cyprus, Germany, and Lithuania. The main objective of the second internal evaluation survey was to capture the opinion of the youth workers and professionals in second chance education, as well as that of youth-at-risk and early school leavers on whether the project as a whole and the continuing development work remain appropriate to these two target groups in each of the different countries involved, and whether the prototype resources are adequate to achieve desired outputs. Ultimately, the survey aimed to assess the relevance and appropriateness of tools and resources, as was deemed to be appropriate to the local culture and practice in each country. A total of 47 completed surveys were collected: 11 from Ireland (6 youth workers and 5 youth-at-risk), 16 from Cyprus (8 youth workers and 8 youth-at-risk), 9 from Germany (2 youth workers, 5 youth-at-risk, 2 undefined), and 11 from Lithuania (2 youth workers and 9 youth-at-risk).

The following table presents a summary of the quantitative data collected through the close-ended statements for all participants from all countries.

Total

Statement	SA %	A %	N %	D %	SD %	Mean
The overall development work to date lives up to my expectations.	29.8	61.7	8.5	0.0	0.0	4.21
The tools and resources developed are relevant to my work/interests.	38.3	55.3	6.4	0.0	0.0	4.32
The prototype resources developed make me feel confident about the project's success.	44.7	48.9	6.4	0.0	0.0	4.38
The ACT roles outlined in the curriculum are clear and understandable to me.	51.1	46.8	2.1	0.0	0.0	4.49
The six styles incorporated in the curriculum are clear to me and appropriate for the target group.	34.0	59.6	6.4	0.0	0.0	4.28
The outline of the potential career pathways and training opportunities in the digital media/film sector provided in the Digital Media Skills and Opportunities Roadmap are relevant and appropriate as presented.	17.0	63.8	19.1	0.0	0.0	3.98
The description of job profiles relating to the digital	23.4	66.0	10.6	0.0	0.0	4.13

media/film sector incorporated in the Digital Media Skills and Opportunities Roadmap are detailed and self-explanatory.						
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Overall, the majority of answers were in the range of “Agree”, indicating that participants were in general satisfied with the overall development of the project thus far and with the design and development of the tools. In some countries there were more positive views with a bigger number of “Strongly agree” statements, while in others there were milder views with a higher number of “Neutral” statements. These variations can be attributed to the opportunities that are available in each partner country and these could influence the way the participants perceive some of the categories on the tools that have been developed.

These variations can be better understood through analysis of the qualitative data obtained as a result of the open ended questions where participants were asked to identify the main strengths of the tools developed and how they might be improved. The following list gives an overview of the responses provided:

Strengths:

- the digital media areas at the centre of the DLQ project
- the embedded learning approach
- the student-centred methodology
- promoting creativity
- activities of the project are fun, entertaining, engaging for youth, not at all school-like which was a big plus for the youth involved as well as being practical and hands-on
- activities provide youth with the freedom to explore different roles and take charge of their options by selecting the role that fits them best after trying out all the different roles
- the tools that have been developed are clear, concise, well-structured and understandable and the curriculum and the ACT roles are engaging and have clear aims
- the roadmap provides information for career paths that they can follow and activities that they can pursue in the future based on the specific career that they might select
- through the project activities collaboration and teamwork is promoted thus promoting team-building skills and social competence
- many of the youth-at-risk that completed the survey expressed great enjoyment in working with their friends and classmates as crew members and as a whole unit in order to produce a film

Improvements:

- some participants expressed concern that they are unsure of the logistics; who the tutors will be; how the youth/students will be selected; and what skills they should have
- there were concerns about learning how to use the equipment and successfully managing everything so that the output is of good quality
- a couple of participants suggested specific improvements to the curriculum based on their preferences
- a couple of participants suggested specific improvements to the careers roadmap based on their preferences
- clear expectations need to be set as to the output that is expected of the youth, and specifically the quality of film that can be feasibly expected given the equipment and budget available

It is clear from this internal evaluation exercise that after 12 months there was an overall positive attitude towards the project from both youth workers and youth at risk. As a result of this evaluation exercise there were a few recommendations made relating primarily to the possible improvements identified by the participants as follows:

- project partners agreed to address certain logistical issues such as selection of tutors and students as well as the timeframe that needs to be followed
- partners also agreed to try and alleviate concerns about using the equipment and to ensure that realistic expectations were set for the youth involved especially where the quality of outputs is concerned
- partners agreed to specific localized improvements to the curriculum and roadmap based on some participants' preferences

Internal Evaluation Survey 3

The third and final evaluation survey of the project was conducted in two different phases through the design and implementation of two separate tools. The first phase involved the completion of a survey designed to capture the opinions of the youth workers that participated in the Research Control Groups as well as in the induction programme that was completed within the framework of the project in each of the 4 acting partner countries. The second phase involved the completion of a survey designed to capture the opinions of the youth-at-risk that participated in the Research Control Groups, as well as in the implementation of the DLQ training in each of the 4 acting partner countries. A total of 29 youth workers and 36 youth-at-risk completed the surveys to inform this evaluation round.

The main objective of both phases of the third internal evaluation survey was to capture the opinions of both of the aforementioned target groups on whether the project as a whole and its final products remained appropriate to these two target groups in each of the different countries involved, and whether their experience

throughout their participation in the DLQ project fulfilled their expectations, needs, and personal/professional development.

The following table presents a summary of the quantitative data collected through the close-ended statements for all youth worker participants from all countries.

Total

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean
	%	%	%	%	%	
My participation in this project has contributed to my professional development.	3.5	3.5	17	41.5	34.5	4.00
I plan to use the tools and resources developed through this project in my professional work.		3.5	7	48	41.5	4.28
The structure of the curriculum is easy to follow.			10	45	41.5	4.31
The objectives of each unit are clear.			17	66	17	4.00
The pedagogical activities provided in each unit are relevant to the objectives set.			10	59	31	4.21
Overall, I feel that the curriculum is detailed enough that I can implement it successfully.			7	55	38	4.31
Overall, I feel that the curriculum will contribute to my students' personal development.			3.5	55	38	4.34

The following table presents a summary of the quantitative data collected through the close-ended statements for all youth at risk participants from all countries.

Total

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean
	%	%	%	%	%	
I enjoyed participating in the DLQ training.			3	50	47	4.44
I feel that the DLQ training in which I participated has contributed to my personal development.			8	58.5	33.5	4.25
I feel that the skills that I have gained through the DLQ training will be useful in the future.				50	50	4.50
The instructional material and resources provided were helpful.			11	75	14	4.03

The degree of collaboration incorporated in each curriculum activity was satisfactory.			8	61	31	4.22
The equipment was adequately demonstrated by the tutors.				64	36	4.36
I felt confident using the equipment to complete the activities and create the video(s).		3	5.5	47	44.5	4.33
The tutors were readily available to provide help during the training.				55.5	44.5	4.44
I enjoyed the filming process.			5.5	39	55.5	4.50
I am satisfied with the videos that my team and I produced.				61	39	4.39

Overall, the majority of the answers were in the range of “Agree”, indicating that participants were in general satisfied with their experience while participating in the DLQ implementation of the curriculum and video-production training. The variations evident in the responses are normal and could be attributed to the opportunities that are available in each partner country; the previous experiences of the youth workers and youth at risk engaged; the expectations from the training; and the amount of interest and involvement they expressed throughout the implementation.

With respect to the strengths of the DLQ training as identified by the youth workers, the most common ones that emerged were:

- how innovative, interesting, and creative the curriculum was
- the curriculum was well-structured and easy to follow with a logical sequence and good flow between the units
- the character of the activities and the overall scope and approach which they considered to be fun, entertaining, engaging for youth, practical, hands-on, and not school-like, thus being more interesting and attractive for students

With respect to the strengths of the DLQ training as identified by the participants the most common ones that emerged were:

- collaboration, team spirit and working with their friends and crew members as a unit to produce a film
- that it was a fun experience
- the structure of the curriculum and the fact that it followed a logical sequence was helpful and made it easy to follow
- participants appreciated how the training related to real-world situations and to real professions and they considered that the experience gained through

the DLQ training could be utilized in real-world professional settings for them in the future

With respect to improvements that could be made to the overall DLQ training model the following suggestions were put forward by members of the youth at risk target group:

- the training could be run over a longer period of time, so that they could spend more time on each unit and experiment with the equipment and thus feel even more confident with all the available features
- additional material and activities could be provided as a follow up to the training for those seeking further information

With respect to improvements that could be made to the implementation of the curriculum the following suggestions were put forward by youth workers:

- the objectives of each learning unit could be more clearly expressed
- additional supplementary material could be provided that would support the delivery of the curriculum such as a glossary of the technical terms; some short videos of the techniques mentioned in the curriculum; a suite of additional optional activities in case a tutor wants to go beyond the stated activities

Findings

The DLQ project was equally aimed at the continuous professional development of youth workers and the engagement of youth at risk in a new embedded learning educational environment. The concept behind the project was new and innovative in the sector and the thinking and actions of partners during the project's implementation was appropriate for a project of its kind. This is a project with great integrity and a significant addition to the educational landscape has been developed and promoted. The feedback from all target groups throughout the duration of the project was positive and insightful and in truth there were very few critical issues identified by the participants that had not already been foreseen by the partners.

Conclusion

In the final analysis it is worth assessing the outcome of the DLQ project under a number of headings as follows:

1. The workings of the consortium as a partnership

Every partner interviewed in the course of this evaluation expressed regret that the project was coming to the end of its lifecycle and that the work of the consortium as a consortium was coming to an end. Partners enjoyed the period of cooperation and each partner expressed the opinion that they had learned a great deal from their involvement in the project. Even though the end of this project coincides with the end of the current Lifelong Learning Programme there is a commitment among partners to seek to further the work of the consortium under the new Erasmus+ Programme.

From an external evaluation perspective it is clear that the Digital Latin Quarter project consortium have worked extremely well and produced high quality outputs in almost all instances. It is also clear that all partners have contributed equally to the development process and that there has been significant exchange of best practice and learning within the consortium.

2. The management and monitoring structures in place

Although the project did require an extension of 3 months to the project lifecycle all partners are agreed that appropriate management and monitoring structures were put in place and maintained throughout the project lifecycle. The quality management and internal evaluation functioned particularly well throughout the project lifecycle. A thorough examination of the project outcomes provides the clearest evidence that DLQ was a project that was well managed although it also be pointed out that the commitment of partners to quality outcomes made the management and monitoring of the project easier.

3. The engagement with the target groups

The envisaged external project structures involving both the youth worker and youth at risk target groups worked very effectively during the project design and development phases ensuring that the end beneficiaries were at all times placed at the centre of the project implementation process. The model used has proven to be very effective in creating a sense of ownership of the outputs achieved within the various target groups.

4. The quality of project outputs

The DLQ project has produced a wide range of outputs during the 27 months of operation and in particular, there are 4 elements of the project that are deserving of a special mention.

- a. The ACT Curriculum developed is a simple, easy to use, engaging curriculum resource that has been singled out for praise by both the youth workers and the youth at risk who have experienced it. This widespread satisfaction with the curriculum resource augurs well for its future use and sustainability into the future. The use of digital media which is so central to the lives of today's youth as a medium for embedded learning, key

competence development resources is a unique, innovative and inspiring combination.

- b. The cascading model of training designed to achieve the continuous professional development of youth workers in the 4 implementing partner countries has been remarkably well received in each partner country. Bringing people from each country together in Ireland for the initial weekend training workshop and the online support provided by Timesnap throughout the project lifecycle has succeeded in creating a transnational team spirit beyond the project partners that is still in evidence as the project draws to an end. The interest in the training provided and the success the project has achieved with the youth at risk target group has been so considerable that there is a significant demand for further iterations of the training. In Ireland, Meath Partnership are planning two further training courses in 2014 for 12 youth workers on each occasion and these courses will be funded from their core training budget.
- c. The quality and insightfulness of some of the video and short films produced is exceptional given the fact that neither the youth workers nor the youth at risk had any prior knowledge or experience of digital film production. These videos which are streamed on the project website can be the inspiration for other groups of youth workers and youth at risk into the future.
- d. Finally, a special mention of the use of the 'Film Crew' concept for the groups of youth at risk is necessary. The various crew roles, the crew uniform provided and the interdependence that this created was an exceptional added and unexpected outcome of the project. All of the youth at risk surveyed insisted that being part of the team, a key member of the film crew, was one of the highlights of their involvement in the project and gave them a sense of importance and purpose. In the project proposal it was mentioned that the variety of roles that exist in digital film production makes it a perfect environment for team building and bonding with marginalised youth and this has been proven to be absolutely correct.