newsletter

The official e-newsletter of BRIDGE-IT

July 2011

BRIDGE-IT (Be Relevant to Intercultural Diversity Generation in Europe Integration Team) invites service providers, working within bureaucratic institutions, to "be relevant", that is, to reflect on their current communicative behaviour within multicultural settings with a view of transforming attitudes and behaviour. Rather than cultural melting pots, BRIDGE-IT advocates for communities where different cultures and languages co-exist in a dynamic and dialectic relationship.

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Newsletter Three

On the way forward...

BRIDGE-IT Malta meeting 11th 16th May 2011

The partnership met in Malta for an extraordinary meeting to discuss progress to date and the way forward. The meeting was hosted by Prof. Carmel Borg and Dr Mario Pace from the University of Malta, one of the partners. Partners in attendance included: Massimo Cimichella, Koffi M. Dossou and Gabriella B. Klein (Italy); Philip Bonanno, Carmel Borg, Colin Calleja, Sandro Caruana and Mario Pace (Malta); Aleksander Schejbal (Poland); Antoon Cox (Belgium); Enver Tufaner (Turkey); Ingrid Wagenhofer (Austria); Katharina Kucher (Germany); and Hilde van Schaeren (the Netherlands).
The meeting was also attended by Valerie Salerno, Suzanne Grixti, and Jonathan Vassallo (Malta).

Day 1 (12th May) was chaired by Carmel Borg. Following a general introduction by Prof. Gabriella Klein from the Università degli Studi of Perugia, the project leader, the participants were given an overall picture of the present situation by Aleksander Schejbal. Schejbal's comprehensive overview provided the whole group with an opportunity to reflect on the progress registered to date. The situation became even more clearer when the participants responsible for the various work pages delivered their respective presentation in the following order:

- Dissemination (Wp2) - Carmel Borg and Mario Pace
- Visual Development & Communication Environment (Wp5 & Wp6) Koffi M. Dossou, Gabriella B. Klein, and Massimo Cimichella
- Pedagogical Guidelines (Wp7) Carmel Borg, Mario Pace and Gabriella Klein
- Identification of Good Training Practices for AMS and ACMs (Wp7/2-3) Gabriella Klein
- Collection of Written and Spoken Texts, Transcribing of Video Recordings, Text Analyses as basis material for the Blended Training Course (Wp8 & Wp9) Koffi Dossou & Gabriella Klein
- Collection and Analysis of written texts (Wp8/4 & Wp9/4)
- Collection, Transcription and Analysis of Spoken Texts (Wp8/2 8/3 and Wp9/3)

The first day ended with a discussion of a pedagogical tool - Let Me Learn for BRIDGE-IT (Wp7/1) led by Colin Calleja.

The second day of the meeting (13th May) focused entirely on the way forward. Chaired by Mario Pace, the discussion of the day revolved mainly on the principles and content of the pedagogical tool an on-line training course for Adults in Mobility and a course

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for Adults in Contact with Mobility. In addition, Antoon Cox delivered a presentation on the depository of bureaucratic institutional texts (Wp10).

Following a reflective introduction by Prof. Klein, the third day (14th May) was mainly dedicated to the instructional design of the on-line pedagogical tool. Led by Dr. Philip Bonanno, the participants discussed at length the nature of the course and the most effective way of delivering its principles and content.

In the afternoon, Jonathan Vassallo gave an overview of the financial situation of the project while Aleksander Schejbal provided the group with a reflection on the proceedings of the meeting and on the way forward between the Malta meeting and the Perugia meeting in September.

The final day of the meeting (15th May) initiated with a tour of Valletta, the Capital. Following lunch at the hotel, the meeting was brought to an end with a presentation by Enver Tufaner, a final reflection by Philip Bonanno, and the presentation of the certificates of attendance by Gabriella Klein and Carmel Borg.

Interview from The Netherlands

By Eelke Thomassen

BRIDGE-IT dissemination and application

I am Eelke Thomassen, 26 years old and final years student of the department of Oriental languages in Maastricht at Zuyd University of Applied Science (HSZUYD). Last year, I spent 6 months in China, studying at the Beijing Polytechnic University.

Despite my Chinese language skills I gained over the past five years, I experienced difficulties adapting to the Chinese culture. I have learned of the BRIDGE-IT EU project while I was following a minor CULTURAL DIVERSITY at the Social Work Department of HSZUYD. This project gave me the opportunity to investigate whether Chinese students who came to study at Zuyd university, the Netherlands, experience the same barriers within institutional bureaucratic systems as I did in China.

It was amazing to learn which barriers Chinese students encounter while living, studying and participating in the Dutch society. By interviewing and recording students, and later on by analyzing these data according to the BRIDGE-IT (e-SPICES) guidelines, I was able to obtain deeper insight into the experienced problems. As a result, I was able to provide advice to the International Office, the lecturers and the students of our Oriental language Department at Zuyd University. Thanks to BRIDGE-IT I gained a better knowledge of diverse cultural orientations.

BCC for efficient communication with a touch of diversity

Commuting between contexts en cultures offers many opportunities, but may also be the cause of communication problems. Values which are very important in one context, may be less so in another. For instance modesty as basis for communicating can be adequate in the family context but can be an obstacle in the work or social environment. And the value of being 'self-contained' can be adequate to maintain one's own cultural value in one society, but in the communication and collaboration with others it may lead to unnecessary misunderstandings and conflicts.

Learn to look at yourself
Looking at yourself with the intention to learn is uncommon for e.g. students who experience their existence in relation to others who surround them and whose self image is mainly determined by the opinion of others. Self reflection, handling feedback and judgement in presenting oneself in a positive way can be very hard.
When students learn the communicative skills necessary to regulate their academic career and successfully finish their practice period, they can also successfully follow through their study. At the same time they are adequately prepared for the labour market. A market that largely benefits the diversity which these students represent.

Look at yourself in a larger context
The narrative approach assumes that the stories people tell and the language they use represent their views. Their stories picture the complexity and diversity in ideas and facts. The narrative method gives people a vote, assigns a value to their story, gives meaning to their knowledge and places it in a larger context.
The Basic Communication Concept (BCC) is a training that combines the narrative approach with a strong emphasis on the development of communicative skills. It is applicable for everybody who wants to improve their communication skills.

Characteristic for the BCC training is:
- Familiarity and self acceptance as basis. Participants tell their own story based on their own context (roots, family, education, school, work, home situation).
- The trainer/supervisor works consciously and explicitly from a diversity perspective.
- The development of the participant is individually accompanied by the use of personal development programmes.
- Participants obtain competences to communicate effectively in various contexts.

The BCC-training consists of 3 modules and has a turnaround of 3 months; the training consists of 9 weekly sessions plus 1 intake session.
Module 1 – Here and present
Module 2 – Self orientation and communication skills
Module 3 – Employee skills
The BCC training has been introduced in the project ´Veelkleurige participatie van Vrouwen´ (Multicoloured Women Participation) in the town of Venlo in the Netherlands. The training was received with much enthusiasm and has helped women from various nationalities move forward in their participation process.
Erica Noya, trainer and creator of this training is of the opinion that language fluency is of course important for these women, but in order to contribute to a more confident presentation it is essential that they should also get help to develop their communication and self reflective skills.
TCM, Erica Noya, trainer/coach /supervisor in partnership with STEM consultancy, Mariet Meurs, PhD, trainer/consultant and cultural antropologist

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## The Knowledgecentre for Emancipation in Maastricht (KCEM)

The Knowledge Centre for Emancipation in Maastricht (KCEM) is a centre of expertise for women emancipation.

In society women are often key factors in securing cohesion as they know their neighborhoods, villages and neighbours. Most of them educate, participate in society life and stimulate their families to take an active role in society.

When they themselves need support and education, KCEM offers educational programs which focus on empowerment.

KCEM is committed, by means of binding and bonding, to enhance people's involvement within their environment and to help them improve and strengthen their possibilities.

One of the key objectives of KCEM is contributing to the creation of a safe and habitable environment which focuses on
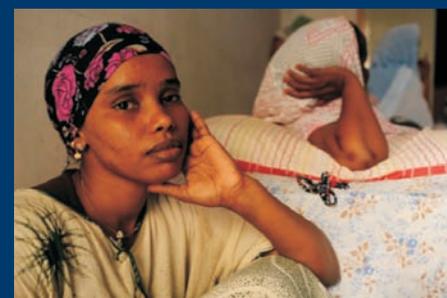
mutual respect and solidarity, bonding each and every actor of society, without distinction of ethnicity or cultural background.

Amongst the main policy orientations of KCEM are topics like:
- Health, Public Mental Health.
- Elderly people
- Law and Safety
- Social (Labour) participation
- Social cohesion in Maastricht

As an associated partner of BRIDGE-IT, KCEM trained highly educated women who have been unemployed for a long time and who look forward to participate actively in society. The group consisted of women with different ethnical backgrounds, some of whom came from Iran, the former Soviet Union, Somalia, Morocco, Ireland, Afghanistan and the Netherlands. In their efforts to find employment, all of them experienced barriers in institutional bureaucratic environments. Hilde van Schaeren offered them a workshop in which competences needed to act adequately within bureaucratic institutional environments where discussed and practiced. During the same workshop, intercultural communication competences were also studied.

A night at the refugee centre
Impressions of a first BRIDGE-IT focus-group meeting

By Ankie Hendrix

Organisation: Sajma Demic and Aida Muratagic.

On Friday March 18th 2011 I visited the refugee centre in Sweikhuizen (the Netherlands) with two 4th year social work students. The purpose of the visit was to have a focus group with ten refugee men in which we wanted to have a conversation about communication with Adults in contact with mobility (ACMs) and the possible barriers they might experience. All this in the context of the BRIDGE-IT project.

The meeting was supposed to start at 6.00p.m. but the three of us and the professional from the refugee centre that was also present at the beginning of the meeting had already calculated an extra 15 minutes: after all asylum seekers are always late, so was our idea. Around 6 o'clock however, the first participants arrived and the refugee centre canteen filled up with the fresh smell of soap and men perfume. Most of the participants seemed to have refreshed themselves up and dressed up especially for the occasion. When only a few minutes later the refugee centre canteen was filled up with a group of ten men, coming from Somalia, Iraq, Iran and Sri Lanka I had to admit a bit shamefully that, regarding time, I had reasoned from my own prejudice.

After a short introduction the actual conversation started. This got going almost immediately. The atmosphere was nice and the participants felt safe and free enough to express their thoughts and feelings. Soon it became clear that it was quite difficult to stick to the topic of intercultural communication. The participants grabbed the opportunity to complain about the miserable circumstances asylum seekers have to live in, in the Netherlands. 'We are prisoners in here', 'why don't people respect me as a human being here', and 'why do people treat us like animals?' are only a few of the cries that came across the table. Statements that really touched me at that moment. I noticed that I started to feel a bit uncomfortable with the situation. I felt helpless by hearing these stories. After all, what could I do except just listening to their sorrow? But I also felt a bit uncomfortable by the way the gentlemen were communicating. Some participants stood up during their speech, spoke with a very loud voice and with fierce hand/arm gestures. Ways of communicating that I'm not used to in the Netherlands. A few participants seemed to be aware of that and kept apologizing every time they crossed the line of a decent conversation by Dutch standards. Despite my uncomfortable feeling, I waved away the apologies. Because what was actually there to blame these men for?

After two hours of chatting and listening to the stories of the asylum seekers the focus group was brought to an end.

The participants thanked us for the meeting and went back to their rooms. Thanks for what? I was thinking. I felt guilty that I had to dredge up all the pains and misery of these men only for this meeting. That's also why, a few days later, I spoke to the professional from the refugee centre. I was wondering how the men had experienced the whole meeting. And what came true... The men told her that they thought the focus group meeting was one of the best nights ever since they arrived in the refugee centre. It was one of the first moments where they could speak freely in an informal setting with each other about their problems and frustrations. The men had experienced the focus group for BRIDGE-IT as a night out and they thought it was definitely worth repeating.
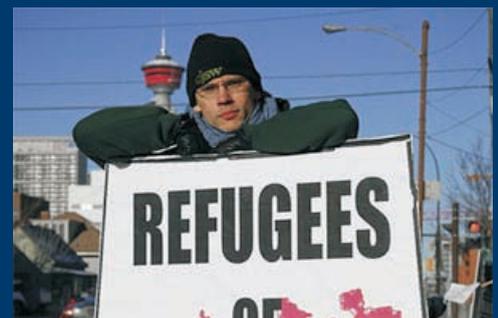
BRIDGE-IT Methodology
by Dr Philip Bonanno

During the Malta meeting of 11th-16th May 2011, the partnership asked me to present a draft of the BRIDGE-IT methodology which should lead us to the development of the teaching/learning tool (WP 07) an e-learning experience for adults in mobility (AMs) and adults in contact with mobility (ACMs).

The methodology includes the following stages:

Needs Analysis
A number of representative 'contact situations' (scenarios) in partner countries involving intercultural communication (ICC) are identified. These scenario situations, together with the other scenarios from SPICES, are analysed using the Need Analysis Templates. The problem situations in these scenarios involving the 4 categories of ICC (Verbal, Visual, Non-verbal, Paraverbal) are identified and recorded for the ACM and AM in the respective template. By the end of this stage the templates should include all entries from the different partners for the identified scenarios.
The entries for each category of the ICC are analysed to identify generic problem situations resulting in all scenarios and specific problem situations characterising particular scenarios.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes
The identified generic and specific needs are changed into statements of what learners should be able to do at the end of learning events involving any of the four categories of ICC. These should be stated in performance terms (action verbs) including observable things learners must be able to do, to show they have learned that particular aspect of ICC. These statements should avoid generic learning terms (understand, familiarise, awareness) and clearly identify the 'what' to learn and not the 'how'. The type of learning (facts, discriminations, concepts, procedural/relational rules, problem solving, attitudes) for each 'need' is identified. In practice, these statements have to be refined by a reflective process of answering questions about the problem or the need being considered, improving statement clarity.
The outcome of this phase will include:

- A description of the learning objectives and outcomes for each identified 'contact' scenario;
- These statements will identify what learners will be able to do and know after passing through a learning experience contextualised for a particular scenario;
- Prioritisation of the learning objectives and outcomes. The identified learning outcomes are analysed on basis of the level of importance in the process of learning an ICC category and consequently ranked according to priority.

Learning Design
The following hierarchical organisation will be adopted in the learning design process:
- Learning experience > Learning event > Learning activity > Learning interactions;
- Given that the BRIDGE-IT project is concerned with the design, development implementation and evaluation of a learning experience involving on-line learning, the learning events making up the whole learning experience in ICC should be identified;
- Each learning event is developed using the Learning event template below:

Learning Event Template	
Title	
Type of learning	
Learning objectives	By the end of this learning event learners will be able to:
Pre-requisites	
Steps: Introduction 1, 2, 3	
Practice	
Assessment	
Post-session	

Determining Learning strategy and Resources
Once the content of each learning event is identified, chunked and sequenced according to the type of learning, the activity and related resources are identified for each step of the learning event. The template below organises the activities and the resources for each step of the learning event. Activities are determined by the affordances of the learning management system, normally including: Chat / Dialogue, Lesson, Forum, Document sharing, Collaborative development, Design, Other activity. Resources include: Label, Text page, Web page, Link to a File (Word/PPP/Excel), Link to a website, Design tool, other.

Learning Event Template (Full)		
Content step	Activity	Resource
Title		
Type of learning		
Learning objectives		
Pre-requisites		
Steps: Introduction 1, 2, 3		
Practice		
Assessment		
Post-session		

Using these completed 'Learning Event Templates', on-line or blended learning experiences are developed on the BRIDGE-IT Platform. The outcome of this phase would be a number of learning experiences based on the identified contact scenarios. The navigational design would include a welcome page with a short video documentary describing the BRIDGE-IT training component leading to a tutorial option which when clicked would eventually lead to a webpage giving a list of learning scenarios.
The final outcome of the BRIDGE-IT project will be this on-line training environment involving context-specific tutorials in which various learning events about the four categories of ICC are embedded.

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Be Relevant to Intercultural Diversity Generation in Europe   Integration Team

Be Relevant to Intercultural Diversity Generation in Europe Integration Team 510101-LLP-1-2010-1-IT-GRUNDTVIG-GMP

*"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.
They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."*

(Article One of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, drafted in 1948 at the foundation of the United Nations)

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