

The official e-newsletter of BRIDGE-IT

January 2012

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.



Come and join our BRIDGE-IT course!

Vienna, Austria - 9-15 July 2012

Perugia, Italy - 14-20 April 2013

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<http://yozgat.meb.gov.tr>

BRIDGE-IT Seminar in Malta

Report by Carmel Borg

A BRIDGE-IT seminar was held in Malta between 23-25 November, 2011. The seminar was organised at the Faculty of Education, University of Malta. Coordinated by Prof. Carmel Borg, the build-up to the seminar engaged the work of other BRIDGE-IT collaborators, namely Dr. Mario Pace, Dr. Philip Bonanno, Colin Calleja and Prof. Sandro Caruana.

The seminar set out to address two main objectives: (1) to engage local stakeholders in a needs analysis exercise based on real, on-the-ground, bureaucratic/institutional situations; and (2) to evaluate the on-line learning experiences produced by the BRIDGE-IT partnership to date.

The seminar started in the afternoon of Wednesday, 23rd November. Prof. Carmel Borg's introduction was followed by greetings from Prof. Valerie Sollars, Dean of the Faculty of Education. The session lasted four hours and was largely dedicated to reflections on biographies and narratives of migrants coming to Malta from sub-Saharan Africa. The facilitators of the reflection process were Maria Pisani, an activist and researcher in the area of migration and education, and Dr. Ahmed Bugri, a lawyer, originally from Ghana, who is the Director of the Marsa Open Centre (a centre for migrants). In their reaction to the various stories of adults-in-mobility who came in contact with Maltese bureaucratic institutions, participants problematised frames-of-mind that marginalise migrants and roadblock intercultural communication. The morning of the second day of the seminar (Thursday, 24th

November) was facilitated by Mr. Mario Friggieri, Commissioner for Refugees (Malta), Lieutenant Colonel Brian Gatt, Commander Detention Services, Major Jeffrey Curmi, Armed Forces of Malta Training Branch, Inspector Mario Haber, Immigration Police, and Dr. Katrine Camilleri, Jesuit Refugee Centre. Mr Friggieri gave those present a step-by-step account of the asylum application process, including measures to minimise intercultural misunderstandings. Lt. Col. Gatt, Major Curmi and Inspector Haber discussed the communication challenges faced by local adults-in-contact-with-mobility who work in contexts marked by security concerns. Dr. Katrine Camilleri reflected on the proceedings of the morning session, providing participants with insights into the structural and infrastructural limitations imposed by gaps in bureaucratic provisions.

The afternoon session served as a backdrop for Friday's evaluation of the on-line experiences. Prof. Carmel Borg discussed the adult education principles and values that inform the BRIDGE-IT educator. Colin Calleja focused on the original elements of BRIDGE-IT in contrast with previous European projects, namely SPICES and E-SPICES. Held in Lab 1 of the Faculty of Education, the Friday session (November 25th) was co-led by Carmel Borg and Colin Calleja. Participants were asked to evaluate individual learning experiences against three criteria: content, structure and pedagogy. Using the excellent tele-conferencing facilities located at the Gateway Building, the



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evaluations were relayed to the rest of the BRIDGE-IT partnership assembled in Perugia. Reflecting on the seminar, participants felt that the event contributed to a better understanding of the complex and multifaceted nature of intercultural communication within Maltese bureaucratic settings. Energised by the two days of reflection, participants who attended the Friday session felt that they were in a better position to evaluate the on-line learning experiences. ♦

BRIDGE-IT PARTNERS



**Come and join
our BRIDGE-IT course!**



Vienna, Austria - 9-15 July 2012

Perugia, Italy - 14-20 April 2013

www.bridge-it.communicationproject.eu

BRIDGE-IT - Communication between Adults-in-Mobility ('migrants') and Civil Servants: an Intercultural and Interdisciplinary Perspective

Grundtvig In-service training course - Reference number: IT-2012-788-002

Come and experience the innovative new course developed for trainers, educators and teachers working with adults-in-mobility or migrants and adults-in-contact-with-mobility. If you are a trainer of initial language courses, a trainer in integration courses, a trainer of public service staff or an adult teacher working with migrants a.s.o., you can come to share your experience with colleagues from around Europe and become a member of the integration team of BRIDGE-IT. The course addresses also those specialising in training for migrants and current or prospective employees from private or public organisations in contact with adults-in-mobility.

WHY BRIDGE-IT:

Adults who for diverse reasons move to another country have to deal with institutions and bureaucracy, which unavoidably becomes an important scenario of the daily communication exchange. Within this setting AMs 'adults-in-mobility' (e.g. migrants) and ACMs 'adults-in-contact-with-mobility' (e.g. public officers) are the fundamental players. On one hand, lack of understanding and empathy between the two of them often lead to serious misunderstanding that could jeopardise the present and future of adults-in-mobility. On the other hand, stressful work situations are created for adults-in-contact-with-mobility.

Our courses address civil servants and professional trainers who are specialised in education for migrants. Specifically the In-service courses aim to develop awareness and competencies in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude in the field of interpersonal communication in bureaucratic-institutional settings.

GRUNDTVIG GRANT:

As the course is listed in the Comenius/Grundtvig Catalogue - series IT-2012-788-002- you can apply for a Grundtvig training grant from the Lifelong Learning Agency in your country. The deadlines for grant applications can be obtained from the website of your National Agency. Usually the grant covers your travel costs, full board and lodging, and the course fees.

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The CENTRAL AGENCY FOR THE RECEPTION OF ASYLUM SEEKERS SWEIKHUIZEN, the Netherlands:

An associated partner in BRIDGE-IT

Hilde van Schaeren

In mid-September, 2011, the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA)¹ featured prominently in the Dutch national media. The work culture within the centres and the closure of some of the refugee centres, including the dismissal of COA professionals, was reported (NRC², NOS³, TROUW⁴).

The Refugee centre Sweikhuizen (COA) in the province of Limburg is one of our associate BRIDGE-IT partners. Three Social Work students⁵ (two of them were themselves once refugees - see Newsletter 4) conducted a research project in this centre. They organised a focus group meeting with refugees, recorded real-life interactions with migrants and COA professionals and interviewed professionals. Some of the interviews and interactions were recorded and all of them were transcribed according to the SPICES Guidelines (Klein, ed. 2007⁶). Afterwards, the data were analysed, using the intercultural communication model of Edwin Hoffman⁷ (TOPOI-model).

The findings reveal that both interlocutors (migrants as well as the professionals) are functioning in highly stressful conditions. The migrants are extremely vulnerable because they have no certainty about their future prospects and are not allowed to participate in society. The professionals have to deal with a growing negative discourse against migration. Professionals often have to work with people who could have been victims of war and/or could have had extremely traumatic experiences (home country/during their flight).

Besides specific competences related to the institutional bureaucracy - knowledge of procedures and rules, insight into trauma and post traumatic stress disorder, awareness of acculturation stress and of how exclusions are manufactured – professionals must communicate with people who do not speak the language. In addition, they have to be highly in the affective domain where skills range from flexibility to empathy.

In their research, the social-work students met with motivated professionals working at the centre. However, they concluded the procedures used need to be looked into critically. For instance, if a migrant is not in the position to participate in society, it is impossible that he/she understands the realities which are relevant in the new country. Most of the migrants do not speak the language and are not familiar with the culture of the new environment. Procedures can help to maintain justice, but they can also provoke exclusion. For example, procedures urge that letters are to be read aloud before they signed. If a migrant is illiterate or does not understand Dutch, nobody will discuss this procedure. The fact that a phone interpreter can be invited to translate the letter is an example of a good practice. But if letters contain linguistic concepts/realities which are only relevant within Dutch contexts, we can stipulate that this is a point for improvement.

To illustrate, if the refugee gets permission to enter the country, housing possibilities come into the picture. Typical Dutch concepts for apartments are 'gallerijflats' or 'portiekflats'. A 'gallerijflat' is an apartment with a shared long balcony in front of all the doors of the neighbour apartments. A "portiekflat" is an apartment where two flats share same stairs at the entrance, this stairs split the entrance of two apartments. In the given example an asylum seeker was proposed a choice between a 'gallerijflat' and 'portiekflat'. Not knowing what was said, the asylum seeker nodded "yes" for approval. Later on in the letter it was explained that if the refugee made a wrong choice (digitally), it would have cost 2000 euro to undo a previous wrong choice. This is the case if a migrant uses his/herself the options on internet for the offered housing possibilities.

If COA professionals follow strictly the given procedures, they do not explain possible alternatives to avoid these risks. A motivated

professional who is willing to help is certainly to inform the migrant about other possibilities and can reduce bias in intercultural communication. It needs reflection about each step of the interaction. The given examples show the complexity of intercultural bias in institutional bureaucratic environments.

¹COA, the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers, is responsible for the reception of asylum seekers. COA provides accommodation during the asylum procedure and prepares asylum seekers for staying in the Netherlands, returning to their country of origin, or transmigration. To carry out these tasks, COA closely cooperates with the IND (Immigration and Naturalization Department), the Aliens Police and the Royal Netherlands Military Constabulary. (<http://www.coa.nl/ENG/website/home.asp>)

²NRC Handelsblad is a Dutch newspaper www.nrc.nl

³NOS: Nederlandse omroepstichting: is public Dutch television and radio which focuses on news and sport information. www.nos.nl

⁴TROUW: is a Dutch newspaper. www.trouw.nl

⁵Students studying at Social Work department, Zuyd university of applied sciences, the Netherlands.

⁶Klein, Gabriella B., ed. (2007). Klein, Gabriella B. et al., SPICES Guidelines, A training method for intercultural communication in institutional settings. Perugia: Key & Key Communications. Translations and adaptations in Bulgarian, German, Italian, Slovene, and Spanish. Published also in BRIDGE-IT TOOLS > Documents: <http://lnx.bridge-it.communicationproject.eu/web/htdocs/bridge-it.communicationproject.eu/dokeos/courses/BRIDGEIT-TRAINING/index.php>.

⁷Hoffman, E. (2009). Interculturele gespreksvoering. Theorie en praktijk van het TOPOI model. Houten: Bohn Stafleu van Loghum.

Frequently used abbreviations and definitions

(from SPICES Guidelines 2007: ed. by Gabriella B. Klein, *SPICES GUIDELINES. A training methodology for intercultural communication in institutional settings*. Perugia: Key & Key Communications. SPICES - Social Promotion of Intercultural Communication Expertise and Skills - 224945-CP-1-2005-1-IT-Grundtvig-G11 - www.trainingspices.net)

AM Adult-in-Mobility

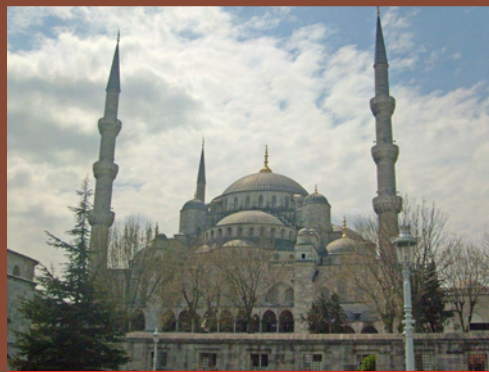
Any individual, eighteen years of age or older, that for economic, social, professional or cultural reasons emigrates from his/her own country of origin and moves for a short or a long period of time in a different geographical, cultural and linguistic context. This different context very often implies, though not necessarily, a state different from the one of origin.

(SPICES Guidelines 2007: 14)

ACM Adult-in-Contact-with-Mobility

Any individual who for reasons of work or profession comes into contact with adults in mobility (for example: educators, trainers, teachers, intercultural mediators, front-line desk officers or counter personnel, doctors...). (SPICES Guidelines 2007: 14)

ICC Inter-Cultural Communication is a way or a style of communicating between people who refer to different cultural backgrounds. (SPICES Guidelines 2007: 15; more on p. 25)



TRAINING COURSE

BRIDGE- IT - Communication between Adults-in-Mobility ('migrants') and Civil Servants: an Intercultural and Interdisciplinary Perspective

The BRIDGE-IT Conference and Final Exhibition

The final conference and best practice exhibition will be held in Turkey, between the 19th and the 20th of September 2012.

The aim of the final conference and exhibition is to disseminate and share the results of the project. The e-learning platform will be discussed from several perspectives. The project partners and conference participants will discuss the usability of:

- ▶ the online learning modules
- ▶ the written and spoken real-life texts depository
- ▶ and the terminological glossary on culturally embedded bureaucratic terminology.

We invite public administrations and NGOs working with and for migrants to present their best practices in:

- ▶ the use of written language, such as forms to fill in
- ▶ the use of spoken language, such as service interactions with migrants.

Application procedure and the work programme will be announced in the next newsletter.

Course sessions:

Vienna (Austria), 9-15 July 2012

Perugia (Italy), 14-20 April 2013

Type and origin of the training course:

training resulting from an LLP or previous Socrates project (Comenius, Lingua, Grundtvig, Minerva)

LLP PROJECT NO.: 510101-LLP-1-2010-1-IT-GRUNDTVIG-GMP

THEMATIC FIELD OF THE TRAINING

GENERAL IN-SERVICE TRAINING:

Active citizenship
Education management/project management
European citizenship & European dimension
ICT - Information and communication technologies
Inclusive approaches
Intercultural education
Pedagogy and didactics
Specific target groups: Roma, travellers, occupational travellers & migrants
Other general courses (Intercultural communication in public institutions)

Language used for the training:

English

Language versions in which materials will be provided:

Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Polish, Turkish

Education sector of the training participants:

Adult education
Second chance or remedial education
Higher education institution offering outreach courses for adults
Organisations working with migrant groups/ethnic minorities
Other sectors of adult education

Target audience:

Teachers (Pre-school, primary, secondary, vocational, adult, special needs)
Teacher trainers
Careers officers, educational guides and counsellors
Inspectors
Headteachers/principals/managers of



schools/organisations offering adult education

Other (Paid or voluntary) management staff in the institution/organisation

Non-teaching administrative staff

Members of students/teachers councils in adult education

Other, namely: Trainers for civil servants; L2 educators

OBJECTIVES:

Adults who for diverse reasons move to another country have to deal with institutions and bureaucracy, which unavoidably becomes an important scenario of the daily communication exchange. Within this setting 'adults-in-mobility' (e.g. migrants) and 'adults-in-contact-with-mobility' (e.g. public officers) are the fundamental players. On one hand, lack of understanding and empathy between the two of them often lead to serious misunderstanding that could jeopardise the present and future of adults-in-mobility and, on the other hand, create stressful work for adults-in-contact-with-mobility. Our courses therefore address professional trainers, who are specialised in education for migrants and/or civil servants. Specifically the courses aim to develop awareness and competencies (in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude) in the field of interpersonal communication in bureaucratic-institutional settings and within an intercultural perspective.

The courses set out to help participants:

- acquire awareness of cultural diversity and its effect on communication practices
- develop the ability to observe communicative interactions generally and in its intercultural dimension
- learn about and focus on the four means used in the interpersonal communication process: verbal (words and discourses), paraverbal (voice), non-verbal (body), and visual (images, colours, shapes, symbols)
- understand intercultural implications in institutional written texts: the bureaucratic language and terminology with particular focus on 'first-impact' situations
- understand intercultural implications in public service encounters
- experience and practise adequate communicative strategies for bureaucratic-institutional settings

- learn to use and adapt the BRIDGE-IT VLCE (e-learning platform) resources and tools for learners' needs in intercultural communication within bureaucratic institutions with particular focus on first-impact situations.

METHODOLOGY:

BRIDGE-IT blended training consists of a combination of on-line and face-to-face learning activities based on a collection of real-life communication materials from a range of bureaucratic-institutional contexts from different countries.

In addition to practical exercises focusing on the key aspect of experiencing specific intercultural situations (learning by doing), the course includes information sessions, short lectures and discussions. Great importance is given to the learning process itself and to the concept of "learning how to learn". Therefore, the course makes use of the Let Me Learn® Process (resulting from another Grundtvig project) as a methodology tool allowing trainers to respect participants' different ways of learning and trainees to discover about and "take control of their learning processes and adapt them in order to meet learning expectations".

BRIDGE-IT methodology makes use of:

- Learning according to specific communicative needs and settings
- Interactive training in small groups
- Cooperative learning
- Problem solving, simulations and role play, and critical incidents
- Self assessment exercises
- Autobiographical approaches.

CONTENTS:

Preparation

Following the registration for the course through the project website, all participants will be registered to the project's platform (Virtual Learning and Communication Environment on Dokeos). There, they will be able to familiarise themselves with the tools and resources of BRIDGE-IT as well as from its predecessor projects SPICES (www.trainingspices.net) and e-SPICES (www.e-spices.net); they will be introduced to the methodology also through direct contact with trainers and tutors.

Two weeks before the beginning of the residential phase of the training, participants will be provided with a range of exercises online (which they will complete at their own pace) and a pre-departure programme (specific suggested reading material, support documents, questionnaires) in order to build a portfolio

of reading and reflection on one's own experience with regard to diversity in communication practices.

The preparatory activities will include:

- collection of materials used in communicative situations and/or interactions with foreign people (e.g.: bureaucratic/official forms that foreigners have to fill in, audio/video recordings of such interactions and similar texts from real-life situations);
- administration of the Learning Connections Inventory, the first step in the Let Me Learn® process, to discover and strategise one's learning.
- Online facilities will also enable course participants and trainers to meet and develop a relationship before the residential phase begins.

Follow up

A follow-up phase that includes post-course assignments and further online modules to be completed through the online instrument is scheduled within the course programme. The BRIDGE-IT trainers and tutors will be available via the project platform and/or email. A participants' mailing-list will be set up for peer networking with the aim of setting up a community for exchange of good practices and for the development of new ideas in the field of intercultural communication for bureaucratic-institutional purposes between ACMs and AMs.

In addition to written evaluation during the course, participants will receive an invitation to an online evaluation tool, two weeks and six months after the course in order to elaborate on their learning triggered by their course experience.

PROGRAMME OF THE TRAINING ACTIVITIES (day by day)

DAY 1 (2 hrs)

Afternoon

Registration

Evening

Welcome session

DAY 2 (8 hrs)

Morning

Presentation of trainers and participants

Course programme

Rules for collaboration

Expectations

Afternoon

LML: Let Me Learn approach

BRIDGE-IT project

Interpersonal communication: Basics

Interpersonal communication: an intercultural perspective

Participants' intercultural experience

Discussion & feedback

DAY 3 (8 hrs)

Morning

Simulation of first-impact situations (Role-play)
Intercultural communication in first-impact bureaucratic-institutional texts: verbal & visual aspects

Afternoon

Working with BRIDGE-IT VLCE (e-learning platform) resources & tools

Participants' intercultural experience

LML Results

DAY 4 (8 hrs)

Morning

Simulation of first-impact situations (Role-play)
Intercultural communication in first-impact bureaucratic-institutional conversations: non-verbal & visual aspects

Afternoon

Working with BRIDGE-IT online platform & tools

Participants' intercultural experience

Discussion & feedback

DAY 5 (8 hrs)

Morning

Experimenting first-impact intercultural encounters (Excursion)

Report, exchange & reflection on the experience

Group discussion & interim feedback

Afternoon

Intercultural communication in first-impact bureaucratic-institutional contexts: the bureaucratic language and terminology
Participants' experience

DAY 6 (8 hrs)

Morning

Simulation of first-impact situations (Role-play)
Intercultural communication in first-impact bureaucratic-institutional conversations: verbal & paraverbal aspects

Afternoon

Working with BRIDGE-IT VLCE (e-learning platform) resources & tools

Participants' intercultural experience

Discussion & feedback

DAY 7 (8 hrs)

Morning

Introduction to BRIDGE-IT learning events for AMs & ACMs

How to use the online learning modules for AMs & ACMs

Afternoon

Assignments for the follow-up phase

Discussion & feedback

Questions - doubts

Overall discussion & evaluation

Cultural Farewell

DAY 8

Departure

Multilateral Grundtvig Project 510260-LLP-1-2010-1-PL-GRUNDTVIG-GMP - October 2010 – September 2012

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Grundtvig In-service training course
Reference number: IT-2012-796-001
3 - 8 September 2012 - Perugia

The **ARTERY Platform**
(<http://www.arteryproject.eu/platform/>)

provides a unique opportunity for artists, educators and therapists to share and discuss their work in rich multimedia. Now, you have the opportunity to take part in a blended learning course based on exploiting and contributing to this platform.

You will gain access to a database of activities and methodologies developed by a highly experienced team from all around Europe, implement your developed adaptations, and share your results on the ARTERY platform!

For more info about the course and grant possibilities, please go to the ARTERY website <http://www.arteryproject.eu>

You may also contact: Koffi M. DOSSOU
keyandkey@keyandkey.it



“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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