



Ariadne Pilot Project: Method Statement

Pilot Project Name: ART OF ADAPTATION

Organisation: ELAN INTERCULTUREL

Dates of Pilot: No of Weeks/Hours: 16th - 27th January 2012, 8 days, 3,75 h / day

Project Manager: Vera Varhegyi, Susanne Dieing

Artist(s)/Facilitators: Raphael Valeron, Carla Foris, Vera Varhegyi, Susanne Dieing

Primary Project Objectives

What were the primary Project Objectives and Aims in relation to socio-cultural adaption and/or psychological adjustment?

The aim of the project was to facilitate socio-cultural adaptation and psycho- social adjustment to a new environment with the means of a variety of arts (visual arts, drama, dance) for a group of newcomer women, whose majority was coming to France to join / follow their partner. A specific objective was to reach a better awareness of own resources and competences, and to increase the motivation to pursue / identify one's project in the new environment.

Concrete objectives:

- Providing a space for social contact and creative activity that generates feelings of well being that can dispel the negative feelings caused by the isolation and loneliness
- Awareness of a new cultural environment with its differences and its points of entry
- Reflection and acceptance on the changes triggered by adaptation
- Stimulating creativity and motivation for recreating one's life project in the new country

Pilot Project

Project Overview – How did we combine intercultural training with the arts? How was the content developed for the pilot course

- The theme of the project was "Art of adaptation", it dealt with the process of adaptation explicitly. The 8 sessions addressed different themes relevant for the adaptation process: landing, exploring a new culture, first contact, culture shock, identity transformation, connecting to the new environment, work on the re-contextualisation of one's life project.
- The workshop provided a creative space in which all participants could address notions of identity, home, family, love, friendship and belonging, primarily through visual art and dancing. The last session was devoted to focus on one's own

- competences and skills and how they can be applied to the new context.
- The diversity of the participants was a very enriching intercultural process for the whole group.

Target Group – Who was the primary target group? Migrants, Refugees, Host population etc. How many? Did they attend and engage in all the sessions? How did you recruit and retain them?

The primary target group was women newcomers, mostly arriving to France to join / follow their partner, except two participants: one participant waiting for her asylum claim's evaluation and one person who came for studies. The ages of all participants ranged from 20 to 43.

The total number of the target group was 10.

Most participants attended all the sessions, however, some of them had to miss some sessions due to sickness or official appointments.

Elan Interculturel recruited the participants by contacting different organizations working together with foreigners such as the Association of American Wives of Europeans, Women of American Church, Parents associations of International schools, Migrant organizations etc.

Where did the pilot course take place? What venue did you use? How accessible was this for the project and for the participants? What did/ did not work?

The Pilot took place mainly in a rented seminar room (7 passage Ambroise) in the 11th district in Paris. For the contact improvisation a dance room was rented at L'Article 6 rue du Paradis 75010 Paris. The participants were informed about the different venues and found easily the way to both seminar rooms as public transport is very developed in Paris.

Project Benefits

Who benefited from the project and how do we know? Community, Participants, Host population, External partner organisations, our organisations?

The people who benefited from the workshop were:

1. Participants benefited from the two weeks course and were highly satisfied with the process of the course and its outcome. The whole process was evaluated at the end of the course and on a daily base.
2. Facilitators – artists: both collaborator artists and both facilitators have themselves an experience of cross-cultural transition and were born in other countries than France. This gave them an authenticity towards the workshop's theme and also gave an opportunity to reconnect with their own experiences.
3. Organisations contacted during the recruitment: some networking benefits may also be noted on behalf of the organizations that were contacted, which had no previous connections between them before.

Primary Project Deliverables

Creative Outcomes – What creative activities took place how were they developed and what was produced? Were they undertaken by the group or individual?

The workshop was based on different means of art (drawing, acting, photography, contact improvisation). Each creative activity was introduced by demechanisation exercises which helped the target group to get slowly into art work, dancing or acting. The participants worked both individually and in small groups. There were taken photos from all sessions and products.

Contact improvisation

- Warming up with simple exercises
- Dance activities were undertaken by individuals, in duets and as groups ensembles

Drawing/Collages

- Drawing materials were provided everyday and the participants made good use of these, making drawings and collages
- Visual representations of “My portrait”, “My dreamt portrait”, “My resources”, “My social galaxy” and “My home in France” were produced by all individuals
- In order to connect the “dreamt portrait” with the reality in France, each participant were photographed with its “dreamt portrait” and its favorite spot in the neighborhood /Paris.
- pictures and wrote, recording their feelings and responses to the project

Role Plays

- The critical incidents (experienced in France) of the participants were discussed and analyzed in small groups. In small group they displayed the situations. In a second sessions they tried to act differently in order to release the critical situation.

What indicators were explored and how? Feelings of culture shock: loss, anxiety, fear, etc.

- Isolation (activities of trust-building, ice-breaking, contact)
- Lack of structure in daily life (intense daily rhythm)
- Experiences of culture shock (joint analysis of critical incidents)
- Loss of confidence about own competences, abilities (portfolio)
- Loss of motivation to pursue own life project in the new context (SWOT)
- Separation from the environment (exercise on ‘ibasho’= the safe place or point of entry in Paris)

What good practice/methodology we the pilots informed by?

Methodological basis of the workshop:

- intercultural approach (inclusion of cultural diversity both in the theme an in the methodology)
- application of theories of intercultural social psychology (aspects of adaptation, work on identity, connection, decentration based on Cohen Emerique’s approach)

- use of a booklet to accompany the workshop with two parts: part 1: inputs / exercises for a better understanding of the adaptation process part 2: images + questions for self-exploration based on the good practice identified at Les paracommand'art (Nations-moi / trajet reel – trajet révé)

Project Assessment

What project assessment methods did you use? Questionnaires, video, photography, journals, observations, self- reflection, notes, diaries, sound recordings, interviews, etc.

Questionnaires,
Photography
Observations
Field notes of facilitators
Discussion with artists
Participant's artwork
Individual participants' shape poetry

Impact - How did you use Pre and Post Qs with Participants? What challenges did you have? Do you have 2 case studies: individual or group?

Pre-test: we proposed it as optional, and half of the participants brought it back. However some failed to use the identification box, so the use for establishing a change is weakened.
Case studies: individual interviews.

Snapshots – What did you produce photos/videos etc? What formats?

We have a photographic record of the whole process from the first day to the last seminar.

Reflections – What do you have? Notes, diaries, journals, etc.

Notes of facilitators, photos of participant's artwork. Notes taken at daily evaluations at the end of each session.

Project Critical Success Factors

What worked and what will you remember?

- the diversity of the group and its intercultural impact on the participants
- the expertise and the emotional intelligence of the partner artist, the fact of commissioning artist / facilitators who themselves have the experience of migration. Collaboration between intercultural trainers and artist to develop the activities proposed
- the commitment of all participants
- working on the theme of adaptation in an explicit way, with a progress built in the succession of the sessions

What was the hardest challenge?

- Recruitment
- To handle late arrivals of participants
- Being trainer and researcher at the same time

What would you do differently next time?

- Taking more time for developing the portfolio of competences and the life project of the participants
- Giving more “outdoors” tasks inviting participants to get in touch with the outside environment
- Separate the task of facilitator / researcher

What was the nicest thing or most unexpected challenge?

The nicest things

- seeing people going through a very positive process
- watching individuals grow in confidence and self esteem
- that our refugee participant were so positive about the experience and gained so much self-confidence

The most unexpected challenge

- To integrate our refugee participant into the group of migrants which came from a very different social background

Please return to ariadneproject@googlegroups.com on completion of your pilot courses.