

Title: “Alert - 2”

Website: <http://www.alert-2-eu.info/project.htm>

Project type: SOCRATES / GRUNDTVIG 1 - pilot project

Ref. no.: 101067-CP-1-2002-1-UK-GRUNDTVIG-G1

Duration: 3 years

Actual stage: Finalised, with the Final Report approved by the European Commission

Total value of the Contract: 337473 Euros

Total value for the University of Pitesti: 66242 Euros

Rationale:

There are three complementary underlying rationales to this project

1. people from disadvantaged groups need to gain a good knowledge and understanding of sustainability issues: European and national policies to reduce consumption of fossil fuels, water and resources rely or will rely at least in part on higher prices. People need to understand why such policies are being adopted and how they can adapt their lifestyle to avoid any reduction in their standard of living
2. there are increasing numbers of employment opportunities in providing advice about resource consumption and, in business, in the management and monitoring of energy and water costs and in waste reduction. Knowledge of the issues could provide a grounding for further training and, potentially, employment.
3. providing adult education which relates practically to everyday requirements and experience is an effective way of re-engaging people from disadvantaged groups in learning. The topics are of universal significance and there is wide interest in "environmental" issues.

There is a demand for environmental information too. The partners have identified, through research consultation and contacts, that people want practical information about sustainability which explains what they can do to help bring about change. The previous SOCRATES project in which die Umweltberatung and envolve were partners showed how a range of consultative and informal processes could be used to engage people who would otherwise not come within the adult education system. As part of the project, research was carried out by University of Bath in disadvantaged communities which confirmed that there is both a need and demand for this information

In France and the UK, there has already been opposition to high petrol prices. Citizens need more information about the reasons for increasing energy prices and prices of other limited resources so that they can engage in informed debate about the pace of change and can recognise the opportunities inherent in the change as well as the threats. In Austria there is wide appreciation of the issues but there is still need to develop good access to advice and support, and to share ideas. In Lithuania and Romania, there is an expectation that it is the state that will act to solve problems including those arising from the increasing use of scarce

resources. The role of the citizen alongside the state is less well understood and the voluntary or not-for-profit sector is not well developed. There is also a natural wish to raise living standards by following the same path that western European states have followed but this may mean undervaluing aspects of cultural behaviour which use less resources. Pitesti is an industrial city and an understanding of these issues will help support environmental management systems in the industries themselves.

Aims and Objectives

The project is designed to develop adult learning which enables people to understand what sustainable living means, why it is a key concept for the future and how citizens can contribute to and benefit from it.

More specifically the project will:

- develop three areas of study: knowledge and understanding, practical action and advising others:
 - o knowledge and understanding: to appreciate the societal impacts of the use of energy, chemicals and other resources; the solutions that are being put in place through regulations, taxes and other structural measures; and the impacts of individual choices of action, activities and purchases
 - o practical actions: on wide-ranging subjects - growing native orchids, collecting rainwater, gardening without pesticides, fitting a solar water heater, reducing household chemicals etc.
 - o enabling new learners to teach or inform others in their community: to play a role in passing on their knowledge, either for collective or wider individual benefits.
- inform and provide materials for adult tutors, trainers, community workers and journalists: to enable them to incorporate these approaches into their work and hence reach large numbers of people

Envisaged outputs

In summary, the outputs will be:

- Common materials in five languages: European context of environmental sustainability and role of the citizen
- Mainly picture/diagram-based practical project descriptions and equivalent written descriptions in the national language and one other major European language
- An "advice resource" for those who wish to act as mentors in their community, either as volunteers, or on a paid honorarium or as a supplementary role alongside a paid role in the community
- Advice for Users of the materials on how to involve people through a variety of routes
- A website from which materials can be drawn and through which additional contacts can be made
- Exchange between adult learners through which they can contact those in other countries to share experiences

Partnership:

- Envolve Partnerships for Sustainability - UK
- Die Umweltberatung, Wien (Environmental Advice Agency) - AT
- University of Pitesti - RO
- Socialiniu inovaciju fondas (Social Innovation Foundation), Kaunas - LT
- APIEU, Besançon (Permanent Workshop for the Urban Environment) - FR