

2024

priseila
EMPOWERMENT THROUGH LIFELONG LEARNING

REPORT OF PILOT IMPLEMENTATIONS

VOLKSHOCHULE IM
LANDKREIS CHAM (Germany)



Co-funded by
the European Union

REPORT OF PILOT IMPLEMENTATIONS

VHS CHAM (GERMANY)

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Year of publication: 2024

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This report has been developed in the context of "PRISCILA – Fostering Personal, Intercultural, Social and Citizenship Competences for Lifelong Learning to Empower Migrant Adult Learners" Project num: 2023-1-ES01-KA220-ADU-000165731

Funded by the European Union.

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About Priscila

"PRISCILA: Fostering Personal, Intercultural, Social and Citizenship Competences for Lifelong Learning to Empower Migrant Adult Learners" is an Erasmus+ project in the field of adult education, involving 6 partners in 4 different countries and one international organization. La Xixa (coordinator) and ACATHI from Spain, Hasat from Türkiye, the Department of Education Studies of the University of Bologna and APS Cantieri Meticci from Italy, Volkshochschule – Cham from Germany and the European Association for the Education of Adults, based in Brussels.

The PRISCILA method, based on non-formal learning methodologies such as Theatre of the Oppressed, Deep Democracy, Spatial Assemblage and Critical Incident, seeks to empower migrant adult learners by fostering and recognising three key competences:

- Personal, social and learning to learn competence,
- Intercultural competence
- Citizenship Competence

The Priscila Project will issue European micro-credential certificates based on the Priscila Method for these three key competences belonging to the **European Framework of Key competences for lifelong learning**.

The aim of the PRISCILA Project is to test, verify, and develop a valid and quality-assured certification tool and guide for non-formal learning professionals who work with adult learners with fewer opportunities.

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01

Introduction



The **Volkshochschule im Landkreis Cham e. V. (VHS Cham)** is a non-profit association located in Upper Palatinate, Bavaria, and is among the 900 adult education institutions in Germany. Dedicated to ensuring equal participation in society, VHS Cham offers a wide range of educational opportunities for individuals of all ages and backgrounds. With 90 full-time employees and 300 freelancers, they provide over 1,250 learning events annually, serving more than 15,000 participants.

The institution offers courses in various fields such as society, vocation, languages, health, culture, arts and crafts, and special programs for vulnerable groups. About 10% of learners are migrants, who benefit from integration language courses, orientation, occupational language courses, and literacy programs. VHS Cham follows the Bavarian Adult Education Association's quality management process and complies with the Federal Ministry's regulations, providing official language exams and preparation for naturalization tests.

In addition to promoting lifelong learning and personal development, VHS Cham is accredited for vocational training by the Employment Agency, offering tailored courses for those with basic skills or literacy issues. As a member of the Bavarian Adult Education Association and BBV e.V., and certified by DQS, VHS Cham is dedicated to supporting educational journeys and ensuring education is accessible and enjoyable for everyone.

The **pilot** took place over three days in **September 2024** in the classrooms of the VHS im Landkreis Cham e. V. on the following days:

- First session: 11/09/2024 (8:00-15:00);
- Second session: 12/09/2024 (8:00-15:00);
- Third session: 13/09/2024 (8:00-15:45).



Recruitment of participants: As the Volkshochschule im Landkreis Cham e. V. is the most established adult education centre in the district and has been offering integration courses for migrants for decades, it had no difficulties in recruiting participants. VHS Cham is one of the centres in Germany that offers the official 600-hour “integration courses” for newcomers, mandatory to obtain German nationality. In this context, VHS Cham is in direct contact with newcomers in the region and is very experienced in German and formal classes complying with official recommendations and curriculum.



Dissemination and promotion activities: The trainers asked in a few of these ongoing “integration courses” and then chose a course that was currently at the A2 level of the CEFR. This group was well suited to the task, because it was a group of German language learners who were keen to take advantage of additional opportunities to learn and practice the language. They had only been working together for a short time and did not know each other very well, so it was also possible to use inclusive get-to-know-you activities.



The learning group: Sixteen people took part in the pilot program. The age of the participants was between 24 and 47, with most of them being around 35 years old. Of these, five were women and eleven men. Five people came from Ukraine, five from Syria, three from Iran (Kurdistan), one from Bosnia and Herzegovina, one from Turkey and one from Ethiopia. Except for two people, all refugees had been in Germany for between three years and six months. Among the religions, Islam and Christianity (mostly Greek Orthodox) were represented. Almost all participants had learned a profession or completed a degree. The professions represented included: lorry driver, IT designer, psychologist, chef, tailor, teacher, nurse. Only two people didn't complete any previous training due to their young age.



Participation: The group started with 17 participants on the first day, with one person falling ill on the following two days. There were no other dropouts.



Difficulties: Only a few language problems were identified and a few difficulties in completing the pre and post-evaluation, which were probably due to the format being unfamiliar to the participants. For most participants, it was the first time that they were asked to carry out self-assessment.

02

Learning Paths and Methodology

02 Learning Paths and Methodology

Learning Paths

Learning Path of the pilot in Cham, Germany "Me and the world around me"

Session 1: Deep Democracy & Critical Incident

The objectives of the session were to get to know each other and discuss peaceful neighbourhoods.

These goals aimed to create a relaxed and engaged environment through various activities that encouraged interaction, personal sharing, and discussions on consideration and respect within the community.

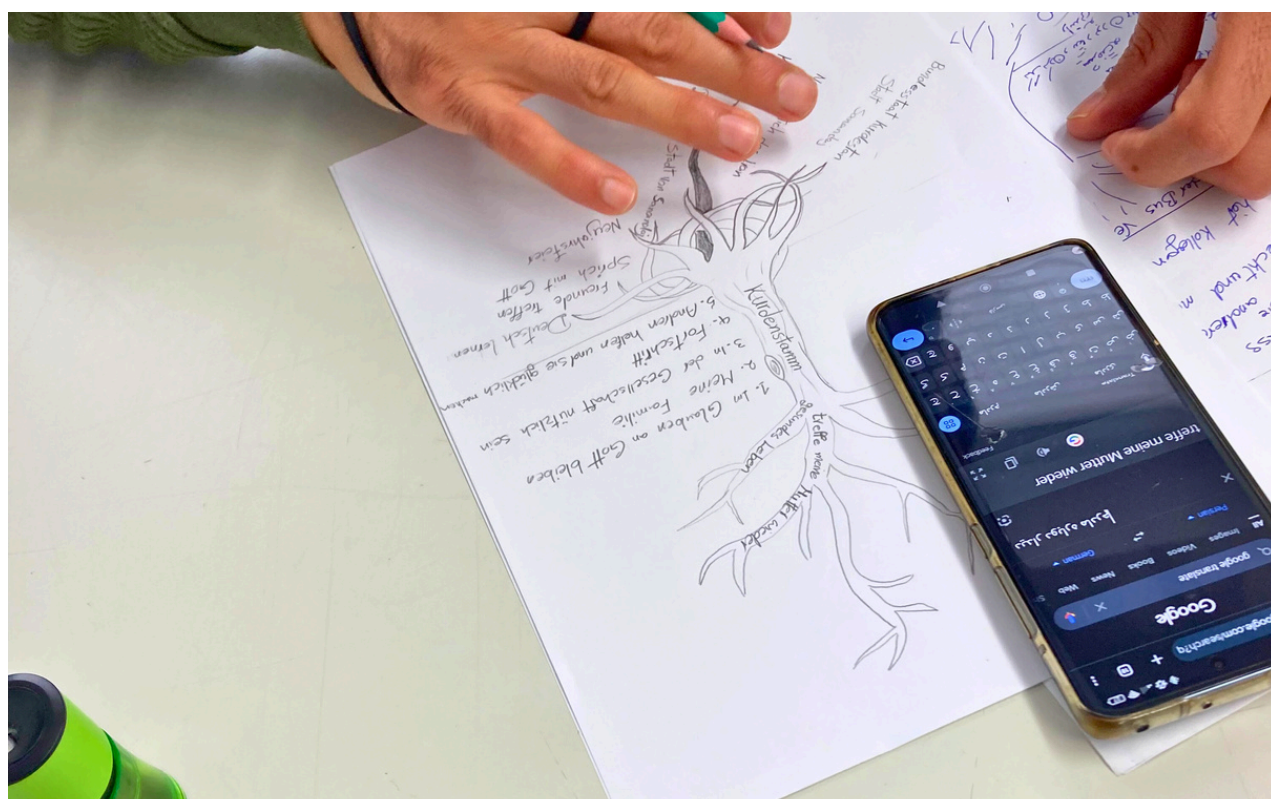
Activity 1: Introductory activity	Presentation of the PRISCILA Project and the lesson plan.
Activity 2: Pre-Self-evaluation activity	Participants are asked to assess their skills and complete the PRE evaluation before the workshop.
Activity 3: Introductory activity	Presentation with a ball: Participants are asked to say their name and an adjective that describes them. This exercise is for team building, dealing with mistakes and frustrations, and incorporating the body into the learning process.
Activity 4: Introductory activity	My Photo: Participants are asked to share a photo to discuss their past and cultural background, aiming to create deep connections, understand individual and collective heritage, and foster closeness and mutual understanding.
Activity 5: Intermediate activity	The Norms: Participants are asked to formulate their thoughts on the rules and norms for peaceful coexistence with their neighbours that are most important to them. Participants are asked to formulate their thoughts on the rules and norms for peaceful coexistence with their neighbours that are most important to them. They should discuss with each other in groups and come to a common conclusion.
Activity 6: Evaluation activity	Participants are asked to name one thing they have done particularly well today.

Learning Path of the pilot in Cham, Germany

Session 2: Deep Democracy

The objective of the session was to encourage participants to reflect on their lives, origins, and future aspirations, including their plans, wishes, and goals. This reflective task aimed to foster self-awareness and personal growth by having participants think deeply about their experiences and future ambitions. The goal of the second part was to engage participants in a dynamic and interactive activity by having them recreate famous city landmarks using their bodies. This activity aimed to foster teamwork, creativity, and a sense of fun among the participants.

Activity 1: Evaluation activity	Participants are asked to summarise the previous day in one sentence.
Activity 2: Intermediate activity	The Tree of Life: Participants are asked to create an individual tree of life, telling short personal stories about the elements of their life, culture, identity and strengths in connection with the past, present and future.
Activity 3: Intermediate activity	The Image of our city: The participants are asked to use their bodies to build various elements of material cultural heritage in mime. This activity strengthens (inter)cultural exchange, teamwork, non-verbal communication, creativity, and problem-solving skills, both individually and as a team.
Activity 4: Evaluation activity	Participants are asked to name one thing they have done particularly well today.



Learning Path of the pilot in Cham, Germany

Session 3: Theatre of the Oppressed

The session aimed to enhance engagement and memory, promote creativity and enjoyment, and develop concentration and coordination. The first activity focused on remembering detailed information about conversation partners and to increase their empathy. The second activity focused on promoting creativity and fun through drawing and created an interactive environment. The aim of the last activity was to develop concentration and coordination through mirror movements.

Activity 1: Evaluation activity	Participants are asked to summarise the previous day in one sentence.
Activity 2: Intermediate activity	Interview with role change: Participants are asked to identify with the role of another person, based on the information they have gained from an interview with that person, in order to increase their empathy.
Activity 3: Intermediate activity	Travelling drawing: Participants are asked to solve a common task as a team without communicating verbally. The aim is to highlight the challenges and nuances of communication and to encourage participants to reflect on their own understanding and interpretations.
Activity 4: Intermediate activity	Growing mirror: Participants are encouraged to become more aware of their bodies and the bodies of others. This activity promotes non-verbal communication through body expression and group bonding. At the same time, it builds trust in oneself and in others.
Activity 5: Post-Self-evaluation activity	Participants are asked to assess their skills after the workshop and complete the POST evaluation.
Activity 6: Evaluation activity	Participants are asked to name three things they learnt during the three-day workshop.
Activity 7: Evaluation activity	Participants are asked to complete a questionnaire to evaluate the three-day workshop and to write down their thoughts, ideas and suggestions for improvement.

Learning Path of the pilot in Cham, Germany

Practical Information

Dates:

- Wednesday 11/09/2024, Thursday 12/09/2024, Friday 13/09/2024
- At 08:00 - 15:00 (08:00 - 15:45)

Venue:

VHS im Landkreis Cham e. V., Waldschmidtstraße 15a, 93413 Cham, Germany

Number of participants:

- 11/09/2024: 17
- 12/09/2024: 16
- 13/09/2024: 16

Attendance:

One participant out of 17 has fallen ill. The remaining 16 participants attended the workshop on all 3 days.

Minimum attendance to obtain the Micro-Credentials certification: 2 entire days



Selected activities

Theatre of the Oppressed

Presentation with a ball (TO; Citizenship competence)

The activity worked well, all participants were involved. The first activity was to memorize the names of the other participants in an entertaining way, which created a relaxed, pleasant atmosphere right at the beginning of the session. It was observed that the participants supported each other, e.g. if one person forgot the descriptive adjective, the other participants helped her to avoid stressful situations. The instructions were clear enough, however the trainer had to adapt them to the CEFR A2 language level in order to include all participants. The activity took longer than planned because the instructions had to be repeatedly explained. The number of participants also plays a role. At the end of the day, all the names were memorised and even the corresponding adjectives were recalled.

This activity supported the development of civic competence by emphasising the importance of sharing resources with others. It also practised active listening and respectful interaction.



Interview with role exchange (TO; Personal, social and learning to learn competence)

The activity worked well and everyone was involved. The instructions were clear enough, but some minor linguistic adjustments were needed. Since the number of participants was relatively high, it took longer for all participants to change roles. In addition, more time was needed to explain the rules of the game. During the interviews, most of the participants took notes and used their mobile phone translation programs, but this was not disruptive. Although the interview as a format was already familiar from the lessons, the combination of role-taking and assuming the 'other' identity was unknown to most of the participants. The possibility of not having to answer a question was also completely new and surprising, especially for the older participants. They are used to having to answer every question at school. Many of them took advantage of this new option. Many of them then used this new option when it came to private matters that were in some way unpleasant or painful for them. However, there were also participants who reacted very calmly even to extremely personal questions. It was an excellent opportunity to get to know each other better and to talk about personal experiences and life paths that were often surprisingly similar.

During this activity, personal, social and learning skills were developed. In the first phase of the activity, the focus was on one's own feelings, thoughts, values and behaviour, while in the second phase, the aim was to become aware of the feelings, experiences and values of another person. Both active and attentive listening and self-confident, clear communication were practised.

Travelling drawing (TO; Citizenship competence, Cultural Awareness)

The activity worked well, almost everyone was involved. The instructions were clear enough, with a slight adjustment of the language level. As the activity was carried out in a German as a second language course, no mobile phones were used for translation in this case, but other methods were used. For example, those who understood the instructions then mimed the process. The proposed duration was realistic, but the space was a little tight, even if the tables were placed next to the wall. This activity required a high level of concentration and teamwork. During the 'picture walk', the observing participants had to be considerate so as not to disturb the acting participants. Collaboration and trust among the participants were fostered by involving them in a collective task. It became clear how important communication and concentration are and how easily 'wrong' interpretations can arise.

Almost all participants wanted to take part, so the playing time was extended. At the end of the activity, the participants became more and more courageous and thought of more difficult images, and the line also grew longer; in the end, up to seven participants were playing along. It was a fun activity that made everyone laugh, especially when the initial image did not match the final image at all. Because of this fear of making a mistake, only two participants initially withdrew from the game. However, when they saw that no one was being judged or laughed at, they came back into the game.

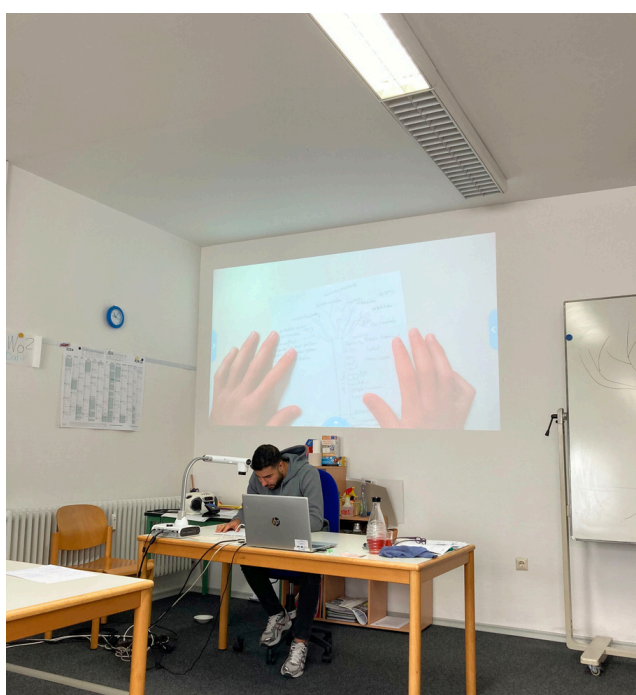
This activity contributed to developing civic competence by sharing one's own resources with others, and also by recognising cultural differences. In addition, respectful interaction was practised by not disturbing others during the activity. Dealing with mistakes was transformed into an exciting anticipation of 'mistaken = funny' results; this helped the less courageous participants to take part in the activity with joy, despite their initial fear of making a mistake.

Growing mirror (TO; Citizenship competence, Cultural Awareness Competence)

The activity went very well; all participants were involved and enjoyed it. However, as with the previous activities, a linguistic adjustment had to be made. To explain the details, those who understood the instructions without any problems were asked to explain the rules of the game to the others in their mother tongue. The aim of this was to ensure that no participant was excluded due to a lack of understanding of the rules of the game. This 'peer learning' was even taken up by the participants on their own initiative.

The explanation took a little longer for all participants to understand the principle. In addition, the participants came up with an extension and wrote various activities on small cards, such as 'brushing teeth', 'hanging out laundry', 'eating a melon', etc., which person A had to draw. The mirror then had to imitate these movements.

This activity trained creativity and imagination, as well as attentive observation and imitation. Soft music accompanied the activity and contributed significantly to better concentration.



Deep Democracy

My photo (DD; Personal, social and learning to learn competence)

The activity worked well, all participants were involved. The instructions were clear; however, the trainer had to adapt them to the CEFR A2 language level in order to include all participants. During this activity, some participants seemed initially a little uncertain and sceptical, as they had to reveal something from their private lives. Searching for a suitable photo took therefore a relatively long time; many participants could not decide spontaneously and had to search for the 'best' photo. The topic of photos varied greatly among the participants - while some chose family photos, others looked for photos of favourite places, landscapes or pets. The photos were then shown using the data projector to give all participants the opportunity to observe them closely. Some of the reports on their photos were very emotional, especially when they included people who were no longer alive or who had remained in their home countries. Since the activity was tested in a group that cannot yet express themselves sufficiently in the foreign language, most participants had to use the Google translator to find a few expressions. As the participants were generally unable to tell a story spontaneously, but had to search for words, the activity lasted correspondingly longer. Despite this, the participants did not appear bored or impatient.

This activity helped to develop the personal, social and learning skills of the participants. They revealed their feelings, values and attitudes, used active and attentive listening and gained new insights into the thoughts and lives of the other participants. It was observed that new sympathies developed among the participants and that some surprising similarities were discovered among them, despite different cultural and religious backgrounds.

The tree of life (DD; Personal, social and learning to learn competence)

The activity went very well; it was a quiet, almost contemplative activity, that was new to many of the participants, but also people, who were not always active in class, put all their hearts into it. The objective of the activity was to reflect on our own lives, to think about the roots from which we come, but also to think about the future, our plans, wishes and goals. It also fostered attentive listening and mutual respect. As expected, this activity took a lot of time, as most of the participants were not familiar with this type of task.

There was a calm, creative atmosphere, accompanied by soft classical music. In terms of instructions, the task was clear in this case; participants only asked a few questions to ensure understanding, which could be solved immediately with the help of the other participants or the trainer.

The fact that some participants took the task of drawing a tree very seriously meant that the activity took longer than planned. The artistic design, which was not the focus of the activity, nevertheless took up a lot of time for creative participants.



During the presentations of the trees of life, there were difficulties in formulating the dreams and wishes, as the vocabulary was simply lacking, so that was also more time needed for the presentation of their work. To compensate for the linguistic limitations, most participants resorted to Google Translator or other translation programmes, which was perfectly fine. Contrary to expectations, all participants were willing to present their tree of life and share their thoughts with others. Quiet, meditative music played in the background while the participants were storytelling.

This activity was one of the most popular among the participants; you could feel a genuine interest in what another person was saying, which was also proven by the questions that followed. While one person was talking, others listened attentively; no disturbances were observed. After the person finished their story, the participants had an opportunity to ask questions or make comments, even if it was not originally planned.

The image of our city (DD; Cultural Awareness Competence)

The activity went well; except for one or two participants, everyone took part. In contrast to the previous activity, 'the tree of life', this activity was very dynamic and loud. The participants really appreciated the fact that movement and fun were part of the game. The majority of participants found the idea of recreating well-known, famous city landmarks with their own bodies fun and amusing. Since we live in a small town that unfortunately has few attractions, the participants were able to expand it to the whole of Germany. At the end of the activity, famous landmarks and buildings from around the world were also 'recreated' at the request of the participants.

At the beginning of the activity, the participants had a tendency to communicate with words. It was observed that some participants had difficulties communicating completely without words. The participants obviously enjoyed the activity so much that they wanted to keep forming letters and words, which was not a problem though.

Critical Incident

The Norms (CI; Citizenship competence)

As with the previous activities, the language level of the instructions had to be adapted. Since the original idea 'to establish norms that would be helpful in establishing and maintaining a good relationship in daily life, professionally or privately' was too abstract due to the insufficient language level, the task was also modified in terms of content: 'What makes a good neighbour?' As this was a more specific and more conceivable task, all participants were able to contribute equally and no one was excluded; this allowed each participant to express their ideas and contribute to the overall result. Some participants already had experience of living with neighbours, as they live in apartment buildings with several parties, while others live in refugee shelters where their own, much stricter rules prevail.

This activity was characterised by many discussions and conversations and, compared to the other phases, even the more reserved participants were more engaged. The task was to establish standards for peaceful neighbourhood life in a residential building - the focus was on consideration and respect.



03

Assessments

03 Assessments

For partners

Difficulties during the self-assessment process for Participants

It was observed that many participants were confused when they first saw the self-assessment tool. This came from the fact that, apart from two participants, they had no previous experience in self-evaluation. They were used to being 'evaluated', as it is still mainly the case in the majority of learning and education centres, but evaluating themselves, reflecting on their own competences was something new. The other difficulty was to deal with abstract concepts, the A2 language level of the CEFR still deals mainly with concreteness.

Support from trainers to the participants during the self-assessment tool

Participants faced the exigence of performance in their answers, and trainers highlighted that there were no need to "perform" the "best" level or answer, but to enter into transparent self-reflection without fear of the results. Despite the support, some participants may have assessed their competences in line with the common performance requirements in our Western society - some too low, others too high -, in particular being in their precarious situation, but the trainers' support helped to re-frame the context and the use that will be done of the results of Self-assessment.

Many learners wanted to know 'how should I imagine the situation?' They asked for examples of situations that were more familiar to them. Wherever possible, the teacher or facilitator added examples.

Support the acquisition of competencies (PSLL, Cult, CTZ) among participants

As can be seen from the verbal and written feedback and what was observed during the workshop, the three-day workshop had improved and developed the skills of most of the participants. For these three days, an inclusive environment fostered the creation of a community in which everyone respected each other, learned from each other and shared their often very personal thoughts. There was a peaceful, attentive and relaxed atmosphere throughout the whole time. The participants had the opportunity to learn about themselves and their fellow human beings. They learned to better present their own culture and showed sincere interest and curiosity about other cultures and their values. In addition, active listening, respectful handling of different opinions and a friendly tone during discussions were the pillars of this workshop's experience.

The impact of the pilot on the facilitators and on the organisation

The moderators also benefited from the new experiences, because the methodologies TO, DD, CI and SA were new to them. The results that emerged were even more exciting. The atmosphere was tense - positively - during each activity: How would the participants react? Would everyone participate? Who would prefer to withdraw? It was also a unique opportunity to learn about and with learners and explore their internal worlds.



Assessing the Success of the Pilot: Perspectives on Trainers/Facilitators and Organizational Impact

The pilot went very smoothly, the participants were highly interested and showed commitment in the workshop. And although the workshops were not compulsory, all participants attended every day without exception.

Evaluating the Pilot's Impact on Trainers' Capability to Work with Migrant Learners on the 3KC

Surely, these (PSLL, Cult, CTZ) competences are also learned and practised in regular lessons and in daily life, but in a rather conservative, less entertaining way, or unconsciously. What must be mentioned, however, is that the curriculum for the usual and official "integration courses is extremely tight and therefore unfortunately there is rarely time to try out new approaches". The PRISCILA pilot was the opportunity to try, validate, and consolidate new methods and approaches to work with adult migrant learners.

Assessing the Pilot's Impact on Trainers' Knowledge in TO, DD, CI, and SA

As already mentioned, the teacher/facilitator was not familiar with TO, DD, CI and SA.. The LTTA in March 2024 offered a first onboarding, reinforced by further capacity-building virtual workshops, as well as the possibility to choose into a pool of activities systematised by expert partners, but these non-formal/theatrical approaches to learners were new for the trainers of VHS. In order to make proper use of all the possibilities offered by these methods in the classroom, they would have to undergo some kind of further training to become more professional in the subject

Evaluating the Pilot's Influence on Practice and Working with Migrant Learners

Teachers could become more courageous and also introduce more personal and controversial topics into their daily teaching. Some activities are also suitable for bringing more movement into the classroom. The social forms could also be changed more frequently to ensure the dynamics of the lesson.

For participants

In summary, it can be said that the workshop contributed significantly to developing and expanding all of the participants' competences. Only in exceptional cases did the participants not improve in individual skills, which can have several reasons. For example, it may be because they overestimated themselves at the beginning or could not see any change for themselves in the post-evaluation. Often it can also be related to their temperament if they are naturally shy or reserved and have the tendency to underestimate themselves.

The participants experienced three exciting days that they will remember. As there is rarely time to perform similar activities in a regular German class ("integration course"), it was a thrilling experience for the participants and the facilitator, as documented by the photos.

The participants were happy to cooperate, and if one person was a bit 'offside', they were invited to join in but never forced to do so. Furthermore, it was possible to observe how many participants helped the linguistically weak ones with explanations and translations without being asked. In this case, the teacher and the facilitator remained in the background and did not intervene. The teams/pairs were formed for each activity so that the participants were encouraged to adapt to new people all the time, which was an excellent process. The participants gained self-awareness in terms of active teamwork; to be considered and considerate others for their identities and opinions, and everyone was attentive to others. Skills acquired are extremely important for both participants and learning groups.

For further studies

The Vhs could also benefit from the experiences and, for example, offer short afternoon courses with similar content for interested migrant, refugees and asylum seekers learners who not only want to improve their German skills but also develop Key Competences.

Discussion

Efficiency on implementation

The piloting of the activities was a valuable enrichment for both the participants and the trainer. The participants got to know each other better, acquired or improved various skills (PSLL, Cult, CTZ), learned how to conduct a conversation, give others space and engage in a discussion themselves. Of course, their language skills and ability to express themselves were also improved.



04

**Parts need
to be developed**

04 Parts need to be developed

The piloting has produced some valuable insights that could help to simplify the implementation of the methods used: Deep Democracy, Critical Incident and Theatre of the Oppressed.



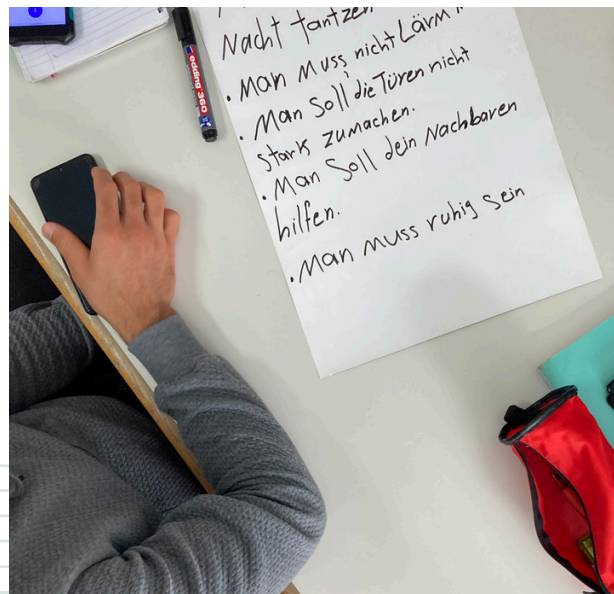
Linguistic preparation of participants: Before each activity, a kind of 'vocabulary list' could be handed out to be used in the reading comprehension of the activity instructions to avoid misunderstandings and long discussions. This 'vocabulary list' would not necessarily have to be presented as a finished product, but rather worked out together; this could initially take place in small peer-to-peer sessions, for example, before the moderator intervenes. This vocabulary list could include keywords, important adjectives or language building blocks.



Familiarity with the technique of self-assessment: Participants could be better prepared for this part of the training. For most participants, it was the first time they were asked to evaluate themselves and assess their actions. They were only familiar with assessments (= grades) that were created by third parties (teachers, employers, colleagues, etc.). Looking at themselves and 'grading' themselves was a major obstacle. To change this situation, a complementary course could be offered on this topic for participants to get familiar with this approach and give more context to this inclusive approach.



'Professional' preparation of moderators/teachers: The moderators and teachers would need to have a better understanding of the piloted methods in order to use them professionally and to the benefit of the participants. To achieve this, a further short training course would be necessary, as most teachers are not (sufficiently) familiar with these methods. Theatre techniques are used in language teaching, but only rarely and only if the teacher has an affinity for theatre. Further exchange and tight cooperation with experienced teachers/facilitators could help here.



05

Conclusion & Recommendations

05 Conclusion & Recommendations

The experience gained from the piloting can be put to good use by the facilitator in particular in their future German classes and - despite a tight curriculum - more room can be found for group activities in particular.

The pilot project has helped the facilitator to learn new methods and concepts, especially in the field of 'theatre', which were not particularly well known before. With the help of some activities, the participants (and the facilitator) were able to get to know each other better, which led to more openness and respect.

For future planning of a pilot, we would plan more time for each activity to allow a more relaxed atmosphere in pilot's execution, an adaptation that we did during the pilot but we planned more activities than we realised. For the self-assessment (pre and post), it is necessary to reformulate the statements more simply if we are working with learners with language difficulties, adapting it better to each context and group; and for trainers to fully support this process, for example giving more concrete examples with which the participants can identify.





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Project no: 2023-1-ES01-KA220-ADU-000165731



**Co-funded by
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