

When:

The project started in January 2004 and will end in December 2005. The concepts will be tested in a pilot study lasting from October 2004 to February 2005.

Project Description

Participants in the project are offered practical application and experience of didactic and methodological concepts and training materials aimed at improving media and intercultural competencies. This training will be piloted internationally and evaluated concerning the ease with which it can be customized to meet the needs of interested institutions.

The aim of the project is to develop a model for setting up and running successful and democratic virtual communities. The "communities of learning" created and maintained during the actual project period will be handed over as a "virtual contribution" to future participant groups as a sustainable new platform that can be used beyond 2005.

Potential participants

Educators at adult and other higher education institutions, counsellors, coordinators of European mobility projects, students and ordinary citizens (such as those involved in community activities).

How to participate:

Please contact your local coordinator – see <http://www.media-net-works.de/>

Or contact the project coordinator Dr. Laurent Borgmann, borgmann@RheinAhrCampus.de

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Partner Organisations:

Fachhochschule Fulda University of Applied Sciences, **Germany.**

Fachhochschule Koblenz, **Germany.**

Grenaa Handelsskole, **Denmark.**

inter.research Institut für interdisziplinäre Forschung e.V., **Germany.**

Umeå Universitet, **Sweden.**

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, **Italy.**

Associated Partners:

AIACLA, Achill Island, Ireland

GlobalBrainNetwork, Germany



**Intercultural communication competencies –
a key to participation in a network society**

Objectives

The aim of the media-net-works project is to promote active citizenship through the acquisition of digital and media competence, combined with intercultural awareness.

How this is achieved

Participants are actively involved in creating and maintaining their own transnational communities where they can share knowledge and insights into political, social and cultural collective decision-making. To give the participants experience of these new media of exchange they analyse existing virtual communities. They also reflect on their own behaviour as moderators, contributors or “lurkers” by documenting and questioning their use of these new media and their intercultural behaviour (e.g. dominance, power-distance in a digital environment, etc.).



On a meta-level the participants keep personal log-books in the form of a “portfolio”. This allows them, by using “Can do” statements, to follow their own learning path to increased digital, media and intercultural competence. To facilitate and illustrate this learning process they establish their own virtual communities for meta-discussions but also real communities that have face-to-face meetings where these experiences can be shared, demonstrated and evaluated. The international piloting will help to produce a realistic and adaptable model which focuses on the concept of active project work for involved learning.

Approach:

Following a pre-defined learning curve the participants gain digital, media and intercultural competence in a progressively complex set of project situations.



The process begins with learning about the basic concepts behind the new media in general and community-building in particular. Starting from real-life experiences in the field of “networks” the participants identify the rules underlying successful intercultural communication. They then reflect and attempt to apply their knowledge to the creation of successful virtual communities. Following the idea of “just-in-time-learning” they learn the technicalities of establishing virtual communities when they actually need to build one.



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Areas of Training:

1) Network society

Participants will gain an understanding of the means and methods governing active participation in a network society in a progressive way. For project participants the concept of a network society will develop progressively from virtual to real in a learning project. They will first build their own shared digital community and then actively use this as a communication tool in the preparation of short stays where they meet face-to-face in real life encounters.



2) Intercultural communication

Inter-generational communities stress the fact that the term “intercultural” encompasses not only different nationalities but also citizens from different socio-cultural backgrounds. By working in international teams and with persons with different socio-cultural backgrounds participants will train their intercultural awareness. Seminars and online trainings will be used to facilitate the learning process.

3) ICT-mediated communication

The creative use of ICT-mediated communication will be explored. The new media will be used predominantly as a communication tool that will facilitate easy exchange of the skills necessary for active participation in fields such as political decision-making and citizenship.