

According to the Peer Review in Social Protection and Social Inclusion and Assessment in Social Inclusion in EU, "unemployment levels, poverty, school drop-out rates, homelessness and financial exclusion are much higher among immigrants and ethnic minorities than among the indigenous population". Despite some success stories of immigrants that were successful in the labour market and enjoy positive relations with other residents, "there is substantial evidence that many face disadvantages on all the key indexes of integration: legal rights, education, employment, criminal justice, health, living conditions, and civic participation". Many studies (including 'Framework for Action' - YHRMP, 2008, Bloch 2004 and BMG Research: 2004) show that little or no ability to communicate in the language of the host country is the biggest barrier to integration and employment for the immigrants.

Furthermore, there is an increasing tendency in several EU countries to "introduce language requirements and tests for adult immigrants, for family reunion, permanent residence and citizenship" (European Commission, Joint Research Centre- Institute for Perspective Technology (JRC-IPT) Studies, ICT for Learning the Host Country's Language by Adult Immigrants in the EU", 2009). There are many organizations that offer non-formal and formal courses of the host country language. However, as Mattheoudakis has shown (Language Education of Adult Immigrants in Greece: current trends and future developments, 2005) adult immigrants show high interest to these courses but are reluctant to participate (the level of enrolment is very low). The JRC-IPT report mentioned above also confirms that in these non-formal and formal courses there are frequent problems of "low percentages of attendance and achievement and of high drop out rates across countries". The same report underlines that this lack of motivation is a consequence of the fact that these courses are not always adapted to the diverse learners' needs and demands and they are not flexible (in terms of curriculum, time schedule etc.).

Another issue that was mentioned in the report as a reason for the low interest of the immigrants is that they have "limited opportunities to socialize with the native population and do not speak the host language outside the classroom, lacking thus the stimulus to get integrated and to learn". Taking into consideration these facts, the partnership has seen that there is a clear need to develop training methodologies for language learning based on informal learning which will help adult immigrants to learn the language in a more free way that will make them overcome this reluctant stance and improve their language skills in a more flexible and "fun" way. Such informal learning methodologies (such as Language Café and Tandem (R) learning, which is based on peer teaching especially with native speakers) have already been developed and used but their target groups are usually people living in their own country wishing to learn a foreign language or people that make short trips to a foreign country for language learning purposes.

The aim of the project is to adapt these methodologies to the specific needs of the immigrants and provide them supportive tools for this purpose. The solution of informal language learning has been selected over others because it is the solution that offers the maximum flexibility for the learner without hindering the learners' results. For the same purpose (maximizing flexibility) the project partnership has decided to promote also informal language learning with the use of ICT in order to facilitate the learning of the host language for the immigrants that are not able to come not even in the informal courses. This can be achieved given the fact that, according to the report "Migrants, Ethnic Minorities and ICT" published in the framework of the project Bridge-It, the use of ICT in immigrant communities (mainly for communicating with their families in the home countries) has increased a lot and there is the emergence of the "connected immigrant".

The partnership has decided to focus on adult learners, because, on the contrary to the children of the immigrants who go to school and have more time to learn better the language of the host country through formal and non formal training, the adults encounter more problems in the learning process and need more the flexibility that informal training can offer them. Moreover, while children meet their counterparts at school, adults need to meet more native speakers of the host country, who want to interact with them and learn from them too.