



GINCO TOOLS & TRAINING for International Course Development and Delivery

GINCO is a European network of organizations and stakeholders involved in professional development and in-service training of adult education staff. The aim of the network is to share expertise and to enhance communication and cooperation in order to improve the quality of international staff training courses, to enlarge

the scope of provision and to improve the visibility and success of the KA1 staff mobility action and related courses.

The GINCO team also presents GINCO Tools & Training as a follow up project in response to the needs

revealed in GINCO surveys and research. GINCO T&T is a Grundtvig Multilateral Project to collect, create and share useful material in order to support course organisers in their search for quality. GINCO T&T started off in the Lifelong Learning Programme but its outcomes also serve international KA1 training in an Erasmus+ context.

GINCO T&T FINAL CONFERENCE

The final conference of the GINCO T&T project took place in Leuven (BE) on 11-12 September 2014. 62 course organisers and 10 NA representatives from 23 different countries took part in the conference.

During the conference we paid attention to the effects of the Erasmus+ KA1 action conditions on the organisation of the mobility training. There were presentations and workshops on the two main 'challenges' for course organisers: a competence oriented approach and validation of learning outcomes.

EPALE

Mrs. Judith Safrani (European Commission, DG EAC) presented the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe. This

platform can play an important role in the visibility of the course provision and the communication among the stakeholders involved.

EPALE is a publication and networking platform for adult education stakeholders: teachers and trainers, managers, employers, guidance counsellors, policy-makers, researchers, media... The key target group however are teachers and trainers.

The platform is a European sharing and networking tool providing a collaborative space for the sharing of policy, news, experience, pedagogical material and good practice in adult education. It will feature a calendar, a library, partner search, info on funding and awards, blogs, glossaries ... Its proposed thematic structure includes headings such as: learner support, learning environments, life skills, quality and policy, strategies and financing.



The 'quality' heading covers: Professional development of adult education staff. Here the KA1 stakeholders should find their place for improving visibility and communication. It is not clear yet what the course publishing potential of EPAL includes but we hope that KA1 courses get a well promoted space on: <https://ec.europa.eu/epale/en>



Christa Bauer (Evalitas) and Franziska Steffen (die Berater) present the GINCO T&T website

- Can the time of the teachers' investment to come and attend courses be part of the co-funding in KA1?
- The description of the course offer should contain the competence oriented approach; can GINCO deliver examples of good practice on how to do this exactly?
- Can GINCO help describe learning outcomes of a course? And learning agreements?

DREAMS and NIGHTMARES

The conference ended with a session on dreams and nightmares. One of the 'recurrent' nightmares was a 'course with 10 participants from the same country'. A number of course organisers fear to lose the international character of their courses since the European eligibility rules have been dropped. There's even the possibility of having a high number of teachers from the same school in one course. Organisers who got such a request find it very hard to refuse it if the alternative is to have no course at all.

The 'hottest' item at the conference was PR and marketing. The fact that the 'database' is no longer active, places the course organisers for the problem of international outreach. High hopes are set for EPAL.

A sending organisation can pick 'any course that fits their needs' after approval of their KA1 application. Any feedback from participants at a course will only reach the NA in the KA1 project report, 1 or two years later. The NAs don't even have tools for banning a course that is reported as negative. This fact, combined with a hard to reach European wide market generates the feeling that quality is not an issue any more. It is difficult to prove good quality and it is impossible to ban bad quality.

Another big issue was the 70 Euro/day course fee grant. The course organisers were unanimous in saying that it is impossible to organise a quality course for this money. Co-funding by the sending organisation is required but this can lead to an IST elite: only rich organisations and organisations from rich countries will apply and

send teachers. The organisations from poorer countries don't have a 'culture of co-funding' and are not ready to bring in money. It is very likely that some of them will withdraw from the system.

As a consequence a number of 'dreams' have been expressed:

- Quality standards for KA1 courses
- A website with reviews from course providers, in the style of booking.com
- A new database
- The raise of the 70 Euro course fee grant to a reasonable level
- A communication channel between course providers and the other stakeholders: Commission and NAs
- Getting 'those with grants' in contact with the course providers.



The KA1 course organisers expressed their need for information, networking, quality care, promotion ... On how the GINCO team will try to answer to some of these needs you will find more information in this newsletter.

QUESTION TIME

2014 was the first year of the Erasmus+ programme and a lot of course organisers had encountered problems and had questions about the funding rules.

- How come so few KA1 applications were approved?
- The "other" competences for professional development like "arts & culture" will be included on the EPAL platform. We welcome this very much as the personal development aspect is very important and shouldn't get lost. How does the Commission want to empower managers to choose this kind of courses too?
- EPAL will also promote blended courses. What will be the basis for their funding? Will there be funding for the distance and the contact periods?
- Will all courses be published in EPAL? What about quality?
- How can the KA1 system ensure quality when the Commission sticks to a free-market offer?
- In order to improve the matching between course providers and the needs of the KA1 beneficiaries: is it possible to publish the needs of the applying organisations? Can GINCO network the AE sending organisations and the KA1 course organisers? Can GINCO help identify the needs of the management of AE organisations?

THIS GINCO T&T NEWSLETTER OFFERS EXTRACTS AND SUMMARIES OF TEXTS AND MATERIAL YOU CAN FIND IN FULL LENGTH ON THE PROJECT WEBSITE.

THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF INTERNATIONAL STAFF TRAINING COURSES

The European dimension is a very important aspect in an international staff training course. It deals with the added value of a European course, compared to a national course. It answers the potential participants' question: "Why should I go abroad for this course instead of taking a similar one in my own country?" Therefore it is very important that course organisers pay attention to the EU dimension of their courses.

An international course must be relevant for and answer to the needs of an international audience. Why should other nationalities join your training course? Here we are not only talking about content (topics) but also about learning and teaching approaches, transfer and applicability of outcomes, validation and recognition of competences developed, intercultural aspects etc.

Focus on the European dimension of the topic

The European countries are economically and socially linked to each other and a number of trends in education and training have a European level. In order to gain relevance for a European audience one needs to ask the question how the approach or the themes of a course are perceived at this European level.

Since education and training is a national matter, Europe can only work via common goals, guidelines, indicators and standards in order to entice the member states to reach a common level (open method of coordination). One of these common goals is the European Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning. A competence driven approach with references to the European Framework of Key Competences would add to the European dimension of the staff training courses. A special GINCO T&T chapter and set of competences is dedicated to innovative didactics and competence oriented training for staff.

Link up with European educational priorities

Education and training also has a 'European dimension' referring to education policy and priorities at European level (e.g. ET 2020 and Erasmus+ priorities). Europe has

tried to steer a number of innovative educational trends by presenting them as priorities in the yearly call for projects and as such has offered preference funding opportunities. Course organisers can link up with European policy and/or European education and training priorities as a way to enhance the European dimension of their courses. However, this does not imply that courses should be restricted to the existing policy agenda; there is no need to squeeze courses in the policy box but they should foster existing policies and provide new steps for developing them.

Transferability of course outcomes and materials

An organiser of an international course should also be aware of the fact that teaching and learning approaches and organizational conditions differ from country to country. In order to be relevant for an international audience it is imperative that the course outcomes and/or materials can be applied in the different 'home organizations' and education systems of the participants. A course therefore should offer international transfer & application opportunities. In this respect it is important to start from the learning needs of the participant. This identification and articulation of learning needs should start before the course (on-line contacts) but should be an ongoing process during the course.

It is also important to take the expertise of the participants into account. All participants are professionals in their national system. The course theme/topic can start from the home situation of the participant: "How do you do this in your organization, what is the meaning of this 'term' for you, how is it used in your context?" Don't try to create 'distinction' but emphasize context and approach. Flexibility, reciprocity, constructivism are key.

Validation processes and multinational certification relevance

The aim of validation is to evidence and value an individual's competence development, irrespective of where these have been acquired. Formative validation reveals individual strengths, weaknesses and particular learning needs and can be used as a basis for further training. Summative validation on the other hand should result in formal recognition.

There are strong arguments for international course organisers to validate the learning outcomes of the participants at their course. Staff mobility courses are run in an international context and – from the perspective of the participant – always in a foreign country. How can a participant get evidence of what he/she has learned and acquired at this course and how can it be recognised in his/her home country? It is also clear that especially adult educators, proven to come from a variety of backgrounds, would benefit from evidenced professional development. A learning outcome validation system would therefore considerably increase the value of an international course for its participants.

A special GINCO T&T chapter and set of competences is dedicated to course organisers validating the learning outcomes of their course participants.

Networking and international project and mobility opportunities

The essence of international in-service training courses is the presence of participants and trainers from different countries, all professionals in their field. This offers opportunities for international networking, exchange of expertise and future cooperation. Make sure that networking is part of the approach and time frame. Promote international cooperation and international mobility actions in the Erasmus+ programme, make sure that this information is available.

Take the intercultural dimension into account

An international course is characterized by mixed nationalities of participants and these courses may be organised by an international team of trainers (would be ideal but is not a requirement any more in the new programme). Course participants will have different individual attitudes, values and norms related to their cultural backgrounds. Take advantage of the international diversity in the group. Trainers should have basic awareness of intercultural issues. Also be aware of language issues in the group, not all participants will master the working language equally. Provide training material in advance in order to let people prepare for the language, to allow them to get acquainted with the terminology etc.

A quality course not only focusses on professional competence development of the participants but also on their personal and social competence development. The European added value of an international course is exactly this intercultural competence development since international courses offer the ideal context for learners to become more competent in intercultural skills. This aspect should be part of the course objectives and course programme.

Link up with the locality, social elements, local professional systems.

A training in a foreign country offers opportunities for encounters with the local (national) education system and 'in situ' visits or trainings. This offer also applies to the social and cultural aspects of the host country. A course should not take place in a confined 'enclave' but interaction with the local culture should be built in in the programme. It is up to the course organiser to find an appropriate balance for training, professional visits and social programme in the light of the objectives of the course and the needs of the participants.

More information, support documents and training tools can be found on the project website:
www.ginconet.eu/content/attention-european-dimension

LEVEL 5 Reference System: Topic/Learning outcome: Competence to design the course to serve multinational application opportunities

	COGNITIVE/KNOWLEDGE		ACTIVITY		AFFECTIVE	
	2	3	2	3	2	3
L	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement
5	Know where else (knowledge for Transfer)	To master the European dimension of your topics and approaches. To know European education policy. To know how to link it with international training. To know how to help other people include the European dimension in their courses.	Developing/ Constructing Transfer	To develop techniques for introducing European level info. To develop transfer techniques.	Incorporated	To have an incorporated reflex to address multinational course application needs. To find it important that international courses pay attention to the multinational applicability of the learning outcomes. To feel the need to help other people in this respect.
4	Know when (Implicit understanding)	To know when and how to include transfer techniques, European level info, multi-national info from the different participating countries in your courses.	Discovering/ acting independently	To introduce European level info, to take multinational application fields into account, to try out transfer techniques. To search for theory and techniques.	Self-regulation	To find it important to build expertise on the European dimension of your topics and courses.
3	Know how	To know techniques to include European and country related info. To know what the European dimension of your topics involves. To know how to transfer your topics in different education systems.	Deciding/ selecting	To apply existing techniques to introduce the European dimension of your approaches and topics in your courses.	Empathy/ appreciation	To value the European dimension of your course topics. To find it important to pay attention to the multinational applicability of your course topics and approaches.
2	Know why (Distant understanding)	To know that your course topics and didactic approaches may need adaptations to be applied efficiently in the different education systems in European countries.	Application, Imitation	Paying attention to the European dimension of your course topics and approaches. Occasionally apply techniques to introduce European matters and broaden the application scope of your course.	Perspective taking	To be interested in the European dimension of your job. Feeling the need to look for International and European level information on the topics you deal with.
1	Know-what	To know that European countries have different education systems and different 'education and training cultures'. To know that a European course needs to address this European reality.	Perceiving	Perceiving that international and European education approaches and material need adaptations and transfer to be applicable in your own work.	Self-oriented	To feel the need to obtain approaches and material adapted to your education system.

GINCO TOOLS & TRAINING - THE MANUAL

KA1 in Erasmus+

The KA1 action in Erasmus+ deals with international professional development of educational staff. The rules in this action have determined the relationships between the stakeholders involved.



Guy Tilkin presenting the GINCO manual.

The sending organisations

The sending organisations in the KA1 system are all kinds of educational and training organisations spread over Europe. They apply for a KA1 grant and, if successful, look out for appropriate courses (abroad) to suit their training needs, send out their staff and (try to) profit from the new competences acquired by those members of staff.

The National Agencies

The NAs decide on grants: they approve or disapprove the KA1 projects of the organisations who sent in their KA1 application based on their staff development plan and training needs. The assessment criteria are related to clarity of the plan, staff development needs, dissemination and impact, European priorities etc. This assessment process is the only phase in the grant system where direct quality control comes in: the quality of the application and the plan of the 'sender'.

The course providers

Since the sending organisations, after approval of their application, can pick any course that suits their needs, the group of course providers consists of a large variety of organisations: public training organisations as well as private bodies offering education related topics and content. These different (types of) providers have different objectives and different needs. This group also is scattered over Europe and 'hard to reach'.

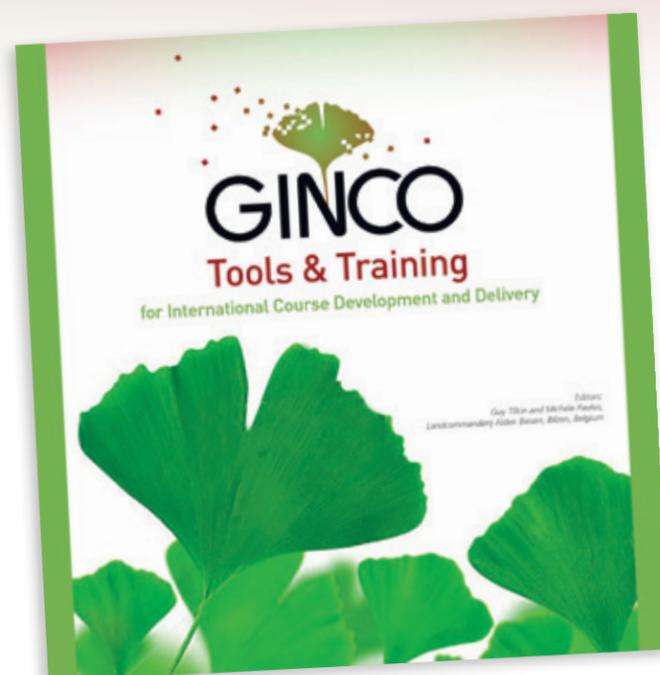
Quality

Course quality is a big issue but the present system does not support a direct impact on the providers and the quality of the course offer. The course providers are in a competitive free market system and are asked to offer value for money. But providers and 'clients' live far from each other. Courses are not directly evaluated and so far (end of 2014) there is no public feedback system.

The KA1 action in Erasmus+ calls for competence development, a needs oriented approach, an international profile, validation, strives for working with learning agreements and puts forward a number of priority themes. Most of these elements are reflected in the criteria of the KA1 applications of the sending organisations. These applicants are looking for the courses answering their needs and fitting their European development plan. The European policy is present on the demand side so it must also be present in the course offer.

So for GINCO the course quality criteria are clear. Courses should:

- be innovative and competence oriented
- care for quality and have a self-evaluation system on board
- link up with European education priorities
- include a European dimension and exploit the European added value
- engage in learning agreements and validation of the individual learning outcomes
- use ICT in an appropriate way
- take care of transfer and impact



Competence development of course organisers

In order to promote and support these quality elements GINCO T&T offers support material for the competence development of course organisers willing to create a quality offer for the 'KA1 market'. One of the project outcomes is the GINCO T&T manual. Each chapter in the manual deals with one of the competences in the profile of the course organiser. The GINCO website offers additional training material and background information on each competence.

You are welcome to read it on-line or download it from www.ginconet.eu

In the future the GINCO team will also organise training courses for course organisers based on the approaches and materials of the GINCO T&T project.

ICT IN KA1

The main aim of European mobility training courses for adult educators is to inspire adult educators to find new ways of engaging, motivating and teaching adult learners. To achieve this goal we have to keep pace with the evolutionary educational processes in order to use effective methodologies and tools. ICT based tools and methodologies should be a component of these teaching and learning processes in European IST courses.

From the trainer point of view ICT should be integrated in courses for adult educators as they enable new didactic methodologies, different activities, more effective learning paths and a learner centred learning environment. This methodological concept fosters motivation, creativity, collaborative learning, autonomy, communication skills and team work.

The success of a KA1 mobility training course, as of any educational activity, is very much depending on to what extent the course succeeds in creating a strong learning community, a community in which the learners and the trainer(s) interact well and where the participants work well together to achieve aims of mutual interests.

ICT can help establish simple communication between the trainer and the participants for didactical purposes and to follow up after the course in the form of a small online group. The trainer can identify the participants' interests, background, professional profile and learning style. It is indeed possible for the participants to get to know each other through brief presentations and to start exchanges from a professional point of view related to the course theme.

The above mentioned activities might enable the trainer to make important adjustments to the course agenda. They will at the same time establish the first elementary working community among the participants, on which the face-to-face community could be built.

The most important potential use of ICT in KA1 mobility training courses are:

- ICT as a communication and networking tool
- ICT and multimedia as a pool of resources, used before, during and after the course, instead of traditional papers
- ICT as a learning tool, allowing the participants to work interactively with computer resources
- ICT as a platform of material and knowledge: the course provider should develop and maintain a website with course material, including the contributions from the trainers and the participants
- ICT facilitating a working community, the participants being requested to build their own knowledge and materials, instead of being taught in the traditional way
- ICT-use serving as a role-model to the adult educators attending the courses and being inspired by the way the course uses ICT and perhaps using this inspiration in their own training contexts

Today a variety of ICT tools are available. Many of them are free of charge, often based on open source, and suitable for smaller learning communities.

Different ICT tools would be appropriate for KA1 mobility



www.padlet.com

training course didactics, as long as they are easy to access and easy to use: mailing lists, small forums in Hotmail or Yahoo, Facebook, Moodle – or more professional platforms like Fronter or First Class.

The need for online tools might change from very simple tools in the pre-course phase to more qualified tools in the post-course phase, if the participants show an interest in this.

The use of ICT cannot in itself guarantee positive and useful outcomes of a course. ICT cannot replace dynamic social learning processes. It is very clear though that ICT offers great potential for high quality course didactics. It can establish a quality framework for the learning community via communication before, during and after the international training course in order to optimise the performance of this community during the course working days.

More on:
[www.ginconet.eu/
content/appropriate-use-ict](http://www.ginconet.eu/content/appropriate-use-ict)



NETWORKING AND BRANDING

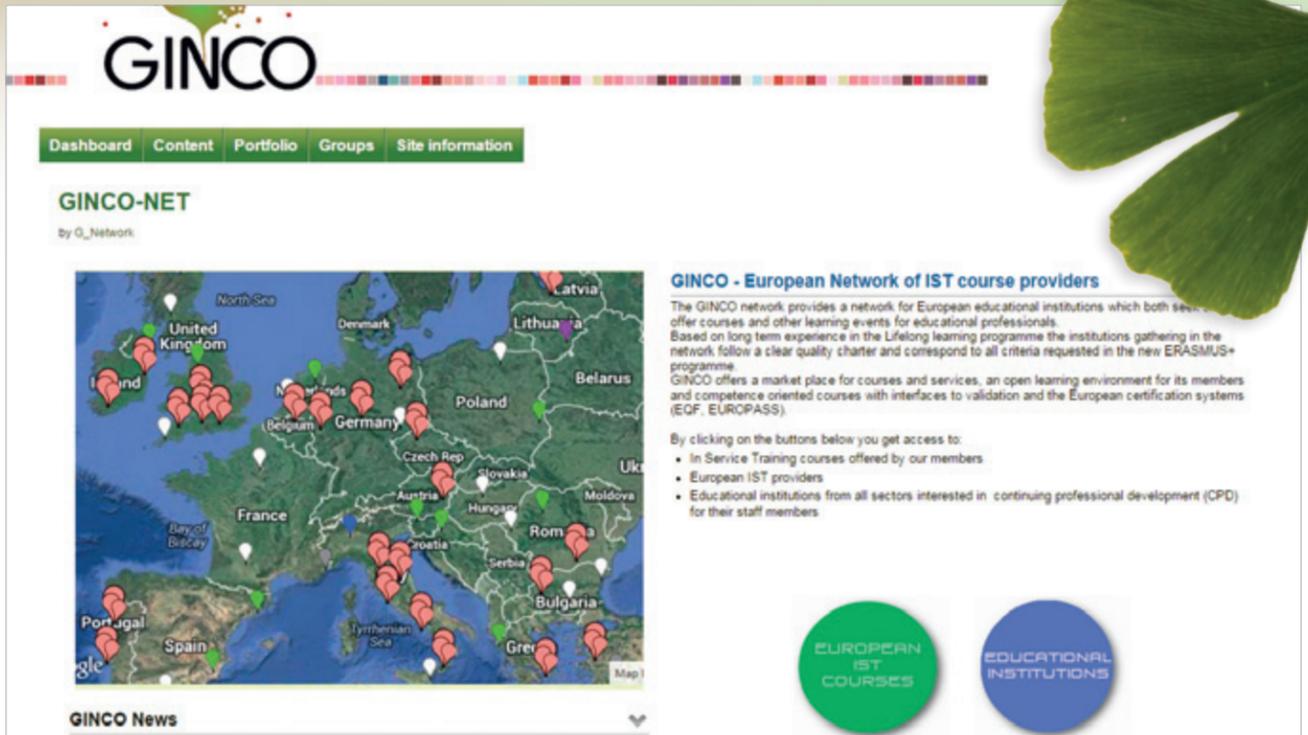
GINCO supports the networking of the providers and their outreach efforts but also wants to link this to quality labels and validation processes. In 2014 the GINCO e-Portfolio was created on the my-VITA platform (ginco.my-vita.eu) which is a rich collaboration and learning environment.

It has five main functionalities:

1. The **GINCO learning space** is the virtual home of KA1 courses. Parallel to the courses in Alden Biesen and at the partner locations all over Europe, GINCO offers an „open learning environment“ for competence oriented course offers.
2. In the European course area course providers can publish their courses in an attractive way in the green section. AE organisations can browse the site and find course offers that match their needs.
3. Educational institutions with a KA1 grant can also publish their needs in the blue section. In this way the site can serve as a virtual market place on which course providers find “client” educational organisations and vice versa.
4. In terms of quality the course providers will have the option to have their course(s) evaluated by the GINCO team. This evaluation will be based on document analysis and interviews of participants.
5. In terms of validation the course organisers will be able to use the LEVEL5 software to validate and certify the learning outcomes of their course participants, with direct export facilities to Europass and/or ECVET.

The services 1-3 will be for free, the services 4 and 5 will be paid services.

Envisaged IMPACT:



The GINCO platform can support KA1 stakeholders (course providers, sending educational institutes and their professionals) to achieve the goals set by the European Commission, namely:

1. to reach the objectives set and give evidence of the competence development described in the European Development Plans (EDP) by the sending institutions and to evidence (validate) the competences of the trained professionals
2. to provide a professional development tool for the educational staff (e-portfolio) in which the validation certificates can be included and connected to the EUROPASS or even with ECVET and EQF tools through the connection with the LEVEL5 software system
3. To provide a validation of competences in the KA1 course which is crucial for the course providers.

Hence the GINCO platform offers, additionally to an attractive market place for KA1 course providers and their clients, an instrument to validate learning outcomes and competence development, which is a precondition for a successful application in KA1.

Support material, training, networking opportunities and a GINCO label are all products of the GINCO T&T project and help GINCO focus on quality of the KA1 offer and the delivery of the courses.



Tim Scholze (BupNet) presents the GINCO My Vita site



Alden Biesen: Quality of Course
GINCO courses for KA1 course organisers



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