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BEST: Business Education for Sustainability: Teaching Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Local and Regional Development

Information Bulletin

Issue No.6

Dear Reader,

This is the sixth and last bulletin issued in the framework of the initiative “Business Education for Sustainability: Teaching Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Local and Regional Development (BEST)”. This initiative is supported and co-financed by the Erasmus+ Program of the European Union.

In a series of electronic editions, we have presented the initiative’s research and new developments in the areas of corporate social responsibility and social entrepreneurship. To conclude we decided to focus your attention to the practice of successful social enterprises from the seven project countries - Bulgaria, United Kingdom, Lithuania, Turkey, Spain, Greece and Portugal.

Moreover and in order to foster the development of socially inclusive economy and business, we present our BEST e-learning platform that contains on-line courses in corporate social responsibility, social entrepreneurship and sustainable development. The platform is open access and offers excellent opportunities for individualized training. Please enrol in our courses at <http://web.spi.pt/BEST/moodle/> and send your feedback on the structures and contents of the training materials!

The success stories and good practices in all project countries, and beyond, are a strong driving force to develop sustainable and socially inclusive businesses everywhere. That is why we shall continue to sustain our research activities and developments as presented in the searchable online database at <http://database.education4sustainability.eu> and the website of the *Center for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship* at <http://education4sustainability.eu> (Please read the Call for Contributions for more details).

Yours Sincerely,

The BEST Project Team

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PCHELA, BULGARIA

The social enterprise was created by the non-profit Association “Nov Pat” (New Way) in the Hayredin Municipality in Northwestern Bulgaria. The association, which was founded in 2004, is by now well established and active in social support programmes – i.e. employment support and creation; social activities and services; health; education; youth activities and Roma inclusion. It is active in the wider Northwestern region of Bulgaria. It maintains a network of partners in other regions, incl. Kozloduy, Sofia, Burgas, Stara Zagora and Veliko Tarnovo. The organization is a member of the National Network for Children. A representative of Nov Pat is a member of the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues at the Bulgarian Council of Ministers, which facilitates dialogue between institutions and citizens, provides civilian oversight over the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria

2012-2020 and participates in the process of planning grant support distribution through Operational Programs for the implementation of integration policy goals.

The social enterprise was the result of a project initiated in 2010 and supported by the Project Generation Facility of the Open Society Foundation in Bulgaria. This facility is focused on maximizing the impact of EU funds on Roma inclusion. In the period 2010-2011, the social enterprise has received financial support for the EU Operational Programme “Human Resources Development”. The funding is used to renovate a building and turn it into a beekeepers’ workshop and to buy 50 honey bee families, hives and equipment.

The idea itself grew out of a genuine social need: the level of economic development in the North-western region of Bulgaria was the highest in the country. Unemployment in Hayredin Municipality was nearly 80%. Employment is primarily in the agricultural sector. Eurostat reported that 30% of the population in North-western Bulgaria was at risk of poverty (the figure is the same in 2015) and 45% of the population was living in conditions of severe material deprivation (this figure has dropped to 35% in 2015 but is still very high compared to the EU average). The region traditionally holds the title “EU’s poorest region” with its regional GDP (PPS per inhabitant) ranging between 27% to 30% of the EU28 average in the period 2010-2015.

A genuine opportunity was present, too. The Municipality has traditions in beekeeping. Yet production as a rule is small scale and many small beekeeping businesses produce small amounts of honey, working in isolation from each other. The lack of cooperation and the lack of contact with national associations of beekeepers has prevented the introduction of new methods in beekeeping. The leader of the social enterprise, who himself has professional experience in beekeeping, saw a genuine potential for the development of this sector in the poor municipality.

The social impact sought by Pchela is to improve the living conditions and to reduce the social isolation of vulnerable groups in the Hayredin Municipality, concretely by providing possibilities for professional training, conditions and support in starting own business and sustainable jobs in the beekeeping sector.



The social enterprise trains persons from vulnerable social groups (Roma minority, persons with disability, long-term unemployed) in the beekeeping profession in real working environment. Trainees receive support for creating their own beekeeping business. Other trainees are employed as beekeepers in the social enterprise itself.

The social enterprise is the first initiative in this region that seeks to provide support for the target group (vulnerable social groups) that is not conceived as provision of social services but as an attempt to activate their initiative and self-sustainability on the labor market. The social enterprise is focused on teaching a profession, activating or developing working habits in real working environment and motivating the trainees to assume an active position on the labor market or the create their own business. The enterprise describes its mission as “help for self-help”.

Apart from the creation of the social enterprise, the initiative of Nov Pat included training in social service provision and

social entrepreneurship for other non-profit organizations from the municipality and the broader North-western region in order to maximize social impact and ensure sustainability of all social-impact driven initiatives.

LA PETITE CANTINE, GREECE

La Petite Cantine, established in 2015, started as a cafe-restaurant which hosts various events such as book presentations, musical events, psychological support for people with disabilities and their parents, small groups who learn sign language etc. The café employs 13 people with various disabilities, a number which makes up for the largest part of the staff.

At the shop, some of the customers have disabilities, and for this reason there is the possibility of audio-visual orders, a catalogue in braille is available, and there are special signs for visually impaired customers both at the entrance and in the bathrooms.

The café is an Inclusion Social Enterprise, consisting of a 7-member board of directors, with individuals of different specialties, so that everyone can contribute to the needs of the Enterprise.

The enterprise also hosts and manages events (on site) and holds consultation sessions, mostly group sessions (family support etc). Other activities include:

- Vocational training for people from vulnerable groups
- Seminars for Vocational Orientation and experiential workshops
- Sensitisation and Dissemination events

La Petite Cantine aims to provide people with disabilities or from disadvantaged/vulnerable groups an opportunity to find employment (and relevant training) at an appropriate and safe setting, allowing them to integrate into the social and economic life of their environment. At the same time, La Petite Cantine seeks to increase awareness in society and facilitate the inclusion of people from vulnerable groups into all aspects of society.

The company operates on the basis of principles such as the right to work, justice and equal opportunities for everyone and has adopted an approach where it aims to



help people that belong to vulnerable groups (that are used to being supported) stand on their own feet and contribute.

La Petite Cantine innovates by providing healthy choices and socially aware services, while at the same time facilitating the inclusion of people from vulnerable groups into the labour market. Also, the whole site is organised in such a way as to provide a safe and facilitating environment for both employees and customers.

La Petite Cantine has managed to employ 13 people from vulnerable groups and is even starting to expand (both in space and activities) while achieving a high level of viability, through income from the operation of the café-restaurant.

EPIS, PORTUGAL

EPIS (“Empresários Pela Inclusão Social” - Entrepreneurs for Social Inclusion) aims to be a national centre in the development, incubation and internationalization of new methods to promote the success in school, the quality of teaching and training

systems and the employability and professional integration of Portuguese young people. It grew out of the efforts of a group of 100 Portuguese entrepreneurs and managers to contribute to preventing school drop-out by increasing society’s involvement in the challenges of Portuguese education and social inclusion.

EPIS works in partnership with several corporate and institutional investors committed to its sustainability in a long-term perspective. This initiative is managed by a small professional team, whose strategic focus is provided by a Directorate - composed by affiliates of EPIS, a Scientific Council - composed of renowned experts and researchers, and by an Advisory Council – formed by leaders of member-companies and other partners with relevant experience in the pursuit of its mission.

EPIS’s mission is to promote social inclusion in Portugal. Since 2006, it has been focusing on the empowerment of needy young people to achieve their potential in life through trough education, training and professional insertion. EPIS seeks to have a significant impact in the entire country by: focusing its attention on working with schools (through the program “Escolas do Futuro” – School from the Future); developing innovative solutions; sharing knowledge, experience in the development of non-cognitive skills and good management practices in school with the help of students (through the program “Mediadores para o sucesso escolar” – Mediators for school success); and orienting and creating integrated opportunities in a professional environment for the young people (through the program “Vocações EPIS” – EPIS Vocations).

The following activities should be highlighted:

- Implementation of the initiative Future Schools - Good Management Practices in Schools (“Escolas de Futuro - Boas Práticas de Gestão nas Escolas”): development, throughout the school years, of initiatives that strengthen the methodologies and dimensions used in schools, as well as good management practices;
- Implementation of Mediators for School Success (“Mediadores para o Sucesso Escolar”): integrated mediation program to eradicate the school drop-out phenomenon and to combat school failure, and of professional insertion of youth from risk groups aged 6 to 24;



- Vocational Guidance, Training and Professional Insertion (“Vocações Orientação, Formação e Inserção Profissional): creating opportunities for professional achievement of young people, through initiative such as volunteering, internships, vocational workshops, EPIS internships (“Fundo de Inserção Profissional” – Professional Insertion Fund) and professional internships, always involving Associates and Partners of EPIS.
- Continuous evaluation of the good practices;
- Creation of opportunities for professional achievements by young people;
- Incubation of change on the ground with quantitative results;
- Promotion of internalization of change by the state and local authorities, based on the principle of “universal service”.

This methodology was developed by a scientific council that gathers specialists from many universities in the country and is validated by the Ministry of Education.

VILNIAUS BALDAI, LITHUANIA

Joint stock company AB Vilniaus Baldai manufactures flat-pack furniture for the Swedish furniture retailer „IKEA“. Honey comb, veneer and UV finishing technology enable the company to provide high-quality products. Using honey comb rather than solid sheet helps not only to lighten the piece of furniture but also to save wood. Veneer also allows to produce in an economically and more environmentally-friendly ways.

High resistance of UV finishing materials makes products highly durable. AB Vilniaus Baldai is a leader in the production of flat-pack furniture, with a core competence in BOF production. The production premises of the company occupy the area of 51,000 square meters. Presently, over 600 employees work in the company.

AB “Vilniaus Baldai” pays great attention to the employment of people who have lost their professional and general employability, are economically inactive, or are unable to compete on the labour market on an equal basis. The company promotes the return of these people to the labour market as well as their social integration in order to reduce social exclusion and develop their professional and social skills. These social problems have been successfully addressed by the subsidiary company UAB “ARI-LUX”, which has the status of social enterprise where more than 80% of employees are people with disabilities.

The major shareholder (over 80% of the capital) is Public company Invalda private capital, Vilnius.Stakeholders

EPIS employs innovative methodologies based on good practices, with capacity to expand them to a national scale. As key factors we can distinguish:

- Network partnerships with local authorities, schools and local and national companies;
- Integrated meditation program to support the students;



include people with disabilities and their families; communities.

Employment of people with disabilities in regular production processes – mostly hardware assembly, manufacturing of furniture parts and packaging. 42 out of the 50 employees belong to the target group (persons working at 30 - 55 % working capacity). Production is complemented by regular sessions with social psychology and social rehabilitation specialists in view of ensuring the safety and health of workers, care for personality formation, social rehabilitation and purposeful leisure time. The subsidiary attaches great importance to job creation. The work environment is adapted to allow people with disabilities to be involved in regular production processes.

The company has installed and certified an Integrated Quality, Environmental and FSC Chain of Custody Management System in accordance with ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and FSC-STD-40-004 standard requirements. IKEA furniture buyer's requirements are set out

in the IWAY standard. In addition, the company follows a holistic sustainability strategy: it uses raw material certified FSC and acquired from responsibly managed forest, it strives to create a safe, healthy and ethical principles-based work environment; it avoids pollution; it recycles waste; and it strives to reduce its consumption of energy resources.

The main innovation of AB “Vilniaus baldai” is that a large number of people with disabilities are employed in the production of high-quality products, i.e. their work is not confined to specialized low value-added production purposes. This allows for their full-fledged inclusion into the world of work.

DREAMS ACADEMY, TURKEY

The Dreams Academy is an alternative arts academy that creates career opportunities and experience for young people with disabilities or in socially disadvantaged position, and aims to integrate these people into social life. Cultural and artistic training is provided free of charge for the target group. The Academy features the following studios: Vocal, Rhythm, Dance, Photography, DJ, Instrument, Painting, Design. Workshops on personality development and motivation are organized occasionally. The work of the Academy is also focused on supporting the trained target group in finding jobs in the arts field.

A key element of the approach is the stress on awareness raising and advocacy activities in order to increase the capacity of society to recognize and deal with the problem. The Dreams Academy was initially a unique model project aimed at the creation of equal participation opportunities with an “art for all” approach. Further projects ensued and became independent. The Dreams Academy has thus evolved from a project into an institution (based in Istanbul). Its work is divided into several main activities:

- Social Inclusion Band formed in 2010 by Rhythm Workshop students of the Dreams Academy and volunteering professional musicians. The main purpose of the band is to raise awareness of the issue of disability and destroy prejudices. Every disadvantaged young person within the Social Inclusion Band receives free training by the volunteering professional musicians, music



therapists and educators and can earn money as an artist. The Band has also created an opportunity for personal achievement for Dreams Academy participants by arranging for the band's participation on major music stages such as Vodafone Freezone music festivals, Efes Pilsen One Love Festival, Traditional Bebek Festival, İstanbul Jazz Festival, Rock'n Coke, Akbank Jazz Festival.

- Dreams Academy Production Studios: this project is conceived as the continuation of the Dreams Academy. Its aim is to help art trainees from the Academy to pursue artistic careers as freelancers.
- Dreams Kitchen is a project consisting of workshops that provide catering

services to customers. The Dreams Kitchen creates professional career opportunities in pastry-making for the participating disabled people. It is a genuine social enterprise on its own right because it uses its own earned income in order to allow for the participation of more disadvantaged people.

- Dreams Academy Film Production is a project implemented by a team of people with hearing impairment and physical disadvantages collaborating with professional volunteers. The team offers services such as video, commercial, concert and library shoots; trailer, documentary and short movie making; organization of events.
- Alternative Camp has been offering sports, education, integration and holiday camping for disabled and disadvantaged young people since 2002. Until now, it has hosted over 8,000 young people with disabilities or from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. The initiative relies on over a thousand local and foreign volunteers and is implemented on the basis of collaboration with local NGOs in the localities where the camps are organized.
- A second location of the Dreams Academy has been set up in Kaş. Located in a rural area, it serves as an alternative provider of education, practice and community services mainly for people with disabilities and chronic diseases. It is active in the Alternative Camp initiative and in the provision of art training, it maintains a Social Innovation Park as a common production and sharing environment for civil society and leaders and it engages in ecological agricultural activities on its own farm.

The key innovation is in the approach of bringing together people with disabilities and youth from disadvantaged backgrounds and professional volunteers in the art and culture fields. The enterprise strives to provide access for disabled and disadvantaged youth to high-profile artistic stages. This bold approach allows both for destroying social prejudices and for creating a sense of personal achievement and self-confidence within the target group. The approach of using art for integrating disabled and disadvantaged persons within society is itself not an



innovation but the innovative element here is the goal of preparing them for an artistic professional career.

Participation in high-profile artistic events has managed to raise awareness of issues related to the social inclusion of people with disability and to demonstrate their fitness for the art stages. It is beyond dispute that the initiative has positively affected their professional skills and employability in the arts field. Special attention is paid to the actual professional realization of the trainees. A real test for the social impact will be the degree to which the trainees achieve long-term professional integration as artists. More analysis on this issue is necessary on the part of the Dreams Academy itself. In this way, it will itself be able to improve its future work.

The Dreams Academy has ensured faster and easier integration of individuals with disabilities in social life. Trainings and recreation models have been developed for people with disabilities with low incomes. The initiative has functioned

on the basis of eliminating all forms of discrimination with regard to gender, religion, language and income. It has been scaled and diversified.

THE BIG ISSUE, UNITED KINGDOM

The Big Issue was launched in 1991 by Gordon Roddick (of the Body Shop) and A. John Bird, who himself had had issues of homelessness and rehabilitation following a period of imprisonment. The Big Issue is an organisation made up of two halves. One part is a charity and the second is a business; a social enterprise that publishes and distributes a magazine via a network of homeless street vendors. The charity part of the organisation is concerned with rehabilitating and addressing the needs of the vendor and the homeless.

The magazine is weekly and has news, current affairs and entertainment type content, as such it is identified as a 'hybrid' genre of magazines (Edsutes media, 2015). The vendors or 'Big Issue sellers' are all or have all been homeless. They buy copies of the magazines for half of the retail price. In addition any further profit made by the magazine is then passed to the charity. The selling of the Big Issue and making an income from it is seen as the first step out of poverty and homelessness. Currently the magazine is bought by vendors for £1.25 and sold for £2.50. The Big Issue has a circulation of around 100,000 and during 2015 had a national network of street vendors of around 2,000 (The Big Issue, 2015).

The social impact sought is evident in terms of offering the homeless a means of making a living and a route out of poverty and homelessness, but it goes beyond this as the following extracts suggest:

"The Big Issue Foundation seeks to deliver social & financial inclusion by supporting Big Issue vendors in the self-help process of buying & selling the Big Issue Magazine. Our services are 'vendor centric' meaning that we favour a holistic approach on a journey to a better future that is led by the vendor." (The Big Issue, 2015)

The Big Issue go onto suggest that through this holistic activity they are able to offer the following to the vendors of the magazine:



- somewhere meaningful to call home
- access to a doctor and equality of access to health care opportunities
- the essential support that is needed to overcome addictions
- direct help with business skills to maximize independent earnings
- the crucial personal identification that opens so many doors
- access to additional financial support and secure saving opportunities
- the opportunity to re-connect with family members and loved ones” (The Big issue, 2015)

The approach was to develop a good quality product that they could build an appetite and audience around and have homeless individuals operate as small, micro-businesses. The ethos was always that sellers should sell the magazine, that the public should buy it. That the public should not simply give sellers money as this would deem them beggars. The

approach is ‘holistic’, attempting to support the individual by providing them with a means of making a living, while also through the charity providing them with a support mechanism to deal with issues of addiction or ill-health.

While to an extent the Big Issue was semi-replicating a model first attempted in New York (USA) with their street newspaper (Streetwise) the social enterprise aspect of the Big Issue is that it offers vendors a means of making a living, that it has a charitable arm which enables vendors to be supported. The Big Issue continue to evolve and innovate. For example, initially the magazine was only sold by homeless. They soon realized that they were withdrawing support too soon and so vendors are able to remain selling the magazine once they are housed.

A more recent innovation is the development of ‘Big Issue invest’. This is a new aspect of the Big Issue brand, and investment arm that aims to: “The investment objective of BII’s Social Enterprise Investment Fund LP is to provide growth capital to high impact social enterprises and financial and social returns to investors” (BII, 2015).

Following the success of the Big Issue Magazine the Big Issue Foundation was established in 1995. This is the charitable arm of the business with the aim of linking “vendors with the vital support and services which help them address the issues that led to and have arisen as a result of experiencing homelessness.” (The Big Issue, 2015). These two parts (the magazine and the charity) of the organisation work in tandem with profits from the magazine (as well as other charitable donations) feeding into the provision of the charity.

Together they have been able to “address issues around housing, health, finances, education, employment and personal aspirations; helping Big Issue vendors to regain their independence and turn a livelihood into a life. In the last decade we have achieved over 40,000 positive outcomes with our vendors alone, life improving steps one and all” (The Big Issue, 2015).

ATADES-GARDENIERS, SPAIN

Gardeniers is a Special Centre of Employment dedicated to Gardening and Ecological Agriculture, which took its first steps in October 2011. Its mission is to facilitate the integration of people with intellectual disabilities into the



labour market. It achieves this through two kinds of activities: ecological agriculture and maintenance of parks and gardens. The project started with two training courses for people with intellectual disabilities, with help from the Employment Institute of Aragon (INAEM) of the Aragon Government. The courses were followed by a selection process and 15 people were chosen to be a part of the work group of the Special Center of Employment Gardeniers.

Nowadays, there are 30 people working at GARDENIERS, 27 of them with disabilities and most of them with intellectual disabilities. They are supervised by a team of 3 agronomists and agricultural engineers. The initiative is supported by ATADES ASSOCIATION which has 53-year experience in working with people with intellectual disabilities in Aragon. GARDENIERS is a part of the Aragonese Committee of Ecological Agriculture of the Department of Agriculture, Cattle Industry and Mountains of the Aragon Government, and the Seeds Network of Aragon

which is composed by a group of farmers, technicians and persons interested in responsible agriculture with the common goal to preserve agricultural biodiversity, especially in Aragon.

Ecological Agriculture Area: The ecological garden of GARDENIERS is located in the Residential City Sonsoles, property of ATADES, in Alagon (Zaragoza) where there are 18 hectares of land dedicated to the growing of green and seasonal vegetables certified by the Aragonese Committee of Ecological Agriculture (CAEE). Another 4 hectares of land in the town of San Mateo de Gallego are used to grow different vegetables respecting the natural cycles of the plants. The products are directly sold to: stores specialised in ecological products, traditional Fruit Shops, online selling through www.gardeniers.es and companies for collective restoration like Aramark or Combicatering.

Gardening Area: This area is used to design, execute and maintain green spaces, both public and private. Nowadays, there are 12 people doing cleaning work in green spaces, work related to the establishment and maintenance of gardens, and all the tasks related to this area, irrigation reparation, pruning and plantations. Located in Clara Campoamor 25, in the Actur neighbourhood, the Gardening Area sells various decorative plants, fruit trees, farming plants, gardening tools and materials and carries out garden projects for public and private spaces. It also provides counselling and gardening tasks for clients. The gardening center employs 6 people. The clients are varied - both public and private institutions, and individuals, including Aragonese Corporation of Radio and TV (CARTV), the Cooperative Autotaxi of Zaragoza, the Department of Taxes and Public Administration of the Aragon Government, the La Caixa Banking Foundation.

ATADES-GARDENIERS' goal is to enable full job placements for people with dysfunctional diversity, adding product and service quality and values that improve their quality of life. GARDENIERS is involved with society, nature and people with the biggest difficulties in terms of social inclusion.

There are two different groups of stakeholders. On the one hand, the logical group of direct stakeholders that are people with an intellectual disability, part of the GARDENIERS project in their program of Work Placement Promotion. On the other hand, the group of indirect



stakeholders are all the final clients of the different sales itineraries, both national and international.

Strategy applied:

- Collaborative Effort: This is an open project for all ecological producers in Aragon. All producers of ecological agriculture in Aragon can find in the brand GARDENIERS an opportunity to work united, sharing efforts and looking for synergies in production, processing, marketing and sales. GARDENIERS is aware that it needs to reach the market with a wide and sufficient offer, produced with efficient costs and organized in such a way that it can meet the commitments it has made with regard to distribution.
- Ecological Agriculture in Aragon: Since this need is common to all producers of ecological agriculture in Aragon, there are opportunities to coordinate, share costs, divide efforts and use synergies in

production, processing, marketing and sales

- Internationalization; Opening Markets: The main goal of GARDENIERS is to be a sustainable and growing company. Facing insufficient demand on the local market, it turns to markets that are more mature in the consumption of ecological vegetables, e.g. Germany, Benelux and Scandinavia.

The GARDENIERS approach to promotion of consumption of ecological products of gardens in Zaragoza contributes with the following key innovations:

1. Search of new profiles of ecological agriculture consumers
2. Strategies for branding
3. Innovative dissemination actions
4. Mobile Phone App for the orders basket
5. Propelling the GARDENIERS brand and disseminating the underlying mission of the project, namely the integration and inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities
6. Coordination and collaboration with other farmers of ecological products in the area to unify productions
7. Good coordination and collaboration with agencies and bodies that support the internationalization of the companies
8. Improved knowledge about outside markets
9. Improved the internal management of GARDENIERS adapting their procedures to the European regulations.



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BEST MOODLE PLATFORM

The BEST Moodle platform is one of the main sustainability outcomes of the project “Business Education for Sustainability: Teaching Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Local and Regional Development”.

The platform contains courses on corporate social responsibility, social entrepreneurship, and sustainable development in English, Bulgarian, Greek, Lithuanian, Portuguese, Spanish and Turkish. They target a) students of business studies and economic disciplines, b) entrepreneurs and businesses, c) civil society organisations and training institutions in the sphere of vocational and non-formal education, d) young people. The courses are suitable for individualized learning and for the conduction of blended-mobility trainings at higher-education and vocational-education levels, as well as for life-long learning.

The e-learning platform is the result of the collaboration among the project partners within a transnational expert working group. Due to the interactive nature of this on-line resource, the transnational working group will continue its existence in order to maintain and adapt the teaching materials in line users’ feedback.

The enrolment in the BEST Moodle Platform and the on-line courses is free and without restrictions at:

<http://web.spi.pt/BEST/moodle/login/index.php>

