



## Creating Spaces of Experience – Kickoff Meeting Karlsruhe 21st-23rd October 2010

### Learning Diary by Pupil Parent Partnership, Laida Quijano

Meeting the other organisations was an interesting beginning. It made me look for clarifying questions to see the differences between organisations which at first glance (except for the Brussels group) seemed somewhat similar.

#### **Structural comparisons:**

Do your learners choose to be part of your programme? (interesting to compare the compulsory requirement of working for unemployed people in Initial's garden project to our under-16 students' requirement to attend education, the experiences of dealing with this, the need to find space for congruent personal decisions and yet also a strong encouragement to taste the new experience before refusing it.)

How is the project funded and what are the implications for this? (The Corsica project French language programmes for immigrants – what are the requirements, assumptions and flexibilities in the curriculum? do they leave space for exploring the emotional/social/political contexts of migration? Is there a need or possibility for extending the integration agenda into wider community inclusion work?)

#### **And out of these comparisons of operating environments:**

To what extent are organisations led by their project requirements and to what extent by underlying values and visions? It seemed that there was variance on this last question, and I couldn't work out if it was a difference in project cultures, wider operating environments or about what came across in the personal motivation/focus/language-ability of the workers gathered there.

The project as a space of experience and learning *as a worker* felt like an important focus although I felt it was mostly addressed informally.

I enjoyed Nevenka's task to look at a strong quality we have and how we've developed it. It could be interesting to extend this discussion into the strengthening of certain qualities in our work environments. I really enjoyed listening to some of the Initial directors talk about their journey working so closely together for years, particularly the comment that, after so many years of shared endeavour and disagreements and discussions that 'there's no danger anymore'. This discussion of challenge, comfort, stimulation and safety made me connect thinking about emotional experiences of learning for project participants with that of the workers. I found myself questioning how my motivation and engagement shifts in my work and what part these factors play.



I felt really intrigued and inspired by Initial's garden and café project, the story of the man who formed such an attachment and care to his little plot, meeting the guy who had got interested in the herbs. I was heartened by the discussion of the importance of following your own trajectory of curiosity/investigation/passion and intrigued by the conversation about how these personal and particular learning routes might be recognised more officially. It made me realise again how important the reflection on your journey is, the sense in which you discover yourself as you discover the world. And this, combined with the useful reminder that 'neurological evidence suggests that we learn best when we are connecting up what we know or connecting up with others' renewed my basic framework of trying to facilitate meaningful spaces of experience.