



“TOOLS FOR LEARNING”

The SALTO network's working group on quality in learning process

Report of the first meeting in Venice 21 November 2010, during 5th Tool Fair

SALTO EuroMed, since few years, has the duty to take care of the TOOL BOX and of organising the TOOL FAIR, on behalf of the SALTO Network . In this framework, SALTO EuroMed identified the need to develop a working group about Tools for Learning as “venue” for developing the overall strategy about quality and Dissemination and Exploitation of Results.

SALTO EuroMed is therefore organizing, with the European Commission's approval, a working group that will help the whole network in setting and coordinating a horizontal strategy on educational tools, aimed at improving the impact of the Youth in Action programme too. The Working Group met for the first time in Venice 19 November 2010, during the Tool Fair, as the most appropriate venue and occasion for it, logistically and symbolically at the same time.

At that meeting were present experts and representatives of SALTO, namely:

1. **Bernard Abrignani**, organizer of the WG (SALTO EuroMed, Co-ordinator)
2. **Federica Demicheli**, coordinator of the WG (SALTO EuroMed, trainer)
3. **Andriy Pavlovych**, (SALTO EECA – Eastern Europe and Caucasus, co-ordinator)
4. **Jonathan Bowyer**, (free-lance trainer and coach - The view from here)
5. **Makr E. Taylor**, (free-lance trainer and coach - Unique)
6. **Miguel Angel Garcia Lopez** (free lance trainer and evaluator);
7. **Ermete Mariani**, rapporteur (free lance trainer and DEOR)

The working groups composition and aims were officially presented in Venice, 20 November '10, to National Agencies who showed an interest in it and engaged themselves in sustaining its actions, to different extents:

- **Estonia**
- **Italy**
- **Poland**
- **Portugal**
- **Spain**
- **Turkey**

Available resources

During its 10 years of activity, SALTO network has acquired hands-on experience in training (young people, youth workers and trainers), as well as a specific knowledge about limits and potentialities of NON FORMAL educational tools.

SALTO network benefits as well of an extraordinary human capital made of trainers, experts, previous participants, regional and institutional partners. This capital can be easily exploited on behalf of youth and the promotion of non formal education too.

The Tool Fair, Tool Box and the Educational Tools newsletter are already recognised as three effective tools and occasion the share ideas and good practices among the learning community about non formal education and youth.

SALTO's aims

Benefiting from its decennial experience and human capital, SALTO EuroMed on behalf of the whole SALTO network would like:

- To take stock of achievements of the results obtained so far, particularly concerning the Tool Fair and the Tool Box;
- To improve the average quality of the educational tools developed and adopted during SALTO's training activities;
- To boost to role of non formal education at large, in particular to make of the Tool Fair and Tool Box venues and occasions for sharing good practices and ideas also with educators external to Youth in Actions programme.

Why a working group “Tools for Learning”

Coordinating experiences, knowledge and skills of experts, trainers and national agencies is the most effective way to capitalize on the common experiences in order to set a common strategy for attaining SALTO's aims.

The working group's members are experts and some SALTO representatives that will act as a sort of consultative group and/or scientific committee. They will set a strategy to satisfy identified needs of national agencies, as well as of SALTO network. The Working Group will have three years to organize itself and bring expected results. In order to do this, it is desirable and to some extent needed, a structured and continuous support from National Agencies.

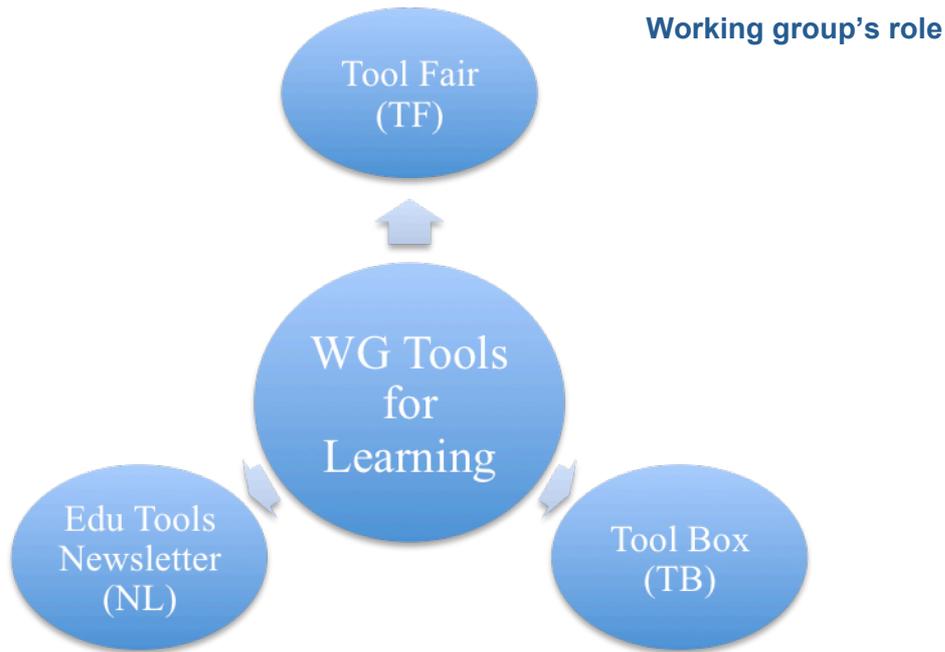
Working Group's name, mission and role

After the presentation of limits, potentialities and identified needs about educational tools, the Working Group agreed upon its name, mission and role:

Name: “Working Group on Tools for Learning”. The WG main concern is to improve the efficacy of the learning process of Youth in Action' training sessions. At the same time, the group is convinced that tools and skills already developed and tested in this programme might be of more general interest for a wider debate about the learning process. Therefore, “Tools for Learning” identifies at the same time the group's core of activities, as well as it's main concern: facilitating the learning through more effective educational tools.

Mission: improving the efficacy and transferability of educational tools already developed and tested, as well as setting the most favourable conditions under which SALTO network and trainers can continuously innovate their training skills and benefit from other experiences. Engaging in a wider and real debate about learning has been identified as a strategic tool for realizing this mission, as only through real confrontation and sharing experiences it is possible to keep alive a flow of ideas.

Role: the working group is at the centre of several SALTO's horizontal activities, nevertheless its role will be exclusively consultative. The WG provides advices and proposes a strategy to better coordinate the Tool Box, the Tool Fair and the Educational Tools Newsletter, in order to exploit at maximum their potentialities on behalf of the whole SALTO Network and, by consequence, to make the European training strategy more effective. The WG's role is exemplified in the following diagram



Some sparkles from the discussion

- The general feeling among participants of the WG was quite positive and somebody was even enthusiast about it.
- We should not have exclusively to innovate, but consolidating the existing tools (Tool Fair, Tool Box and the newsletter) and capitalizing on what we already have.
- Newsletter and Tool Fair are two tools to mobilize trainers, stakeholders and partners for a common aim.
- We know that improving the educational tools quality has been a way to increase the quality and efficacy of the Youth in Action programme, as well as the whole European Training strategy. The most difficult task now is to make others understand the value of the job we have done.
- Transforming the different networks around YiA and SALTO into communities: learning community and community of practice.
- The working group's tasks are to promote, facilitate and test ideas... we have to be quite creative and engaging ourselves in an exploration journey.
- We have to show that in our past activities there are quite few things worth remembering.
- We should be able to translate what we do and we have done into other streams.
- Sharing the ownership of this strategy with stakeholders is the key to its success: if they feel part of it they can openly declare their needs and engage some of their resources and energies to its success.
- We should keep in mind that we work somehow in the direction of recognition of non formal education. In this perspective the Tool Box is not only for YiA actors, but for the "whole world" and we should open the Tool Fair to educators not from YiA programme too.

Working Group' agreed TIMELINE

2011 will be dedicated to assess: potentialities and limits of the Tool Fair, Tool Box and newsletter; analysing needs of SALTO and National Agencies; defining priorities and setting a common strategy:

- **February:**
 - Evaluating the last edition of the Tool Fair,
 - Drafting a first publication (collective book or a sort of “manifesto”) as a way to throw the bases for common actions and reaching an agreement upon values and aims
 - Publishing an issue of the Educational tool newsletter
- **Before summer**
 - Defining a roadmap for 2012 and 2013:
 - Needs analysis based on an assessment of the Newsletter, a study of the Tool Box and a quality survey of the Tool Fair
 - Evaluating the impact of NL, TF and TB
 - Announcing a draft strategy to partners, stakeholders and trainers through an issue of the newsletter, or other means.
- **November:**
 - 6th edition of the Tool Fair in Estonia: “Tools for Learning” strategy should be ready, approved and basically financed

2012 – 2013: Implementation, evaluation, revision...