

1ST NEWSLETTER



About the project

Welcome to the first newsletter of the ELIEMENTAL project. This is an exciting new way of helping people to find out about how to become enterprising!

The European Union has funded this project to find out in more detail the sorts of things that can prevent people starting their own business and then to develop a new qualification that can help provide skills for being enterprising or even for getting a job. We plan to work with communities where many people find it difficult to find work, perhaps because they have had caring responsibilities, maybe they have a disability, they might face discrimination because of age or ethnic background or there might be other issues in their lives that make it hard for them to find a job and even harder to think about starting up in business.

Why is the project called ELIEMENTAL?

This is a made-up word that comes from a previous project run by this project team. ELIE (Employability: Learning from Immigrant Entrepreneurs) was our first project where we worked with entrepreneurs (business people) who had left their home country and started a business after settling in a new country. Our new project is based on one of the most important things the ELIE project discovered. People taking part in ELIE told us that it could be really difficult to start a new business, but that the obvious reasons like not having money to invest, or the paperwork being too difficult were not the main problems.



We were told that the really big difficulties in starting a business were things like:

- Having the confidence in your idea
- Knowing how to make a business network (that is, links with other businesses and people)
- Being able to do research about your idea
- Having confidence to talk to people from outside your family and friends about your business ideas
- Having a support network and someone to offer informal advice

Finding out that these problems meant some people with brilliant business ideas did not feel able to start their business for many years showed us that something needed to be done. The ELIEMENTAL project plans to help more people get the skills they need to start their own business.

Where is the project happening?

There are four countries taking part in the project, Romania, UK, Greece and Poland.

In the UK we are working in Greater Manchester with the communities living in the Hattersley Housing Estate, a deprived suburb with many unemployed families. We are also very proud to be working with a new countywide support programme that supports the Lancashire User Forum (LUF), which is a self-help group of over 300 people recovering or connected in some way to substance abuse. In Cambridgeshire our project lead, Ila Chandravarker is working with ethnic minority groups who find it difficult to get into employment.

In Greece, in the city of Thessaloniki, we are very happy to work with Ergani, a non-profit organization supporting women's employment and entrepreneurship. Ergani provides services to the unemployed but also to members of vulnerable social groups in order to smooth their integration into the labour market or to create sustainable businesses. Ergani also creates training tools and manuals and conducts surveys on women's employment and entrepreneurship.

In Romania, the Valahia University of Târgoviste are working with Roma from a small town. These people wish to start a small business to become self-employed and to earn an income to support their families. The partners in Romania are happy to work with people who are eager to learn and to be assisted in starting a business!

Finally, in Poland, the University of Lodz is working with the probation service.



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Activities so far:

Kick-off meeting in Lancaster, UK

The first meeting of the ELIEMENTAL partners took place on the 4th and 5th of March, 2013, in the Department of Management, Learning and Leadership, in Lancaster University and was attended by 16 partners. New partners, University of Targoviste, Ergani, Tameside College Enterprise Centre and Menter joined with the University of Lodz, South East Europe Research Centre, The Business Group and LUMS and formed excellent working relationships.

The kick-off event was very successful and it was planned to perfection from the start (including a jolly good lunch); and it was a great opportunity for all to establish their purpose, aims and objectives towards carrying out the project. It was fantastic to see the project come alive and inspire all, and there was plenty to take away in terms of a how the project is expected to progress over the coming months.

The meeting also included the first dissemination event of the project, a networking lunch that was kindly funded by LUMS and which allowed the team to speak to around 30 academics about ELIEMENTAL. We were delighted to find such a level of interest in our work.



Presenting at Red Rose Recovery Forum

On July 25th, Allie Clifton from the Lancaster University ELIEMENTAL Team presented at the Red Rose Recovery County Lancashire User Forum in Preston. Red Rose is a charity organization which gives people, in recovery from drug or alcohol misuse, the chance to contribute to their local communities by taking part in education, employment or volunteering. Allie talked about how the project will explore how individuals can overcome barriers to enterprise and will develop a new Ticket to Enterprise qualification to help people gain enterprise and employability skills that are relevant to their real needs.



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Asking future entrepreneurs about their needs: Pilot study & data collection

Our scientific partners from the UK and Greece carefully designed questionnaires, based on solid scientific evidence, in order to identify the needs of future entrepreneurs belonging to ethnic or other social minorities. The questionnaires were first piloted in small representative samples in all collaborating countries, following scientific good practice. Following this procedure was the design of the questionnaires that are currently being used by all partners to collect relevant data, in larger samples with identical demographic characteristics. Below, is an example of the characteristics of the participants included in this study, from Ergani organization in Thessaloniki, Greece.

Twenty-three women over the age of 40 participated, who all wish to start their own business and went to Ergani to undertake relevant counseling sessions. Examples of the type of business they wish to start are: Manufacture and sale of soaps, art café, production of organic bread from wheat seedlings, e-shop for the promotion of olive-oil, selling cupcakes and many more!

These questionnaires are invaluable to us, as they will help the ELIEMENTAL team to identify the exact needs of our target group so as to develop state-of-the-art tools based on these needs! More participants are currently being recruited.

ELIEMENTAL participants winning an enterprise award!

A group of students from Tameside who have completed a questionnaire for the project have won a regional enterprise competition and local council award and are now starting their own business with the assistance of local business mentor. The ELIEMENTAL team wishes to congratulate them!



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UK Activity



ELIEMENTAL was recently invited to the 'Lancashire User Forum' or LUF as it is affectionately known. LUFs are forums held at a district level across Lancashire County, for people who are affected by, or have an interest in, drug and alcohol misuse. When we attended a forum in June, it was clear that it is a thriving community offering exciting opportunities for interested people to mix with others in recovery or those connected in some way to substance misuse. This social support provides encouragement and inspiration to many who have, at times, struggled surviving on the edges of community life. This movement is also strengthened by its union with Red Rose Recovery (RRR), a more structured support programme that focuses on the asset, skills and gifts of the recovery community, rather than individual needs, and looks to build on these. We are now preparing to present our project at the quarterly LUF/RRR meeting, where about 300+ people attend. We hope this will pave the way for lots of fun, building rewarding relationships, and enabling people to gain accredited qualifications in enterprise, and additional opportunities to gain work experience and develop interpersonal and business skills.

Taking part in ELIEMENTAL

Organisations from countries who would like to take part in our education programme can apply to the project team leader, and in most cases, we will be able to arrange this.

Also, if you live in one of the four project countries and would like to take part as a co-researcher, as a trainee entrepreneur, or think your organization could host the ELIEMENTAL qualification please get in touch via the project contact details for your area on this brochure or our website.

If you live outside the four project countries but think you would like to take part as a host organization for the qualification, please also get in touch with us.

Contact details:

Project email address: Eliemental@GMX.com

Lead Academic: Dr Carolyn Downs on c.downs@lancaster.ac.uk

Also, our website is continuously updated and as the project develops, and offers even more resources.

You can visit us at: <http://www.eliemental.org/>



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