Citizens Xelerator project: An innovative methodology to foster adults’ participation in democratic and civic life

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INTRODUCTION
Participation in democratic and civic life comprises a key ingredient for the promotion of inclusion and empowerment of people in/ or at risk of exclusion.

Citizens Xelerator is a European project that aims to:

- Strengthen the democratic and civic literacy and social empathy of adults with unmet literacy needs
- Contribute to a systemic change in the regional/national/European approach and strategies fostering adults’ participation in democratic life, embrace the common values and civic engagement.

METHODOLOGY
- 2-year project, implemented by 9 partners from 8 European countries (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Germany, Croatia, Ireland, Romania and Greece)
- Addressed to organizations and professionals of adult education and learning, adults with unmet literacy needs and other civil society organizations.
- 5 Intertwined Work Packages (WPs).

Concept:
- Application, scaling up and/or inspiration from 4 European instruments and tools while designing a model and kit to promote the literacy, capacities, empowerment and civic engagement and participation:
  - LifeComp: The European framework for the personal, social and learning key competence
  - EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework
  - DigComp: The Digital Competence Framework 2.0
  - GreenComp: The European sustainability competence framework

RESULTS
The Citizens Xelerator project is built into an innovative methodology comprised of 3 main phases:

1. Designing innovation
   Development of the Citizens Xelerator products and resources.
   - LifeComp Cards Collection: 9 cards organized in 3 main areas: Personal, Social, and Learning
   - Citizens Xelerator model and kit: a) guidelines and supports for the establishment of the Citizens Xelerator Lab, and b) instruments/resources to be used by adult professionals for the preparation and implementation of the activities defined for the lab.

2. Pilot action
   Implementation of the Citizens Xelerator results in the real context of adult learning.
   - 8 Action Labs
   - 16 brainstorming sessions of the Citizens Xelerator think tank, attended by 240 adults;
   - 40 actions prepared and launched by 80 adults;
   - 16 Citizens Xelerator Days promoted involving 80 adults;
   - 88 micro-learning sessions implemented with 880 adults.

3. Scaling up and scalability
   Scaling up and scalability of the project’s results.
   - 3 events, two national and one international;
   - Exploitation plan
   - Sustainability strategy, based on the 9 blocks of the Business Canva.
   - Raising awareness of target groups to the project’s activities and products;
   - Mobilizing and engaging target groups in the different activities of the project, in particular in the pilot action with organizations inside and outside partners
   - Maximizing the opportunities of multiplication and progress mainstreaming of the project’s results.

CONCLUSIONS
- The formulation of Citizens Xelerator resources will draw upon the expertise of adult education professionals and providers within the consortium. These resources will subsequently undergo testing through collaboration with low-skilled adults and civil society organizations during the pilot action.
- By implementing this innovative methodology, the Citizens Xelerator project expects to contribute to a systemic change at the regional, national and European levels on the approaches and strategies aimed at supporting adults’ participation in democratic life.