

France Field Visits Report

March 2010



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1. Introduction.

The purpose of this document is to provide information on the field visits conducted on the framework of LILAMA Network's third Consortium Meeting that took place in Bordeaux, France between March 22nd – 24th of 2010.

Under Work Package 2 of the project, Observatory of Best Practices, the organisation of Field Visits are scheduled allowing Network Partners to get to know first hand some of the available Good Practices at partner's regional level. Such Field Visits take place coincidentally with scheduled Consortium Meetings. The first of such took place in Cambridge, United Kingdom, in March 2009 and the remaining one will take place in Italy in the framework of the 4th Consortium Meeting in October 2010.

The Good Practices identified by the French partner, UMBIV, are:

1. ASL.

2. GRETA.

This document includes for each of such Good Practices background information on the experience, as well as main conclusions resulting from the meeting and discussion carried out all along the field visits. The complete dossier files elaborated by UMBIV will be later submitted to project partners to be consequently evaluated.

2. ASL Linguistic

2.1. Basic information.

- **Date of field visit:** Tuesday, March 23th, 2010.
- **Venue of field visit:** University Montesquieu – Bordeaux IV, Bordeaux, France.
- **LILAMA Network attendants:** representatives of Servicio Navarro de Empleo (Spain), Iniciativas Innovadoras (Spain), Regional Language Network-East (UK), Université Montesquieu (France), Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale (Italy), and Adult Education Authority of Göteborg (Sweden).
- **Kind of Good Practice:** Language Training.
- **Manager of the project contacted:** Gerald Soubeyran, Director, gerald.soubeyran@asl-linguistic.com.
- **Project website:** <http://www.asl-linguistic.com>.
- **Status of the project:** On going.

2.2. Background information.

“ASL Formations Linguistiques” is a private agency, member of UNOSEL, which organises language training abroad. ASL was founded in 1978, which means that it has now 32 years of expertise in the field of language travel.

The main target audience is university students, young adults and more and more executives who are looking for an up-skilling as well as re-training for professional purposes. ASL also has programmes based on requests from Human Resources Departments willing to re-train their employees; ASL is therefore really aware of the expectations of the companies they work with.

The trend over the past few years has been the development of more and more programmes focusing on both improving linguistic and cultural skills and developing employability.

Their programmes for students improve language skills and thus complement and enhance what students have learnt at university, and help them achieve fluency. Moreover, the training and the work experience abroad offers them an interesting multicultural experience, developing abilities such as adaptability, curiosity, tolerance, international contacts that students may make effective use of, whether in the course of their studies, or to enter the job market.

The company promotes employability in relation with foreign language mastery, more specifically by developing skills during work experience. For this purpose, the company has developed a network of partnerships with prestigious schools in many countries, mainly English speaking, but also Germany and Spain.

The training is specific and needs-focused as content of training is really geared towards students' needs. They are taught effective communication, working on task-based activities. Students preparing for a work experience will typically be taught how to write a CV, a cover letter and then be prepared for job interviews.

Objectives to be achieved vary according to students' needs and in keeping with the time frame in their centres. They also differ according to the programmes, preparatory courses, etc.

All courses can be tailor-made. It is to be highlighted that it is also possible to combine an English course with work experience. ASL has partner entities all over Europe helping with students' placement for work experiences. In some centres, they have specialised English training dedicated to young lawyers, politicians, public administrators, etc., focussing on their specific needs.

At the end of each training session, students have to give their feedback on specific evaluative questionnaires. If they were on work placements, their employer also gives a full feedback. Matching these evaluations enables ASL to always stick to the needs of both employers and students.

3. GRETA.

3.1. Basic information.

- **Date of field visit:** Tuesday, March 23th, 2010.
- **Venue of field visit:** University Montesquieu – Bordeaux IV, Bordeaux, France.
- **LILAMA Network attendants:** representatives of Servicio Navarro de Empleo (Spain), Iniciativas Innovadoras (Spain), Regional Language Network-East (UK), Université Montesquieu (France), Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale (Italy), and Adult Education Authority of Göteborg (Sweden).
- **Kind of Good Practice:** Language Training.
- **Manager of the project contacted:** Catherine Coussi
- **Project website:** <http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid255/carte-des-groupements-etablissements-publics-locaux-enseignement-greta.html>
- **Status of the project:** On going.

3.2. Background information.

GRETA is a network of VET providers covering over 6,000 locations across France and which offer courses in a variety of subjects, including languages. Overall, training at the GRETA is funded mostly by the State (for half of the trainees) but also by businesses (in one third of the cases). GRETA reflects current EU and regional policy on multilingualism in the sense that training can be provided on demand, in an almost unlimited number of languages, at all levels and to suit a variety of restraints: in groups, on a one-to-one basis, over the telephone, using a multimedia platform, in a language centre, while having lunch with the trainer, on the internet, etc..

Training in an unlimited number of languages can potentially be covered, from the most to the least demanded. The focus of the training may be one or several target level(s) or one or several target competency (ies). Training is carried out by state-accredited teachers or by experienced trainers. Language certificates are systematically offered at the end of the course whenever available.

The tax scheme under which GRETA operates allows to offer courses starting at very low fees. These vary depending on job status and income levels.

In France, everybody in employment is eligible to language training through the Droit Individuel à la formation (which can be translated Individual Right to Training), or D.I.F., which is a training bonds system. The DIF provides yearly with 20 hours of free training for everybody in employment and can be used to take language courses. This makes language training fully accessible across the country.

Training targets people in employment but also outside employment, such as job seekers, including people in retraining, and migrants. Employed may take a language course as part of the

DIF but also as part of a corporate training scheme. The course may then deal with language for general or for specific purposes, for instance for a particular business sector or a particular type of needs, as determined through a needs analysis prior to the training. All combinations of languages, sectors and purposes can be considered.

4. Field Visit results

The Field Visits were carried out in an interview format. LILAMA partners had the chance to contrast the information collected from both experience right with the representatives of the so-to-say studied visits.

Special interest was drawn in the financial aspects that makes of the two initiatives and its fields of action so different. Being GRETA a public financed initiative, no other private institution can compete with such low costs

Participants discussed on the different needs of the audience of the courses as, while ASL focuses mainly in students entering the job market, GRETA provides generally language training for employees working for a specific company., and so, courses' characteristic offered by each entity vary greatly.

The SNE was especially interested in knowing if specific materials were developed for the different courses carried out, adapted to the so-called Professional Linguistic Competences needed for the specific sector/position of the student. Both the ASL and the GRETA representatives pointed out that materials are adapted to specific needs by trainers, but no new materials are developed according to the specific profile of the course.

Monitoring was also a key issue discussed. While GRETA does not monitor the outcomes of the language training initiatives, ASL monitors by providing with quality questionnaires both the students and the companies offering the internships during the different stages of the programme: prior enrolment, during and after the experience has conclude.