

“CONTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC INTERNET CENTRES (PICs) TO ADULT EDUCATION IN EUROPE”

Comparative Study On Innovative Practices of Public Internet Centers from Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy and Spain.

*Written by Gabriel Rissola (Viladecans City Foundation) with
contributions from all the partners of PIAP Project*

1 Introduction

This study consist on a comparative analysis of the variety of best practices on Digital Literacy and Adult Education that were identified in individual PICs across Europe -practices which are potentially transferable to other European regions or countries-, with a view to the local context, the belonging network and the typology of PIC in which they were developed.

The source data for this study is contained in an online database which collects all the interviews to PICs that were made by PPII's project partners during 2006.

These cases were collected in the five countries represented by PPII project's partners: Spain, Italy, France, Germany and Czech Republic.

2 Cases Description

We have defined as “Innovative” those practices that were created under certain local conditions, have produced a positive learning effect for the learners -improving not only their concrete knowledge but also their quality of life in many different ways- and are potentially transferable to other European PICs.

During PPII project's data gathering process, some 60 PICs/Networks of PICs (Public Internet Centres) were selected as having a higher degree of innovation in the field of Digital Literacy and Non Formal Education, being this innovation potentially transferable to PICs from other European regions.

It follows a summary of the innovation produced by each one of the centres of each country.

2.1 Spain

Spanish cases were collected by Viladecans City Foundation in three regions: Catalonia (ESF's Objective 3), Andalusia and Extremadura (ESF's Objective 1).

ID	Centre	Innovative Practice
55	Adults Training Centre "Edelia Hernandez"	Introductory courses on ICT taught by means of Socratic learning strategies, combining regular lessons together with practical applications.
57	Auditorium "Pau Picasso"	Discovery learning methodologies structured in theoretical and practical lessons and supported by reference material (dossiers and practice cards).
61	TecnoCampus Mataró	Short workshops (3 hours) for reduced groups (up to 8 people) coordinated by specialized trainers and structured accordingly to its contents, with detailed explanations and exercises for its subject.
71	"Alba Rosa" Civic Centre	Technology Literacy for Aged People: learning by doing techniques and on-demand assistance, plus a specific course to exercise the memory taught by a specialist in the matter.
213	Manresa Council	Staff are young scholarship holders hired as practitioners and trained to teach, who then make their practices teaching in any of the 21 PICs of the city.
216	"Aplicació" Private Foundation of Callús	Projects to create digital contents in a collaborative way: Atlas of Diversity and Atlas of Living Memory. The outputs are online databases containing a recompilation of documents, made by the participants, related to the subjects of reference (historical memory, etc.). Blended learning and combination of different kind of subjects (ICT and History) are oriented to a common goal: the collective edition of the Atlas as a driving force of the learning process. Lessons about ICT, History and how to recompile historical information; activities of data gathering, digitalization and creation of documents to be incorporated in the "Atlas"; creation of networks for giving inputs to the Atlas and of affinity networks for virtually grouping persons with similar interests.
262	NCC Cabezuela del Valle	Cycle of chat sessions with local politicians as guests. Step-by-step process: contact with politicians who are potential guests; selection of a shared issue for the discussions; involvement of local authorities and collaborative networks; training of users of the centre to allow them participate in the activity; elaboration of a project card and a web page; event communication through media, execution of the event.
264 266	NCC Madrigalejo NCC Puebla de la Calzada	NCC is the Spanish acronym for New Centres of Knowledge, which is the name given to Extremadura's model, born in the early 2000s and then exported to

ID	Centre	Innovative Practice
269	NCC Villagonzalo	<p>other geographies. These 3 centres represent the innovation introduced by the model, which can be synthesised in this way:</p> <p>On contents: promotion of e-administration, creation of blogs and podcasts, online radio, videoconferencing, regional thematic chats and ircs</p> <p>On methods: User-centred methodology, based on animation, motivation and training, pointing out to three areas of intervention: 1) social components that can become agents of transformation towards the Information and Knowledge Society; 2) generation of targeted projects, initiatives and actions; 3) focus on digital literacy/ICT training and capacity to develop autonomous initiatives.</p> <p>On processes: Mobilization of target groups that can become digitally literate, active hearing of user's knowledge and interests, team building, digital literacy workshops and participation in regional projects and local actions.</p>
340	Ignasi Iglesias-Can Fabra Library	Guided lessons with help of a teacher and a dossier
341	Telecentre del Solsonès (CTFC)	Centre offer is open, "a la carte" and targeted to different disadvantaged group. Thanks to online courses provided by Aula Mentor (a Spanish model for online training) and by Woman Institute -combined with classroom-based courses- the training offer has evolved towards non-ICT subjects (environment, accounting, languages ...), which has indirectly produced that new users became interested on new technologies.
345	Centro Guadalinfo Turre	Different strategies are used to involve people in training: 1) during the Grandfather's day, they can keep in touch with their relatives through videoconferencing, chat or instant messengers; 2) single's caravan to another city to make local users meet with their virtual mates (firstly met by Internet). 3) training lessons via a well-know FM radio channel: once a week the PIC's monitor together with senior/retired people who are advantaged students, offer a step-by-step explanation of PC's activities; the audience can contact them by phone or mail and formulate them their questions to be answered "live".
346	Centro Guadalinfo Huétor Tájar	The centre gives a complement to the Digital Literacy courses that offers the local Centre for Adults. Students come to the centre looking for info for their lessons, and have to learn how to deal with the new technologies for that. Theoretical explanations in groups are complemented with several exercises and individual tutoring. Motivation is managed through

ID	Centre	Innovative Practice
		attractive and familiar activities, which depends on skills, interests and needs of each target group.
347	Centro Guadalinfo Itrabo	A car driven course was designed to give a response to a specific local need, collecting materials from specialized offices and designing a training path for a long duration workshop, harmonizing all the available elements, including a pair of original training activities at the end (a simulation on a circuit using mini cards with traffic signals, and a puppets theatre play supplied by the national Traffic office). Thank to this kind of initiatives, people who was reluctant to new technologies started using them for their everyday life.

2.2 Italy

The selected sample of relevant cases in Italy is composed by PICs belonging to both ARCI's networks (the PPII's local partner organization) and other Public agencies at either regional or local levels. They have been selected according to the following criteria: a) geographical area [North; Centre; South]; b) legal Status of the promoting body [Public; Third System]; c) their range of action [formal rather than non formal adult education; information rather than job guidance and/or cultural and social inclusion]; d) their categories of users [young people rather than migrants, and/or women and/or unemployed and/or disabled people, etc.].

ID	Centre	Innovative Practice
117	Piazze Telematiche	Full immersion E-skills course, where ICT is applied whenever possible (on-line selection of candidates to attend courses, practical exercises connecting e-government "theory" with local government processes; organization of web site's contents).
122	Mediateca Centrale di Firenze	Free access to e-learning platforms.
123	Biblioteca Berio – Genova	Promotion of e-inclusion and languages' learning oriented to aged people and migrants. Relationship between young teachers and aged students has been particularly effective. Promotion of self-learning in languages' laboratories.
131	Biblioteca Lazzerini – Prato	Groups of study dealing with technological literacy were born spontaneously from Arabic language courses, destined to children and young people inside the library. Availability of mother tongue tutors, speaking Arabic and French.
132	Internet Social Point	Diffusion of a wide approach to ICT, all over the regional area of Basiliicata in Southern Italy.

ID	Centre	Innovative Practice
		Cooperation with local universities in organising ECDL courses. International network of 55 PICs around the world represents a point of reference for native people of Basilicata Region who live abroad.
135	Viconet Points	Citizen guidance and assistance to know Public Administration's services through a network of 6 PICs hosted by local associations in a small town of Toscana Region. Growing connection between the local Public Administration and the local Third System.
139	Passpartout	This Cultural Network of ARCI links up to 80 Youth Local Cultural Clubs located in different great urban areas and middle-sized towns of the Emilia-Romagna Region. It has: 1. encouraged the exchange of human and material resources, knowledge and multimedia skills, equipment, know-how and joint productions across the Network; 2. fostered youth entrepreneurship; 3. increased communications and links to other European/Non-European Cultural Networks.
141	Comitato ARCI di Caserta - Sportello Immigrati Con Accesso Ad Internet	Free ICT courses officially recognised by the Regional Authorities. Friendly, informal and inclusive approach. Care to different disadvantaged features. Multicultural Guidance Approach/Method to enable migrants to plan their permanence in Italy and develop a life/business Project.
156	Artisti in Rete	Training of artists on new technologies. Promotion of Self-learning initiatives and exchanges/development initiatives to improve cultural knowledge, know-how and multimedia skills within the ARCI's Network of Youth Local Clubs of Emilia Romagna.
171	Circolo ARCI "Zona Franka" of Bari	Training on Linux open source system gives option to direct use of target software and to direct contact with University of Bari's training resources on the subject
172	Passwork - Sportello di orientamento e formazione al lavoro	Increase of job-searching opportunities through the improvement of e-skills and on online opportunities thanks to free short-term courses tailored at people who have little time and money available. The courses are part of a variety of integrated resources to help people inserting in the labour market, which ranges from fast development of social and relational skills to job practices ("stages") inside the most representative firms of the area.
173	Circolo ARCI of Melizzano (SW of Italy)	Being located in a rural tourism area, this PIC is producing a cultural change of the local traditions in order to both encourage local citizens to participate to civic life, access to Public Administration services, create steady at-the-distance links with the about 3.500 relatives migrated elsewhere in Europe and improve sustainable and socially responsible

ID	Centre	Innovative Practice
		SMEs/small businesses set-up. LINUX and OPEN SOURCES Systems/Software are strongly promoted/disseminated too.
174	TRIO	Self-learning network of 19 Training Centres provided with the most advanced multimedia technologies and equipped classrooms (each one has about 11 Internet access points). Courses dealing with a wide range of subjects in lots of existing training fields. High percentage of students attending a second course (as in a prison's PIC, where a significant process of prisoners' fidelization was observed). Vocational training and guidance for foreign people.
271	P.A.A.S.	Oriented to all categories of citizens. The 296 P.A.A.S. Points have been put forward by the Regional Authorities and are all managed by Third System Organisations belonging to the Regional Tuscan Third System Forum. ARCI directly manages 90 P.A.A.S. Points. They are: a) disseminating e-democracy; b) guiding citizens to web on-line opportunities and Public Administration Services; c) informing/training them about OPEN SOURCE systems/software and multimedia technologies. "Shared Thought" Method: from individual to group planning. FLUG Groups who manage network situations/events/moments and OPEN OFFICE. Central Training Courses Planning integrated to the one taking place in any of the 296 P.A.A.S Points in the Toscana Region. 60 "central trainers" going around the Network to train "local trainers/operators".

2.3 Germany

In Germany the data was collected with help of an existing data base of 8000 PICS elaborated by the foundation Digitale Chancen (www.digitale-chancen.de). This data base uses a search engine which allows identifying PICs on the basis of a variety of criteria ranging from address to target groups, qualification of staff, activities, etc. This database gave also the opportunity to establish the typologies most represented in Germany.

ID	Centre	Innovative Practice
177	Computer school Viernheim	ICT training for finding a job, combined with contacts to enterprises and help to find a job through internet. Mutual help between unemployed person with university studies and unemployed person without any professional training. Contacts with psychologist concerning difficulties in finding a job
180	Family centre	Children and parents training in computer and internet

ID	Centre	Innovative Practice
	Barmbek	but also in critical education concerning the media (especially for parents in connection with their children's education).
191	Silbermedia	Oriented to over 50. Special training activities, counselling concerning buying computers, internet coffee. After a basic course on ICT they propose targeted course and a lot of practical exercises useful for the daily life. Special summer activities (cafe pour women, cinema, games with and without the computer, repetition courses, interventions on topics like IP phone, etc.
198	AWO Day care centre for elderly people	Objectives and rhythm of learning depends of the participants, the slowest determines how to go forward. Teachers are also elderly people who have good knowledge of ICT and work as volunteer in the PIC.
199	Computer and internet without stress Biberach	Self-help organization which helps people over 50 with basic knowledge in computers to resolve problems they are confronted with, to inform about new trends and to help to repeat things that were forgotten. Volunteer at the disposal of people to explain them how to resolve special problems related to their work. They meet twice a week in a centre for elderly people and in a kind of pub.
200	Youth centre Pegasus	Combination of open activities and learning activities, low costs for the computer activities, aiming to using the computer activities for the access of the young people to the knowledge based society and sociocultural learning. Website of this PIC is made and actualized by young users of the centre.
201	Medientreff Zone	Project groups from kindergarten till elderly people or mental or physical handicapped groups, training for educators in the field of competence and free access for individuals. Activities suggested/decided by the users or project partners (no yearly programme). In the near future: a mobile youth club on media activities aiming to reach young people in the countryside out of the town.
202	Public library of Münster	Computer is a user tool to look for information in well known databanks which are expensive for the individual, and in national and international libraries. Motivation to use internet in a simple way, persons who might be do not have the courage to go somewhere else in a training course have here the possibility for a first contact with the computer. Learning groups, workshops, courses for German language are offered with the support of computers.
203	IBIS Integration and training for migrants	Integration of migrants by different means (from courses in German language and concerning the daily life in Germany till a consultation service for

ID	Centre	Innovative Practice
		antidiscrimination). Contents and activities are target oriented. Learning groups, workshops, courses for German language with the support of computers. The number of successful training activities for German language is higher (86,5 %) than in Germany in general (66 %) certainly also due to use of computers and the possibility for the migrants to learn alone with the computer which is well accepted as a method.
204	AWO Computer training courses for migrant women	Basic courses addressed especially to migrant women, very often those who come to join their immigrated husband. Main objective is to take them out of isolation, give them self consciousness and competences in participation in social life and to prepare them to the integration courses for German language. The computer training is part of the different activities aiming to participation in social life
206	Public PIC Esslingen	Network of community centres working in special quarters of the town where trainers are at the disposal of users on their demand (no training courses or programmes). They are volunteers with high ICT knowledge coming from same centre's area (might be a migrant, or an elderly person in an elderly centre) with the aim of motivating people of special target groups to come to the centre.
207	Public library Paderborn	Workshops of three hours accessible for working people and people who don't want to engage for a longer period of time. Transmission of basic knowledge and new trends (i.e. how eBay works, etc.). Cooperation with and within teachers of an associated school.
208	Local Internet centre AWO	Neighbourhood centre which offers training specifically for topics demanded by the users.
331	Communicate without barriers	Products are developed concerning websites without barriers and adequate material for different types of handicaps. Integrated courses for handicapped and non handicapped people. Consultation so to use and find the right material for a specific handicap

2.4 Czech Republic

A distinctive characteristic of interviewed PICs in this country is that they mainly belong to the network of associated centres of Centrum Internetu (PPII's local partner organization) and their main mission deals in most of the cases with Digital Literacy and Adult Education. Even if not so many details about the identified innovations are available in the database, gathered information shows some tendencies in the country which are further evidenced in next chapter.

ID	Centre	Innovative Practice
37	Gymnazium Matyase Lercha	Assimilation of a dynamicity and pace of education according to target group.
38	SPS and VOS Pisek	Blended-learning. Self learning is implemented for easy-learning individuals to extend trainers capacity (throughput).
39	Lyrix centrum	It operates on a rural area, realizing educational programs in villages and small towns. Own call centre to provide detailed information about its services.
40	ZS Slany	Own methodologies for design, development of web sites and digital photos.
41	OA Hodonin	Use of the latest interactive programs/software with the final scope of labour market insertion of unemployed people.
42	SSD Frydek-Mistek	Quality methods evaluation to take into account participant feedback. Social inclusion of woman on maternity leave.
44	Jintes CB	High rate of specialized courses. PIC compiles own methods for teaching on graphic programs.
45	SOS Lanskroun	Trainee has an option to be tutored also individually in case he/she do not follow all the lessons of courses. Procured education helps to trainees to easier labor market insertion.
46	Arci Gymnazium	Focus on e-skills development of those citizens who had not a possibility to pass IT courses. PIC develops own methods relevant to e-skills level of trainees.
48	VOS informatic Brno	The content of courses is established in accordance with trainee interests and needs.
129	IC - HK	Content is adapted to IT knowledge of target groups.

2.5 France

The effort by La Ligue (PPII's local partner organization) in France was putted in the identification and explanation of relevant typologies, as innovation in this country seems to be mainly promoted by the models or networks operating behind the individual PICs. This is why only few cases of best practices are enumerated here, and innovation in this country is afterwards explained in next chapter, in close connection with identified French typologies.

ID	Centre	Innovative Practice
49	CYBER-BASE de Guérande	Key role to bridge the digital gap on the territory. The Cyber-Base proposes workshops adapted to adult's needs. The workshops are not formal courses but rather animations in which one can learn in a playful way. The pedagogical methods used by the trainers take into account different approaches, visual, auditive and kinaesthetic. Practical moments alternate with demonstrations during the workshops.

244	Forum Inter'@ctif de la Communauté de Communes du Val d'Oust et de Lanvaux	PIC located in a rural area which promotes the user become active and creates contents by him/herself (appropriation of ICT tools is seen as a mean of emancipation for the citizen in everyday life)
246	Ligue de l'enseignement de la Dordogne	Training for publics that are often far away from ICT, specially retired persons. They learn how to use ICT resources in a familial surrounding
351	Association Varlin Pont-Neuf de Limoges - Bourri Multimédia	Strong link between the different activities of the centre (a Young Workers Hostel): social inclusion, citizenship, culture... Initiation to ICT is also an initiation to collective action and creation, but also to professional inclusion. Innovation in terms of education is that social inclusion and personal development are important in the different activities. By giving confidence, one can create social links, which in turn can help for socio-professional insertion.
279	P@T de Nontron (Aquitaine)	P@T is a tool that proposes a whole range of vocational training to adults (in a region where there are not many training structures), linking training to the concrete competencies required for a particular job. It uses videoconference for a direct tutoring with the trainer.

3 ANALYSIS

3.1 Introduction

Interviewed PICs demonstrate to being playing a key role in local society, especially in towns and small villages, where they have become a point of reference not only for new technologies and learning, but also for developing of social links, community belonging sense and cultural life. Social integration seems to be the more important contribution of PICs to society up to now, of particular relevance when located in small towns or rural areas.

From this point of view, PICs are conscious of the social dimension of their mission -the digital illiteracy reduction- and play their educative role in a variety of ways, normally adapting their training strategies to the different target audiences that frequent the centres, "customizing" the contents, methodologies or procedures to make the users enter more easily in the digital world.

Training in PICs is non official neither formal (with a few exceptions), so user's motivation is the key element to get successful learning experiences. To keep participants motivated, PICs staff has created a lot of innovative training strategies which has little to do with normal lessons in a traditional classroom, and which sometimes overcome the limits of a training activity or a centre to become a social project (like the collaborative edition of a Atlas of Memory in

Catalonia) or a social event (like special training activities for Grandfather's day in Andalusia).

There is a variety of elements that makes needs and motivation different from PIC to PIC, i.e. the geographical location of the centre (needs change in big, medium or small cities or in rural areas) or the population living around it (needs of digitally disadvantaged people changes depending on each local context). To take into account these local differences by PIC staff when designing their activities is a success key, as the studied cases seem to demonstrate.

Apart from these general notes, which are valid for the whole population of involved PICs, we have found some contrasts and similarities between models in different countries when going deeper in our analysis, as explained below.

3.2 Comparative Analysis of PIC's Educational Approaches by Countries.

Adult Education offer

The training offer of all the interviewed centres in Spain is focused on the ICT/Technological literacy field. A few of them -especially in Southern Spain- extends their offer to socio-cultural and vocational/labour fields, but rarely to languages teaching. In other words, Spanish PICs are specialized in Digital Literacy.

Interviewed Czech PICs are, like in Spain, specialized in ICT/Technological literacy. Some of them cover also other subjects, following this order (by quantity of cases): 1) Vocational training / labour market insertion; 2) Languages; 3) Entrepreneurship/self employment; 4) Socio-cultural promotion or integration.

On the other hand, the training offer of most of the interviewed centres in Italy, Germany and France are polyvalent.

Italian offer covers not only the ICT/Technological literacy field (in all the cases except one) but also Languages (half the cases), Vocational training / labour market insertion (almost half the cases), Entrepreneurship/self employment (almost half the cases) and Socio-cultural promotion or integration (half of the cases).

In Germany, apart from a pair of PICs devoted exclusively to ICT/Technological literacy, all the other centres cover not only this field but also Socio-cultural promotion or integration (two third parts of the cases), Vocational training / labour market insertion (half the cases), Languages and Entrepreneurship/self employment (a few cases each).

In France, the training offer is various depending on the nature of the PICs. The main idea behind the creation of the national and local network such as the Cyber-Bases was to bridge the digital divide. In most PICs, the main focus is ICT/Technological literacy. Existing structures have also started to offer adults some ICT initiation activities to support their traditional missions such as the local employment agencies or popular education associations. Beyond the traditional mission of the PICs, most of them propose other activities and other missions either in partnership with other structures or by their own initiative. Nearly all the interviewed centres have developed a special attention towards unemployed persons, others focus on social inclusion (ID 351), artistic creation and cultural development (ID 351), distance training (ID 279) or disadvantaged publics (ID 244 and 246). Language teaching is not significant in the PICs.

Personnel at public's disposal

Field analysis in Spain reveals different approaches by type of region. While personnel in the northeast (Catalonia) is mainly composed by staff specialized in technical issues who offer a passive assistance (on demand, under user's request), personnel in the south (Extremadura and Andalusia) plays an active animation/facilitation role locally named "Dinamizador", which includes the promotion of the activity of the centre inside and outside it.

There are anyway some slight differences between Extremadura and Andalusia models (called , respectively NCC –meaning New Knowledge Centres- and Guadalinfo). Team of "Dinamizadores" in Extremadura is exclusively composed by professionals prepared to deal both with technical and socio-cultural issues, while in Andalusia is sometimes composed by volunteers, other times by professionals (staff), both capable of dealing with intercultural issues (as so many immigrants are present in the territory) and sometimes playing a teaching role more clearly than in Extremadura case.

Personnel in Italy is composed in the same proportion by staff and volunteers, and both categories coexists in some of the PICs. They cover predominantly the role of Assistant which quite often is played by social/cultural operators and/or guidance experts, profiles that include in their tasks also the ones of the animators/facilitators. Teachers are present in a third part of the cases, normally coexisting with Assistants.

In all the German cases the role of Assistant is regularly present on PICs, while the other pre-identified roles -Teacher and Animator/Facilitator- are completely absent (with only one exception). German scenario seems to be close to Italian and far from Spanish in this aspect. They are well prepared in technical issues (more than a half of them) more than in socio-cultural issues (a third part), in languages (a fifth part) or they are not specialized at all (another fifth part).

Like in German, the role of Assistant is constantly present in Czech centres (with only one exception) while the other pre-identified roles -Teacher and Animator/Facilitator- are absent (with only one exception too).

In France, most of the PICs have at least one part time professional acting as animator / facilitator and sometimes one or more volunteers. The animators have generally an initial training in ICT or social animation. According to the type of PICs their missions can vary. Some national or regional networks organise specific training for their staff such as ERIC or Cyber-base. But most of the persons interviewed said they had not enough time to answer completely public's needs due to the diversity of their missions and that continuing education could be fostered due to the progressive nature of ICT.

As a sort of conclusion we can observe that while in some countries the predominant role is Assistant (Germany, Czech Republic), in others is Animator/Facilitator (Spain, France) or there is a combination of both profiles (in Italy), but instead teachers are only occasionally involved in the learning processes in the centres.

On the other hand, the "Dinamizador" role (a sort of Animator/Facilitator who balances social and technical competences) synthesizes an idea that could be "exported" from Southern Spain to other geographical contexts (mainly Objective 1 regions): to have personnel inside the PICs devoted to the task of "dynamizing" the centre's activity by promoting it, helping users to learn, giving them assistance on demand, favouring socialization (collaborative learning even virtually) and intensive use of technology (digital literacy by means of a full immersion process).

Educational methodologies

The preferred methodology to guide the learning process in Spain, France and Czech Republic are Regular lessons led by a trainer, while Blended learning is applied only occasionally in these countries. In contrast, Blended learning is the more recurrent methodology used in Germany, while there is no a clearly prevalent educational methodology applied in Italy (as Regular lessons, Self-learning and the combination of both are applied in similar proportions).

There is a general coincidence in all the studied countries about Tutoring/user's assistance: it is mainly giving on a group basis, and occasionally on an individual basis. It calls the attention that in some contexts tutoring is not offered at all, like in half the Catalonian cases in Spain or a few Italian and German cases.

Regarding Learning Communities/Collaborative Learning, most of interviewed PICs in five countries involved declared that it was based on collaboration among classmates at the same PIC. Some particularities are that virtual collaboration at distance with people from other places was verified in an important number of PICs in Spain, while in Italy and Germany collaboration (with mates or virtually) is significantly absent in a fourth part of the interviewed centres.

Evaluation strategy seems to be the more chaotic component of studied PIC's education models.

Speaking about Spain, it seems not to be regulated by the models or typologies to which the PICs belong, but to be an own decision of each PIC. When evaluation of user's knowledge is practised, evaluation during the training is the more common case, in despite of initial or final evaluation.

When evaluation of user's knowledge is practised in Italy (in about two third parts of the centres), evaluation at the end of the training is the more common case (differently from Spain, where continuous evaluation during the training is the more practices method).

In German there is an incredible homogeneity about the different options: evaluation before, during or at the end of the training, or no evaluation. And in an important number of centres more different types of evaluation are combined (at the beginning and at the end, etc.).

In France, the evaluation methodology varies according to the PIC. In the P@Ts for example, a evaluation is planned all along the training (before, during and after).

Only in Czech PICs it seems to be a consolidated tendency to apply the Evaluation in a specific moment of the training path -at the end of the learning activity or course- probably induced by the model that gives support to the interviewed centres (to be reminded that most of the centres belong to the local partner's network). This is different from Spain, Italy and Germany, where Evaluation seems not to be regulated by the models or typologies to which the PICs belong.

4 General Conclusions

Even if the structures and types of centres, the responsible organizations, the financial support for the PICs and the quantity of centres may be different from one country to the other, there are similarities in the PIC's models or typologies to state.

Probably due to its federal model, Spain is the country where the presence of regional typologies of PICs is more evident (OMNIA Points in Catalonia, NCC in Extremadura or Guadalinfo centres in Andalusia). All of them are models created by regional governments -usually co-funded by European programmes- in order to deal with the priorities the regional authorities have defined for their territory in terms of integration to the Information Society.

For example, NCC model aims to promote ICT access, development of innovative actions, dissemination of local culture and tradition, creation of social and cultural spaces, creation of collaborative networks and massive use of videoconferencing and online radio, development of multimedia products. Each NCC centre has become a ICT point of reference for local population and the surrounding towns, i.e. unemployed people looking for work online, parents looking for scholastic software in order to help their children with their ICT based homework, etc., growing interest in e-administration services (which are explained in all digital literacy workshops), collaborative networks and virtual exchange of experiences, dissemination of local and regional culture, technical advisory for citizens, etc.

More information at: <http://www.viladecans.info/gru/admin/verTyp.aspx?typ=74>

Italy verifies a similar tendency than Spain (it has so many regional models, even if participation from national government is stronger than in Spain). Nevertheless, differently than in the Spanish case, in Italy the most effective Identified PIC's models are strongly linked to a combined action of Public and Third System organizations and in some cases [i.e. the pioneering initiatives targeted on the most excluded layers of population] Third System Bodies start positive actions to reduce digital and social-health exclusion that are recognized and/or backed by Public Authorities on a latter moment. Such a co-operation appears to be more frequent and effective in those regional areas that apply a Community Welfare Model whereby Third System bodies are regarded as agencies offering services of general interest because of their mission, their legal status and considering their closeness to citizens desires/expectations.

In Czech Republic -the smallest and newest EC's country of our study- strategy relies on promotion of the Information Society by its central government.

In France there are very important national networks (P@T, Cyber-Base) linked to the centralized nature of France (specific public, mission, etc.). Some regional networks such as ERIC in PACA have also appeared, which are more or less developed according to regions. Finally, we find some local or intercommunal networks.

All these "official" models, when putted in practice, evidence some gaps and weaknesses (i.e. on evaluation strategies, as explained in our comparative analysis above) which are more evident when applied to concrete local contexts (i.e. on reaching the right target groups). These are normally the occasions where individual PICs innovation emerges, thanks to PICs personnel's initiative and creativity, but the original solutions they found to their local problems normally remain as hidden treasures for PICs from other latitudes (and this is one of the reasons that justifies making this study).

In parallel to official initiatives, other networks or models of PICs have been growing in Europe (even before the government took the initiative, or where its intervention is less evident like in Germany or France), normally as an answer to needs that are very concrete, limited to a specific territory or population, probably having scarce funds and facing all types of financial problems to survive and lacking of a realistic model to become sustainable. These "spontaneously" generated models offer also a variety of original approaches to rescue as they are normally more target-oriented than official ones.

In other words, when thinking on transferability, these complementary perspectives have to be taken into account in order to define if an innovative model or practice can be adopted in another context:

- Social context & structural-organisational framework: which typologies facilitated which type of innovation
- Local context: in which conditions innovation is produced in individual PICs (type of PIC, type of target audiences, economical aspects, access, rural/urban, etc)

Coming back to our analysis in the precedent chapter, we have extracted some other conclusions:

Learning is easier when related to user's interests, and adaptation to personal interests demonstrated to be essential for PIC's training success. That's why we think that a stronger linkage between Digital Literacy and other Adult education types of offer (Languages, Vocational training / labour market insertion, Entrepreneurship/self employment, Socio-cultural promotion or integration, etc.) would help to attract the interest of people who are still e-illiterate.

In Italy and Spain (but probably in other European countries too), it has also been observed that PICs fostering the use of free software [i.e. LINUX and similar] seem to be more "user-friendly" either considering the high costs of Windows original programs and accessories or the highest "democratic space of action" provided. This brings to another crucial issue: the promotion of an aware and conscious use of Internet facilities a key-element to distinguish PICs operating with non profit goals to the profit ones and to explain the level of popularity/success of the PICs identified with this Study.

Personnel at user's disposal in the centres can be indistinctly staff or volunteer only if this fact doesn't affect his/her professional level. There is an important lack of personnel's preparation for dealing with social, cultural, ethnic or religious characteristics of the audiences coming to the centres (while the same doesn't happen with technical aspects).

Even if Assistant is the most recurrent role found in most of European PICs, we think that the Animator/Facilitator role could more appropriated for PIC's mission and type of audience (probably having a better pedagogical preparation and an improved socio-cultural understanding as explained before). Participation of more Teachers on a discretionary basis would also contribute to improve the adult learning process already running in the centres.

It seems a no sense speaking about digital literacy but while blended learning is becoming the preferred model for learning in the modern world, we still find a lot of centres that don't take advantage of the possibilities that e-learning gives to favour and accelerate the learning process. We think it is necessary to determine the causes of this phenomena (not here but in a specific study) and take the initiatives to expand blended learning practices among European PICs.

Joining both previous evidences, we can imagine that PIC staff in the future will

be specialized in socio-cultural animation, capable of attracting users and maintaining them interested in the whole learning process (not only in ICT), and specialized in blended learning processes to provide users with a pedagogical assistance or guidance that help the users learn to learn.

Finally, we have observed that Evaluation strategy seems to be the more instable component of studied PIC's education models, so it has for sure to be carefully analyzed and promoted in a way that we don't know now but that must aggregate a specific value to the PIC-based adult learning process.

5 Recommendations on How to Expand the Relevance of PICs Contribution to Digital Literacy and Adult Education in Europe.

Exchange of experiences and good practices is normally limited to first level of linkage with similar centres. Individual PICs are formally linked to other PICs through their belonging networks –from which they have taken own model-, and share experiences almost exclusively with colleagues from these networks and/or from other PICs located in the same geographical area. At the same time, a high level of isolation among the different networks or models working on this field can be noted, which is almost absolute among networks of different countries.

In our opinion, a set of articulated initiatives is necessary to enlarge the “natural borders” of this knowledge exchanging process, as for example:

1. identification of the state-of-the-art at national and European level in this field:
 - these studies
 - the book "" about Spanish Telecentres
 - the research that EC's DG Education and Culture has recently contracted for 25 EC's member countries and some else ones from the rest of the world
2. promotion of linkages of PICs with other PICs not directly related to them:
 - through events devoted to make PICs know each other at national and European level, like:
 - the annual meeting of Telecentres in Spain
 - the meeting we are organizing for April 2007 in Prague in order to test and promote our tools for European PICs dealing with Evaluation & Quality and antidiscrimination practices
 - specific European multilingual PIC databases similar to existing national data base of 8000 PICS elaborated by the foundation Digitale Chancen in Germany; through creation of Community of practices for PIC staff at European level, etc.).

Apart from exchanging experiences, other procedures that can help to reproduce identified best practices or produce new ones can be:

- definition of Quality standards for PICs services
- standardized methods for Evaluation of Digital Literacy (a sort of ECDL, more simple in the contents but more oriented to the different disadvantaged target groups that need to become digitally included)
- promotion of E&Q practices by access to specific funds conditioned to implementation of previous standards and methods