Minutes of Pools 2 Meeting

Held in Marina Hotel at the Corinthia Beach Resort

On the 6th, 7th & 8th of September, 2011.

Present: Yana Mifsud

Kleoniki Chrystanthou

Maria Theodorou

Marian Villanueva

Maria Marcalo

Kent Anderson

Jason Masini

Jesmond Xuereb

Not present:

Ms. Ana Silva

 *Day 1: 6th September, 2011*

Ms. Villanueva introduced and welcomed the participants to the concluding meeting of the Pools 2 project. Mr. Jason Masini, representing FTZ, followed and thanked everyone for attending and mentioned that on the part of FTZ there have been some problems, mainly due the untimely demise of the Maltese project manager Dr. Cesare Catania. Since this is the first time the new Maltese team has met the other participants, Mr. Jason Masini and Ms. Yana Mifsud introduced themselves and were also introduced to the all the members of the meeting. Mr. Masini produced a presentation with the aims of the project with reference to the Maltese team and presented the feedback within the local perspective.

Ms. Villanueva acknowledged that there have been some stumbling blocks on the part of the Maltese partners and reminded Mr. Jesmond Xuereb, chairman of FTZ of the pending documents which still are needed before the end of the month in order to close the project and for the partners to receive funding. Mr. Xuereb has agreed to send over the documentation as soon as possible.

Mr. Kent Anderson continued the meeting by showing some videos which discuss the use of physical and emotional learning i.e. using their body to learn. These videos demonstrated how to use such activities for language learning, for example by memorizing a letter, or the use of acting or script-writing to learn proverbs. These can also be applied to all topics and subjects, including physiotherapy, engineering etc. Partners agreed on the efficiency of such methods of learning and discussed that they had done similar activities within their own countries, with great success.

Since Pools 2 will be closing this month, the partners discussed the issue of the new project, more specifically where it should be targeted and which language should be the main one. The partners discussed the possibility of targeting in Spain with the main language being Catalan. Mr. Anderson suggested a Finnish partner.

Since the meeting in question is aimed at concluding the project and discussing any shortcomings of the project, the partners discussed the project milestones, which include:

1. Meeting minute for the 4th meeting were done;
2. 6th Quarterly Partners Report: All partners have to submit a report to CECE covering the three months period with list of activities, achievements, milestones met, staff and financial resources used. CECE will make a compilation of the reports which will be used for quality control and monitoring.
3. The project newsletter (which have been two in all till now) present work in progress, events, and examples of everyday project life from the partnership, e.g. students working with materials developed during the project. Issues 29 and 30 are available online. These are compiled and edited by SDE based on input from all partners.
4. As discussed earlier, FTZ still need to send over their quarterly report.
5. The 2nd year quality report has been postponed because the minutes of this meeting are needed to be able to compile this report. Please note that this has been postponed by agreement with Angelica and has to be submitted by the end of this month. This report from the external quality assessor reflecting the project activities, matching milestones and deliveries with actual outputs, and partnership. The report is to serve as a tool for the final corrective actions, and improvements before the Final Report and closure of the funded period.
6. An Exploitation Report has to be compiled. This is an assessment of how all the material is being used and how it will be used in the future i.e. ongoing exploitation and future exploitation. The Exploitation Report is one of the key issues for the evaluation and shows what will be used in the future. This will be especially useful to prove that the Pools material is worthwhile and therefore worth using.
7. Quality management Report is there to prove that the outputs exist, that they are there in real life and they are online. Mr. Anderson explained that connected with this report, the quality of manuals need to look good and that they can be used on different hardware such as IPAD etc.

In connection with the above point, Mr. Anderson then presented a list per country which shows how many users have actually downloaded the Pools 2 material. This list will be very useful in compiling data. All partners examined the list and were surprised to find out that a lot of downloads where from the USA, which despite being an English speaking country has a vast number of immigrant population which may still be not conversant with the language. Mr. Anderson also produced the links to the websites and search engines which have been used to access the Pools 2 website and tools. The partners discussed the usefulness of such data on showing the actual application of the project and the desired outputs.

Ms. Villanueva continued by discussing the outputs of the projects:

1. Quarterly reports: we miss one (Number 7) from FTZ, Malta will be sending their report this month.
2. Interim report is available online (otherwise we would have not received funding).
3. The final report is not there because this needs to be done in October.
4. The First year quality report is online; this is prepared by the external body.
5. Meeting minutes which have to be prepared by the Maltese partners.
6. Project website and blog. Mr. Anderson explained that the fact that there is no blog is not a problem because the project partners had decided that instead of the blog we would be using the social network Facebook, which while also functioning as a blog is also more innovative.

Mr. Anderson urged the partners to send over any samples from ‘hot potato’, because it would be useful to collect them. Cypriot partners, Ms. Kleoniki Chrystanthou and Ms. Maria Theodorou have collected some ‘hot potato’ samples and will be sending them over. Mr. Anderson noted to partners that one of the videos online needs to have sub-titles revised.

The meeting continued by the partners individually mentioning their experience on the application of Pools 2 tools, Ms. Marcalo from Portugal, explained the accreditation system of the country recognizes teachers’ credits which in turn will be translated as points (18 for the Portuguese and 24 for the English). These points are equivalent to ECTS. Teachers in Portugal are obliged to attend life-long learning courses and this point system helps in their progression and eventually their salary. Each teacher can choose from various courses, their courses where given accreditation this summer. The Portuguese colleagues are thinking of transforming these courses in a ‘graduation style’ for students. After finishing their degrees they can learn and earn another small degree (like a post-graduate). Ms. Marcalo said they are full of ideas to exploit the Pools 2 project, possibly adapting it to teaching English to children.

Ms. Marcalo continued by focusing on the evaluation process, she believes the main problem with the said evaluation was that participants felt uncomfortable, especially the older generation felt it was too time-consuming. Ms. Marcalo pointed out that they had especially succeeded with the relationship with the administration as regards the languages courses. University experts (Anna and Maria) will be taking care of developing the language course. Ms. Chrystanthou inquired whether they have already created online courses, Ms. Marcalo replied that they are available online. Ms. Chrystanthou mentioned the importance of the Moodle tool, she believes that training on Moodle should be provided. Ms. Marcalo acknowledged that while Moodle is an important tool the courses are currently only offered online. Mr. Anderson believes that this is a very important point and thus should be included in the Evaluation Report. Partners have asked Ms. Marcalo to keep everyone updated on how the online tool works, the issue of flexibility being of paramount importance. Ms. Marcalo said that they have not prepared percentages for the evaluation but will be sent. Ms. Villanueva reminded everyone that is important to show all the work done therefore everything should be sent.

The Cypriot team explained that all pilot courses have been done – these included six and an additional one which was not a full-day course. The first three took place at the University of Nicosia in November, the other two were done in December and they had sixty-two participants in total. Ms. Chrystanthou and Ms. Theodorou explained that just like the Portuguese situation, the older participants could not deal with technology and thought it was too time-consuming. Younger participants also considered the tool to be too time-consuming and asked something which is ready-made, rather than something which you have to ‘create’ yourself. Despite such comments, there were many who otherwise where very keen but they noticed that over-45s were more reluctant towards the tool, but also really enjoyed the classes. The Cypriot colleagues admitted that they have faced a number of difficulties in applying all the tools while delivering the courses; they started off by developing Drop Box, Hot Potato, Text Blender and the Web quests. They also pointed out that their colleagues attended both training the course. Since most of the teachers receiving the training asked for an alternative method of using the tool, feedback from the student is expected since most of the schools do not have Moodle.

Ms. Villanueva reminded all present that the Final Report (which is expected from all the partners) should include:

1. Dissemination in relation to the project
2. Sustainability of the project
3. Financial report.

The partners again discussed the future project which was previously mentioned in the morning, the project will be parallel to what is today is known as ‘Pools M’ where we made a portrait of 5 languages. Partners concluded the first day of the meeting, which to recapitulate was left for the final evaluation and the continuation of ideas for future formulation.

*Day 2: 7th September*

Present: Kleoniki Chrystanthou

Maria Theodorou

Marian Villanueva

Maria Marcalo

Kent Anderson

Jason Masini

Not present: Ms Yana Mifsud

 Ms Ana Silva

 Mr Jesmond Xuereb

On the second day Ms. Villanueva started by explaining the financial aspects and closing reports. By use of a powerpoint presentation she explained the details of each document to be presented, such as monthly and daily reports which have to be signed accordingly. Each and every participant must provide a copy of the contract of employment, 1 payslip per year (therfore 3 in all 2009/10/11) and a stamped salary decleration.

Mr. Anderson mentioned that Ms. Villanueva is to keep copy of all the documentation and not the partners. This had to be checked by Ms. Villanueva.

Ms. Villanueva continued by saying that there is a 3 month period from the documents submission dates that the commision can question the participants. All travel subsistance must be in one line of the exel sheet. Taxis used during any stay must be included in the subsistance expences and not the Travel expences.There was a dissussion of Subsistance methods since some of the particpants have a daily allowance system and not a daily recepit method for payments.

At this point Mr. Anderson mentined that any Bank tansfer is to be payed by Ms. Villanueva and that bank penalties are to be encurred by the participants raising it. Ms. Marcalo from the Portugese partners asked to Ms Villanueva for the doument that has to be filled by every participant and Ms Villanueva replyed that it will be send to each once it will be fully compiled. Mr Anderson pointed out to Ms Villanueva needs to also include the detials of the interim report in this document. Any account interest is to be catered by Ms. Villanueva.

Mr. Anderson pointed that at this stage the report compiled by Ms Villanueva must reflect the actual work done and the commitments placed on the actual contract. After by the use of a presenation Ms. Villanueva showed some actual samples of final report.

Ms. Villanueva asked Ms. Marcalo from Portugal to send her some T shirts of Pools 2 that were distributed in the last meeting held at Evora.

Mr. Masini from the maltese team explained the progress of the Pilot couses. By the use of a presenation he showed and explained the development of the 5 language courses in Private Language schools and the main Vocational College in Malta MCAST. He showed that even though they had started late on the actual delivery, eventually they will manage to reach the expected targets.

Following the Agenda future exploitation was discussed. Ms. Villanueva pointed out that the Maltese particiapant must include the visit that had at UOM (University of Malta) on their last visit in their exploitation report. Mr. Anderson said that the final exploitation report has to be complied by Ms. Villanueva however the data has to be provided by each participant.

At this stage Ms. Villanueva asked everyone present if we wish to change or update any online material; everyone agreed that no changed are needed.

With reference to Dissimination and exploitation Mr. Anderson mentioned data of Pools2 are to be used in pools C. More dissimiation is to be done in the Conferance that is to be held in Malta on Last week of October.

More on exploitation Mr. Anderson said that in his last visit in Nottinghan he gave out 50DVD with Pools2 material. In all we are bound to distribute 2000DVD and Mr. Anderson expressed that we are nearly reaching that ammout.

The Portugese participant Ms. Marcalo will exploit the POOLS2 material during a conferance that they will have very soon at their University.

Maria Theodorou from the Cyprus team said that the DVD with info will be included in a ‘material bag’ to participants of a conferance on Teaching that they are having next month. Also they are going to speak about the DVD and Pools2 material in a conferance to be held in Turkey in the coming months.

For future exploitation Maria Theodorou from Cyprus said that they going to approch Goverment entites to sponser similar courses. One example are the Police forces that are willingly to held these language courses; other institutions are Pascal English school in Nicosia, English school in Larnaka the intercollage and obviously their own University. Kleoniki Chrystanthou mentioned that they also targeting ‘Special purpose school’

 Certificates are needed showing ECTS points by Mr. Anderson

Mr. Anderson explained clearly the difference between Exploiation and Dissimination; Exploitaion is when one know for sure that the educational material is being used by teachers and institutions while Dissimation is maily the handout of information material such as DVD etc.

At this stage all participant have complied a word soft copy of the both Exploitaion and Dissimination of the material and send it by mail to Ms. Villanueva .

*Day 3: 8th September*

Present: Kleoniki Chrystanthou

 Maria Theodorou

 Marian Villanueva

 Maria Marcalo

 Kent Anderson

 Jason Masini

Not present: Ms Yana Mifsud

 Ms Ana Silva

 Mr Jesmond Xuereb

The third and final day for of the project meeting was dedicated towards explaining the compilationn of the exploitation report by Ms. Villanueva and overview of the website by Mr. Anderson . The partners discussed the evaluation of workshop through the use of the usual evaluation forms.

Mr. Anderson went through the Pools 2 official web site and checked tarily each page for any mistakes.

He mentioned that hopefully for the new project there are already some catchy names such a ‘Methods 2’ and ‘Method 4 languages’. It will defianately be on language oriented learning. He expreseed that he is looking forward for the participation of Cyprus and Belgium and Malta in this project with Cyprus as administrators.

Final conclusions by each participant were delivered thanking everyone for the successfull last meeting of POOLS2 project.