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**WORK-PLAN 2014/2015**

**Brussels, May 2014**



# WORK-PLAN 2014/2015

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## Introduction

2013 has been another intense year for Earllall with General Assemblies, Seminars and Conferences, and the activities of the working groups.

The European year has been characterised by negotiations on the European programmes for 2014 – 2020, that are now active. For Earllall members this meant waiting for the calls to be published in order to apply for European funding. The working groups are indeed currently working on the new call to finance their initiatives and increase the cooperation links between them.

## Overall aims

At the creation of Earllall, some main objectives were identified by the founding members. Today, 13 years later, those objectives are still up to date and need to be remembered and re-read in the light of the present challenges and the present situation:

- Seeking to bring regional perspectives to the European debate of Lifelong Learning and trying to influence it;
- Offering a platform for members to share information, exchange experiences and transfer good practice;
- Enhancing Regional cooperation through projects and other activities;
- Encouraging the development of joint projects among members, with the participation of Earllall itself, funded by EU programmes.

This last year, work involving young people and the focus of the European Institutions on youth, together with the often dramatic situation that young people are living in, demanded that youth policies remain on the top of Earllall's agenda as well. For this reason and in a lifelong learning perspective, Earllall Seminars have been dedicated to specific topics, like Entrepreneurship, Education and Apprenticeship.

The working groups are focusing on particular issues in the lifelong learning field, making the overall aims of the association more concrete and creating concrete outcomes.

## EARLALL in 2013

2013 has been dedicated to youth policies with the final conference of the OSA project "A Guarantee System for Youth Policies" on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of February 2013 in Florence and the Seminar on Entrepreneurship Education on the 11<sup>th</sup> of October in Brussels.

The two events were in combination with the two General Assemblies. Starting from 2014, only one GA will be organised in Brussels or in one of the Member Regions in order to decrease the costs that members have to face from travelling to the General Assemblies.

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As for the Statutes, elections took place on the 11<sup>th</sup> of October and members of the board of directors agreed to serve on the board until the GA in May 2014. This phase is a transition until further elections which are to be organised in May 2014 in order to give the possibility to other members of being involved in the board and contributing to the life of the Association.

Concerning the working groups, below there is a brief overview of their activities in 2013.

### *1. Youth policies*

In late 2011 some Earllall members started a comparative analysis of youth policies in their Regions. The study gave interesting results on how the regions are organising public policies in issues related to youth. Those results have been presented at two events, one in 2012 and the final Conference on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of February 2013 in Florence, “A Guarantee System for Youth Policies”.

Following this conference, where representatives of Regional Governments and the European Commission participated, a policy document was prepared by project partners and Earllall members and sent to the Commissioner for Employment, Social affairs and Inclusion, Laszlo Andor. The document is entitled “*A system of guarantees for young people. The contribution of regional policies*” and is available on Earllall website <http://www.earllall.eu/filebank/A%20system%20of%20guarantees%20for%20young%20people.pdf> and Dropbox: Earllall Archive/Policy/Policy Papers/2013.

Regions directly involved: Tuscany Region (leader), Baden-Württemberg, Basque Country, Jämtland, Welsh Government.

In order to focus the work on youth policies on specific issues, the Earllall board proposed to dedicate the GA in October 2013 to Entrepreneurship Education. The Seminar was a successful event and an occasion to share best practice and to present them to the European Commission; both DG Enterprise and DG EAC, who are equally involved in the topic. The outcomes of the Seminar were the basis for a document entitled “*Seminar Entrepreneurship Education. Lessons Learned*” which was sent to the European Commission, who particularly appreciated the concrete perspective of the document. The paper is available for downloading on the Earllall website <http://www.earllall.eu/filebank/Entrepreneurship%20Education.%20Lessons%20Learned.pdf> and Dropbox: Earllall Archive/Policy/Policy Papers/2013.

### *2. Mobility*

Members of the mobility group had bilateral exchanges and meetings while a Seminar on mobility in VET has been decided on for 2014 – see section Earllall in 2014.

Regions directly involved: Baden-Württemberg, Umbria Ricerche, Catalonia, Jamtland, Tuscany, East Sweden Vastra Gotaland.

### *3. Lifelong Guidance*

The working group dedicated to lifelong guidance met in Brussels in April 2014 to meet an expert from the ELGPN (European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network) that presented the latest policy documents made by the network and discussed with the participants common vocabulary related to lifelong guidance. A Belgian guidance professional was also invited to present the national

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guidance system and describe the management and day-to-day work of guidance services, especially in relation to young people.

In October 2013, Brittany Region invited members of the working group to a seminar organised by the Regional Council on Lifelong Guidance and focused on the new competences French regions, Brittany in particular as pilot region, have with regard to coordination of guidance services.

Four Earllall members (Baden-Württemberg, Catalonia, Trento and Jämtland) attended the event and also had bilateral meetings with regional stakeholders:

- A group of 15 people from Trento met regional authorities responsible for the French work experience recognition system
- A study visit was organised for the delegations from Baden-Württemberg, Catalonia and Jämtland to a vocation school and to a training centre for apprentices.

Members directly involved: Brittany Region (leader), University of Southern Brittany, Baden-Württemberg, Catalunya, Region East Sweden, Region Jämtland, Autonomous Province of Trento.

#### *4. Flexible Learning*

The group, coordinated by Västra Gotland and VKF, worked through online meetings and emailing to collect information in order to prepare the application for a call in the Lifelong Learning Programme. Following the start in early 2014 of the new European programme of Education, Training, Youth and Sport, Erasmus+, the group decided to prepare a project application for the call for proposal Erasmus KA3 ICT.

As Earllall is not eligible for this call, it will be supporting the project application as a silent partner and will keep informing members about the project outcomes.

#### *5. Lifelong Learning and ageing population*

The group composed of, not only Earllall members but also external Regions and Universities, were put together to collect and analyse management, stakeholders involvement and measures designed for the older adult age group. The main outcomes of this analysis will serve as a basis for a larger project which is likely to be in the framework of Erasmus+.

Members directly involved: Jämtland (leader), Baden-Württemberg, Rheinland-Phalz, Wales. External Local Authorities: Durham County, Livorno.

#### *6. Coordination group of Regional Offices in Brussels*

The Coordination Group met in January 2014 to meet a representative of DG EAC that presented the initiative "Rethinking Education".

16/07/2013 meeting with DG ENTERPRISE on Earllall seminar on Entrepreneurship Education

20/09/2013 meeting with DG EAC on Earllall seminar on Entrepreneurship Education

All members are always invited to take part in the events: their participation depends on interest on a particular issue.

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## **EARLALL in 2014/2015**

For the year 2014/2015, Earllall is renewing its commitment in the aforementioned topics and issues in the field of lifelong learning as well as in supporting cooperation among Regional Governments.

Traditional activities such as General Assemblies and Seminars will be organised to promote at a European level what regions do internally, and to lobby the European institutions for the recognition of the added value regional policies have on lifelong learning.

In 2014 the General Assembly is taking place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May in combination with a Seminar on Apprenticeship – see below for details.

In 2015 the General Assembly will be organised in spring – summer (date to be confirmed) together with a Seminar dedicated to a matter of interest to Earllall members (to be confirmed).

The GA in Ostersund in October 2012 decided to have one GA per year starting from 2014; however, in order to ensure the continuity of the work, two seminars should be organised: one in combination with the GA in spring and one in autumn at a more technical level to facilitate the sharing of best practice and meeting with the European institutions.

The working groups will have a strong role in implementing activities to reach the objective of promoting the contribution of the Regions to lifelong learning policies. In particular the coordination Group of the regional Brussels' offices can support Earllall and its members in organising events, meeting the European institutions and making links among the regional experts in the different topics and in Brussels.

The approval of Erasmus+ is likely to give an impulse to activities in a broader European context. Earllall should support members in participating to call for proposals as well as participate directly in European projects.

In the following section, themes and topics are proposed as possible working topics for Earllall. For each theme, it is said which activities can be organised and, if a working group exists, what the WG has foreseen in that topic.

Youth employment: apprenticeship, youth guarantee, NEETs
Mobility
Lifelong Guidance
Lifelong learning: active ageing, professional requalification
Structural Funds and lifelong learning
Early school leaving
Literacy
Recognition of non formal and informal learning
Disadvantaged groups and lifelong learning

### *1. Youth employment*

Earllall has been working on youth policies since 2011 and the topic is still at the top of the concerns of all member Regions. In particular a Seminar on the Apprenticeship schemes implemented in different European regions has been organised for 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2014 at the Committee of the Regions.

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The seminar is the occasion to share best practice and to discuss with representatives of the European Commission (DG EAC and DG EMPL) the initiatives taken at a European level.

Following the Seminar, Earllall will send the European Commission a formal pledge to be included in the website of the Alliance for Apprenticeship<sup>1</sup> to state the commitment of Earllall and its members in strengthening access to, the supply of, and/or the quality of apprenticeships.

The Youth Guarantee is also an issue of relevance for Earllall members; in particular, the Council Recommendation on the Youth Guarantee has given the Member States the task of implementing the youth guarantee and all relevant actors at European, National and Regional level are committed to the topic.

An interactive seminar can be organised in autumn 2014 for exchanging experience in the implementation of the youth guarantee; technicians in the regions, project managers and experts in the youth guarantee will meet in Brussels to share best practice and to discuss further cooperation in the topic.

The NEETs will remain at the top of the concerns of Earllall members and their involvement in the different policies will be taken into consideration. Members may decide to dedicate specific initiative to this target group.

## *2. Mobility*

Mobility has traditionally been a strong topic in Earllall work; indeed the working group dedicated to that will continue its activities for linking members and practitioners that organise and manage mobility programmes.

On April 7th and 8th, Baden-Württemberg organised a Seminar on “Developing Mobility Projects - Creating Networks” at the State Academy for in-service training of teachers, Esslingen (Baden-Württemberg), Germany. The seminar brought together key players at an operational level, who are involved in the planning and implementation of mobility projects and wish to expand their transnational networks.

## *3. Lifelong guidance*

The transversal topic is very relevant and Earllall members continue participating in the dedicated Working Group; the group is indeed meeting in Brussels with a focus on guidance and early school leaving (22nd of May); other meetings will be planned depending on members interest.

Bilateral study visits are also planned for the period 2014 – 2015. These visits will contribute to the understanding and comparison of the organisation and day-to-day work of guidance services in different regions.

The cooperation with the ELGPN network will be strengthened in order to test at regional level the methodology and policy tools developed by the network.

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<sup>1</sup> “The European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EaFA), jointly coordinated by DG Education and Culture and DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, aims to bring together public authorities, businesses, social partners, VET providers, youth representatives, and other key actors in order to promote apprenticeship schemes and initiatives across Europe. Although managed by the European Commission, the success of the initiative lies with the commitment of its partners, notably through the network of ambassadors and pledges.” [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/vocational-policy/alliance\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/vocational-policy/alliance_en.htm)

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With the coordination of the Association of adult education centers in Baden-Württemberg, a number of interested working group members applied for a European grant for the period 2014 – 2016 within the Erasmus +. The objective of the project is to compare and analyze guidance measures targeted specifically at low-skilled adults in order to help regional authorities and guidance providers develop new strategies in this field.

#### *4. Lifelong learning*

Learning is a lifelong process and this is even more important nowadays as the ageing of the population and the financial crisis have increased the need of learning for an older age group than the traditional younger group.

Because of the financial crisis and the technological innovations, many adults in Europe found themselves in need of updating their skills or obtaining new skills. The professional requalification is a very crucial theme to be undertaken by European Regions through Earllall. How the training activities are organised, how they are financed, who is coordinating it and the impact on the target group should be investigated by a small and informal technical seminar open to interested Earllall members.

The WG dedicated to the ageing population will work to build a consortium and present a project application for the first period of calls for proposals in the beginning of 2015. The WG is committed in involving public and private actors at regional level, that are active in providing services to an older age group.

Other stakeholders at European level dedicated to adult education might be consulted and involved for the undertaking of common projects and initiatives.

#### *5. Early school leaving*

Many Earllall members expressed their commitment and their interest in including early school leaving among the issues Earllall is focusing on. The topic is very crucial as it is linked to many other relevant issues: for example early school drop-out, the risk of young people becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training), the second chance education schemes, etcetera...

The Seminar in combination with the General Assembly in spring – summer 2015 might be dedicated to this topic with reference to linked topics as the ones above mentioned.

#### *6. Recognition of informal and non-formal learning*

Member states are requested to put in place by 2018 a system which identifies documents and assesses and certifies all forms of learning, as stated in the Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, adopted on the 20th December 2012.

Regions are also involved in the process and are interested in exchanging views on it: for this reason, the Coordination group of the Brussels' regional offices could meet to prepare the background for further work for Earllall members.

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## **Projects, Support to members, lobbying and advocacy**

### *1. Projects*

Earlall should support its members in participating in call for proposals for European projects, in particular in the framework of Erasmus + and EaSI. Furthermore Earlall will actively seek to be active partner in projects from members' initiative or as a promoter.

The topic and objective of the projects Earlall should be promoter of will be identified by the Board members with the support of the Business Manager; the above mentioned 6 working topics might be possible project ideas.

### *2. Support to members*

The support to members remains the core business of Earlall, which is continuing doing so in different ways:

- Newsletter,
- Facebook page,
- Earlall archive available on line (dropbox),
- Technical notes,
- Meetings of the technical group of regional Brussels' offices.

In addition to those traditional activities, Earlall proposes to organise **training activities** in member regions dedicated to relevant stakeholders in order to explain what Earlall is and does and the policies and the funding opportunities at European level. The aim is to improve the understanding of members and their partners of European policies and programmes, to raise awareness of the opportunities offered by Earlall and to increase the dissemination of Earlall's work.

In particular, the Business Manager will be travelling to interested member regions together with one board member for such training sessions.

### *3. Lobbying and advocacy*

The work carried out by Earlall and its members through the working groups and the seminars is the basis for taking the regional perspective of lifelong learning to the European institutions.

Seminars and Conferences, traditionally organised by Earlall, are an excellent opportunity to show the commitment of regions in lifelong learning and to advocate to the EU.

The **Coordination Group** of regional offices in Brussels is a further instrument to support members in their relationship with the European Institutions and to support this advocacy work. In the period 2014/2015 the following activities are proposed (different initiatives might be organised depending on the priorities and interest of members):

- Meeting representatives of the Presidencies of the European Union to listen to the priorities in lifelong learning: Italian Presidency (July – December 2014), Latvia Presidency (January-June 2015).
- Meeting representatives of the European Institutions on particular dossiers related to the European agenda on lifelong learning.

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- Facilitating bilateral meetings among Earllall members and between Earllall members and the European Institutions.

The Business Manager is responsible for coordinating and organising the meetings following the priorities and interest expressed by the members.

This work-plan is a draft that will be updated after the GA depending on decisions and new proposals that might be raised during the meeting.