



Cooperation between OECD-CERI and ENSI ivzw concerning the OECD-CERI programme 'Innovative learning environments'

The OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovations (CERI) and ENSI INPA decided on June 19th 2009 in Paris a cooperation within the OECD programme 'Innovative Learning Environments'. ENSI will participate in the programme in the status of a full member. For more details see farther down.

OECD/CERI is identifying concrete cases of innovative learning environments to provide examples of inspiring practice and to raise discussion of the potential to enrich mainstream education in systems around the world. We are exploring how people learn and under which conditions and dynamics they can learn better. OECD-CERI is looking for examples of settings where learning takes place as an active process, fostering in learners the capability to apply knowledge and skills flexibly and creatively in a variety of different contexts.

OECD countries, states/regions, and potential cases themselves, as well as other partners, such as ivzw ENS, are invited to propose cases of innovative learning environments, using the criteria below. They do not need to be located only in OECD countries and OECD-CERI is looking for as many potentially relevant cases as possible from these diverse sources at this stage.

Criteria defining cases as "innovative learning environments":

- The proposed innovative learning environment (ILE) serves the learning needs of children and adolescents (covering some or all of the approximate age range 3-19 years), whether exclusively or in mixed environments with older or younger learners.
- The proposed learning environment should be an intentional departure from the traditional approach of the large body of general or vocational education in order to respond better to the learning needs of the learners- it should be innovative.
- The proposed learning environment should be a setting(s) which seeks to provide optimal learning and development in cognitive, meta-cognitive and socio-emotional terms, whatever its specific curriculum focus.
- The ILE aims at a broad set of the learning and educational needs of the learners, rather than addressing very specific types of knowledge or capabilities.
- The ILE does not depend on such elevated tuition fees that its potential to be replicated in mainstream education systems would be severely limited.
- The innovative learning environment (ILE) is not reliant only on the charisma or commitment of a single innovator (or 2 or 3), but it enjoys a broader

organisational foundation, holding the promise to be sustainable, even if relatively new.

- The innovative learning environment (ILE) is a learning organisation, formally or informally evaluating its own practice in order continually to improve itself.

Note: Learning settings for specific subgroups of students (e.g. indigenous/native students, migrants, the gifted or those with learning difficulties) are often both innovative and tailored to optimise learning. These cases are highly relevant for the ILE project, especially the more that their approach is potentially transferable to wider groups of young people. Vocationally-oriented learning is also highly relevant so long the ILE in question meets the above criteria.

There is a formal agreement between OECD-CERI and ENSI ivzw that the latter will actively look for concrete cases which relate to 'education for sustainable development' and/or 'environmental education' (in its widest sense), which meet the above criteria.

The cases can be sent for a first analysis and selection to the secretariat of ENSI¹. The selected cases will subsequently be forwarded to OECD-CERI for a further analysis. ENSI delegates a board member in the project group of the ILE project and participates at the relevant meetings and conferences.

ENSI promotes the project in his newsletter.

A close exchange between the ENSI project 'Learning Environments' and the OECD/CERI 'ILE'-project is planned.

2. What will OECD-CERI do with the submitted ILEs?

CERI will create a broad compilation of cases which meet the above criteria to constitute the project's "Universe". They will be entered into the project knowledge bank and some will be profiled in the project homepage.

Drawing from this "Universe" will come two sub-groups for more intensive analysis. The ILE Inventory will be made up of about 35 to 50 or more cases, having been selected and accepted the invitation to participate in more detailed project reporting and research. This will be aimed at illuminating the organisation of learning in the selected cases in more detail, their innovative character, and the social, cultural and policy conditions that shape them.

From within the Inventory cases, a smaller group of 10 to 12 different cases will make up the Observatory, each of which will have accepted to be part of the detailed case study research. The analysis will focus on the micro-level processes of learning, with the aim of giving a detailed understanding of learning processes and dynamics, the rich complexities of interactions within the wider context, and the ways that learning dynamics relate to outcomes.

3. Benefits of Participation for Innovative Learning Environments

The learning environments in the Universe will be featured in a prominent international programme and will gain contacts around the world as a result. Those in the Inventory and the Observatory will have the opportunity to join an online OECD social network that will be set up to assist mutual exchange and co-operation and some of them will also take part in organised seminars and workshops. All

¹ ENSI ivzw secretariat, p/a Christine Affolter, Steinen 57, CH 3534 Signau, Switzerland

participants will also have access to the analytical reports of the project, whether on learning sciences or on the innovations.

4. More information needed?

Information regarding: a) the project aims; b) selection processes for the Observatory and Inventory; c) the updated calendar of activities; and d) other relevant documents and information, is available at www.oecd.org/edu/learningenvironments

You can also write to christine.a.affolter@bluewin.ch or willy.sleurs@ond.vlaanderen.be if you need more detailed information about the relationship between ENSI and the ILE -project.