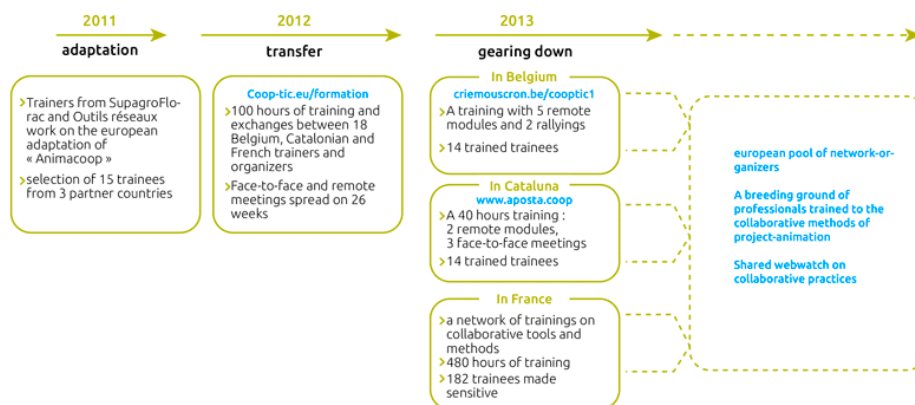


Introducing the Coptic project

Coptic is an initiative for innovation transfer funded by the European Commission within the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci project. Four partners specializing in innovative teaching methods - Suprago Florac and Outils-Réseaux (Montpellier), the Cooperation School Aposta from Catalonia and the Regional Centre for Environmental Initiatives (CRIE Mouscron) from Wallonia – joined forces to work on adapting a training tool for collaborative project facilitators.

During the Coptic project, fifteen people from three countries (Belgium, France and Spain) received training to become trainers of cooperative project and network facilitators, in their respective circles.

Coptic today has 60 network facilitators forming a real pool in three European countries. This network developed over the course of three years:



Introducing the team of partners

The **Coptic** programme linked four structures:



Supagro Florac: Agriculture and Environmental Education Institute has been providing training to facilitators of many themes and geographic networks on public agricultural education for many years, as well as providing technical support for them. Recognized nationally for its expertise in education sciences and its experimental teaching activities and for promoting innovative training tools, Supagro Florac shares its knowledge with its partners in this project. It also oversaw the creation and coordination of the whole project.



The 'reference' association in France for networking. Its main mission is to start and accompany cooperative networks and practices using methodological tools and the Internet. In 2010, Outils-Réseaux created the Animacoop training tool for facilitators and professionals working in the fields of cooperation and network facilitation. This Animacoop tool was a part of the European Coptic project.



Catalan association: Cooperation school in charge of transfer in Catalonia.



Walloon association for environmental education in charge of transfer in Wallonia.

These partners brought together the skills of several institutions, universities, researchers, and local actors and groups engaging in participatory development who actively participated in drafting the e-book you have in your hands.

Introduction to the learning tool

The Coptic learning tool is based on educational principles that aim to accompany trainees along the path to autonomy and building their capacity to carry out informed actions. Trainees are the main focus of the teaching tool. These principles lead to the choice of teaching methods and resources that are articulated around three ideas: the crosscutting nature of knowledge and collaborative skills to be learnt; a link to the professional projects of trainees; and the use of the possibilities offered by digital tools to innovate in teaching practices.

What can be learnt with the Coptic training?

The training contents favour the development of operational skills linked to the facilitation of cooperative projects: managing information, co-producing resources, starting network dynamics, group facilitation...

These contents are structured around 12 key concepts and 12 crosscutting collaborative skills:

	Key-concepts				Know how to act			
environment	Abundancy	Constraints	Legitimacies	Exchanges	Gathering information	Producing	Event organizing	« Scaling up »
group	Size	Vocation	Maturity	Culture	Start the network	Keeping the group alive	Managing conflicts	Self-evaluating
person	Convergence	Involvement	Awareness	Coordination	to join a group	Behaving	Managing information	Taking a stand

These collaborative skills are dealt with in parallel at three different levels:

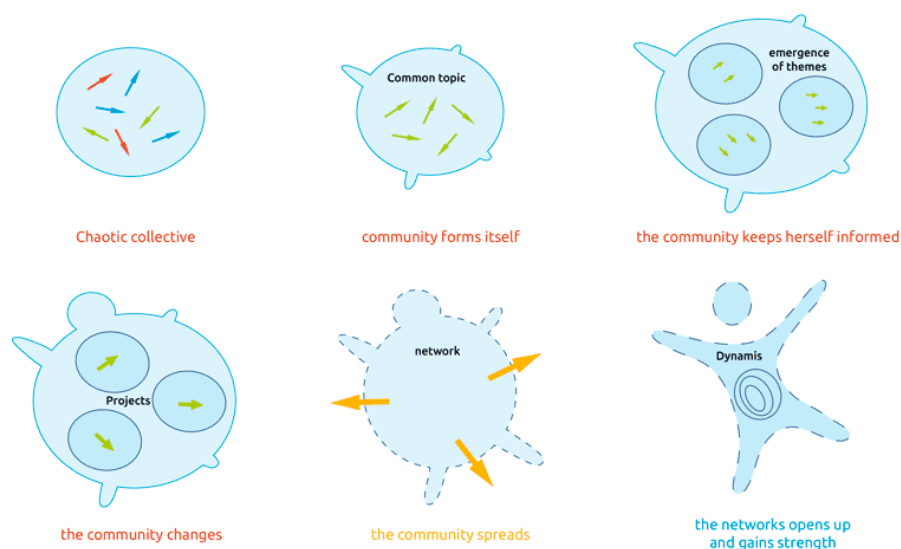
- at an individual level, training develops the engagement of a person in a collaborative project,
- at a group level, training deals with understanding group dynamics, networks, groups and skills to manage a group,
- a third level relating to the environment refers to openness factors and communication "outside" the network.

How is the learning done?

During a training period of 14 weeks, trainees work remotely and on-site following a progression in three parallel itineraries:

• Individual itinerary:

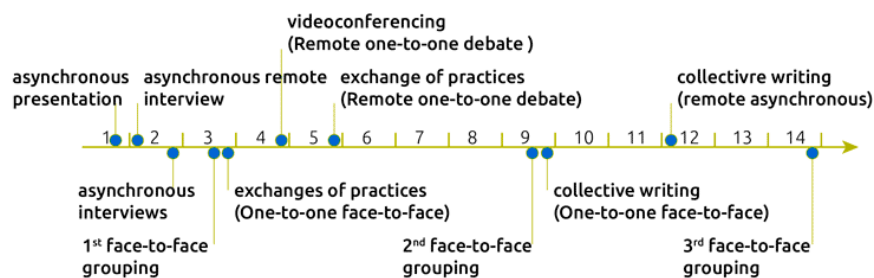
On-line contents follow the stages in a network's existence.



- Creation of the network: the group is established, a "group of individuals" becomes aware that it is a learning group.
- The network becomes informed: exchanges on the projects lead to a set of common experiences and problems.
- The network is transformed: individual and collective events are created in small-group collaborative work.
- Network outreach: spreading the outcomes of the cooperation works outside the community brings value to it.
- Network consolidation: this allows for an assessment and a reflexion on how to maintain the dynamics alive and how to open up to others.

• Collective trainee itinerary :

Trainees produce new contents collectively



• Project itinerary :

The creation of a collaborative project by the trainee is a pre-requisite, and the activities refer to this project throughout the training. During the first week, trainees introduce the context and the object of their project, and then test the methods and tools on their project, explaining the whole experience relating to their own personal learning process. At each of the three meetings, an update is given on how the training has contributed so far to the project's progress. Training actions speed up the project in its professional context and the lessons learnt from the training reciprocally become more "tangible" since they are implicit in the action.

A pedagogy impacted by new technologies

A training ecosystem:

A methodology to move from "network facilitators" to "trainers of network facilitators"

A combination of on-site and distance exchanges using Internet-based tools

Using collaborative tools and methods during the training process.

Moments to exchange practices

Individual work on the trainees' collaborative projects

Co-generation of knowledge: pedagogical training plans.

The Coptic ebook

The ebook that you are handling contains the resources used during the CoopTic training session. Some were written specifically for the ebook because the contents were

presented orally during training. This book is a state of our knowledge in the field of cooperation and collaboration at the time of writing in late 2013. But this is an area that is just beginning to be studied and we continue to experiment, to imagine, to try, to dream ... To make it short, even if the publication of this ebook is the outcome of the European project Leonardo CoopTic, this is not the end but just the bases of our future projects: a resource center on collaboration? A MOOC? Or perhaps something that does not exist yet!

Enjoy your reading and your "small irreversible cooperation experiences" to come!

They took part in the adventure !

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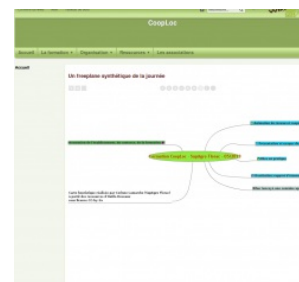
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A change in posture for associations: embracing cooperation

Card's author : Corinne Lamarche et Claire Herrgott - SupAgro Florac

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Testimonies : Setting up a one-day training course on network facilitation for local associations.



Why CoopLoc ?

After the training course [CoopTic](#), we were asked to explain to some fifteen facilitators what we had learnt, in what was called a "scaling-down phase". Inhabitants from Lozère, with a dense associative fabric, wanted us to share our experiences with the local associations. We often heard: *we always find the same people attending the different associations, people don't participate,...*so, how can we encourage participation? How can we provide paid people or volunteers with a tool to optimise the way they facilitate these association networks?

Formalising the project

At first we were wondering what the duration of the training should be, the number of participants, the content of the course: we wanted to deal with so many things we had heard and experiences in [CoopTic](#).

At the Moustic [Meeting](#), we signed up for a workshop on the [Project accelerator](#) method. After forty-five minutes at last we had found the answers to our questions: "Conceiving a 6-hour training tool for 15 people with three objectives: living an irreversible cooperation experience, discovering collaborative tools and formulating a change in posture to facilitate participation of a network or association's members".

Thanks to this method, around ten people cleared the way and opened [action tips](#) to us.

What tools for organisation tasks ?

The tools used depended on the tasks to be done:

- a wiki: where we created a section called Organisation (pedagogical plan, questionnaire), a section on Training (a page for **participants** where everyone could introduce themselves, a page for **the day's tempo**, a **picnic** page to organise a collaborative picnic) a section on Resources (links to networks and facilitator training resources, sites, articles, tools and a bibliography)
- a file shared on Google Drive: a form for the registration of participants, for the report sent one week later; a text file to write an email between two people to then send it to the participants; a text file to write the press review article after the training course where all participants could contribute;
- a Pad: for collaborative writing during the day of training;
- a freeplane: one for a summarised introduction to the session, with Internet links; and another one that was completed on-site, at the end of the session, to explain the remarks made by the trainees;
- a Doodle: to organise a picnic, which was sent to each participant to foster a bit of sharing
- a Dropbox: to save final documents (the final email on pdf, the freeplane, the attendance sheet, the chart for the barcamp).

Pooling resources on the platform [CoopTic](#) during our own training allowed us to recover some parts of the course, (especially the course by Jean-Michel Cornu on Cooperation in 28 keywords)

On site, we were asked to fill in an on-line chart with the associations everyone knew, giving an email address or a physical address to increase our outreach.

Using these tools allowed us to reduce the number of meetings, and we were able to work on on-line documents, at a distance, between several people (to improve their contents) and to get the trainees involved in the training right from the start, as well as along the way.

Internet link : <http://wikis.cdrlflorac.fr/w/CoopLoc/wakka.php?wiki=Accueil>

What we learnt from Cooptic

Hybrid training combining distance and on-site "learning" is an excellent tool for life-long professional development.

However, many conditions are required for this type of training tool to be a real learning ecosystem.

The Cooptic experience has reinforced our convictions regarding certain conditions for training to be successful in the digital era.

Training is no longer a pyramidal transmission of knowledge, where the person that knows passes information down to the person that is learning. It is a co-building of knowledge by networking available information, chosen by the trainers; individual knowledge and experiences that are collectively enriched by reflective exchanges. The training process is rendered explicit by the trainer so that the training provided enables the process of learning to learn.

People are at the centre of the learning process. But these people are easily connected to the world and to others thanks to the new technologies available.

In the training, Cooptic and Animacoop, its French equivalent, we have experienced the construction of learning communities that operate in a similar way to epistemic communities (cf. *supra*). Trainees publish articles and create training itineraries while gradually becoming active "amateur-experts". This new quality in people that are training is a real conjunction of intellectual, pedagogical, and even democratic ambitions that really sets the grounds for the pleasure of learning.

The work of trainers changes because it entails several roles in parallel:

- "Expert" trainer: is the reference for the subjects dealt with and transfers knowledge.
- accompanist: is the person that structures and accompanies the group's progression in a learning environment based on communication and exchange.

- tutor: is the person creating an individualised link with each of the learners helping them to overcome the isolation induced by distance learning.
- "technician": is the person that makes sure that all technical devices work properly.

These new "roles" fulfilled by one or more trainers require deep changes:

- reconsidering "distance" as a space and time with multiple possibilities for interaction and learning. It is possible to learn, create links, work together and produce a resource in multiple ways:
 - asynchronous distance contribution based on availability of a space for writing, sharing resources, exchanging via email or a forum,
 - synchronous distance during video-conferences or exchanging practices between groups,
 - on-site and distance at the same time...it is possible to organise a course on video-conference with two groups in parallel at two different sites.
- making the relationship between trainers, learners and knowledge more horizontal. In the flow of information and exchanges, the trainer is just one element among many others.
- adopting the "surf method"¹....accepting uncertainties and being brave enough to experiment during the process. Trainers are the ones guaranteeing the methodology: they create the balance conditions and do not necessarily master the form of co-production outcomes.

Innovation elements and the effects they have on the training tool and the cooperative learning

How Cooptic innovates	The effect on training	The effect on cooperative learning
Choosing a wiki as a training platform	Technical device that is easy to use with an intuitive configuration and carefully designed graphics. The trainer tries to minimize any possible technical difficulties.	Reduces difficulties for participation. Generates trust in the tools. Creates a feeling of pleasure. Encourages trainees to publish on the NET.
A common space and individual spaces	The wiki platform enables creating personal spaces that are easily linked to a collective support.	Belonging to the learning group is natural (common spaces). Individualised learning is possible (personal space).
Open contents	Courses are posted on-line and are accessible to all outside training times.	Freedom to refer to the courses at all times. Greater availability for activities and exchanges.
Learning contents that extend beyond those in the courses	Posting the course on-line "frees" time to accompany trainees along the process of acquiring skills.	Knowledge acquisition: "learning to learn" and "learning to work with others".
Modular structure	Contents are divided into units (granulated). The general itinerary is defined, but it can be modified during the training.	Building a more personal itinerary is possible.
Systematic approach	Contents are selected so they correspond to the activity as a whole, the collaborative network and to the different levels (individual, group, environment).	Acquisition of global perspective. Relatively complete study of the collaborative processes.
A multiplicity of structured itineraries	Modular course itineraries (the life of a network). Group activities itinerary (learning community). "professional project" itinerary (collaborative environment).	Multiple opportunities to deal with issues on cooperation and collaboration; put them into practice, facilitate them. Analysis of the collaborative process.
Gradual change in the size of work groups	Activities are programmed based on progression: individual exercise, work in pairs, in groups of 4 to 8	Practice on epistemic communities. Exercise on ephemeral groups (change in scale).
Networking and exchanging practices	The activity is conceived as a knowledge aggregator. The trainer provides the methodology.	Valuing experiences as a source of knowledge (reflective practitioner). A particular form of professionalisation (based on the experiences of others). Reinforcing self-esteem.
Co-production of contents	An evolutionary platform: everyone can add pages and text. The trainer accompanies the process and ensures it is consistent.	Active stance towards knowledge. The sense of creating a "common good".
Notion of "presence" from a distance	A fine-tuned articulation of distance and on-site times. The effort of accompanying is placed on interaction between participants. "Distance" accompanying is systematized (fixed points with the trainers).	The effect of distance decreases or even transformed. Removing project and culture proximity methods.

For further information: epistemic communities

Epistemic communities can be defined as a (small) group of representatives who share a common cognitive aim to create knowledge and a common structure that enables a shared understanding. They are heterogeneous groups. Therefore, one of the first tasks for its members is to create a *codebook*, a form of "**code of conduct**", defining the aims of the community and the means to achieve these aims, as well as the **rules of collective behaviour**. Therefore, what distinguishes an epistemic community is, first and foremost, **the procedural authority**, that ensures progress towards the established aim while allowing participants a certain degree of autonomy.

The production of knowledge is done based on the synergy of individual specificities. This requires that the knowledge that flows within the community is made explicit. This is done by converting tacit individual knowledge into explicit and collective knowledge: the members of epistemic communities are united by their responsibilities to value a particular set of different knowledge. The aim of the assessment is therefore related to the individual contribution of effort towards a collective aim that is to be achieved, and the validation of the cognitive activity (production of knowledge) of each member is done by their peers based on the criteria established by the procedural authority. The same applies to the recruitment of new members in this type of groups: it is done by the peers, following the pre-established rules regarding the potential in new members to achieve the community's aim.

¹ Rosnay, Joël. *Surfer la vie : vers la société fluide*. Paris : Les liens qui libèrent, 2012