

The challenge of the Pilot Plans for increasing knowledge and use of the Catalan language: from knowledge to social use

by Dolors Solà

Abstract

The Pilot Plans for increasing knowledge and use of the Catalan language implemented by the Generalitat of Catalonia (Catalonia Autonomous Government) via the Secretariat for Language Policy and the Consortium for Language Normalization, are currently in operation, over the period September 2004-December 2005 in seven municipal areas of Catalonia – Badalona, Banyoles, Lleida, Manlleu, Reus, Ulldecona and Vic. The objective: to make Catalan the vehicular language, the language common to all those living in Catalonia and a means of social integration. Once the necessary corrections have been applied, the experience will serve as a model that can be subsequently extended, in gradual fashion, to other localities.

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1. Introduction

The government of the Generalitat of Catalonia is currently developing a strategic plan on language policy. The Strategic Plan lays down:

- The 2004-2005 Plan of Action for the Secretariat for Language Policy, which is an advance of the plan of measures for immediate application. In one of the areas covered by the Plan, a series of Pilot Plans are established, aimed at increasing knowledge and use of Catalan, 2004-2005.
- Plans of the various departments in their respective areas of competence: These will be steadily set in motion in coordination with the Secretariat for Language Policy.

The general aims and objectives outlined in the 2004-2005 Plan of Action of the Secretariat for Language Policy, and with direct application in the above-mentioned 2004-2005 Pilot Plans, are as follows:

- a. Guarantee access to knowledge of Catalan for the entire population.
Everyone has to be able to learn Catalan.
- b. Foster and encourage interpersonal use of Catalan.
Get those who know Catalan to speak Catalan.
- c. Guarantee the right of all citizens to use.
All those who want to use Catalan must be able to do so without feeling uncomfortable, and must know that the Administration supports citizens who want to live their lives in Catalan.

One of the areas of operation of the 2004-2005 Plan of Action is that of immigration and one of the specific lines of action planned here is the application of the Pilot Plans for increasing knowledge and use of the Catalan language. These plans establish a set of directives and political and economic measures, which will be implemented by the Secretariat for Language Policy together with the Consortium for Language Normalization in accordance with a series of objectives, planning, modus operandi, evaluative indicators, etc. over a delimited period of time, in specific towns and cities. The objective, as we have said, will be that ensuring that

Catalan can be spoken as the vehicular language of all those living in Catalonia. On the basis of relevant analyses, objectives will be fixed and activities will be specified together with the means for achieving the objectives.

This is in accordance with the directives established by the 2004-2005 Language Policy Plan of Action, on political and economic measures to be taken by the Generalitat of Catalonia and the city councils directly involved. Participating in the plans are the various departments of the Generalitat and the councils, together with the Consortium for Language Normalisation, immigrants' associations, newcomers and host communities... with the objective of making Catalan the vehicular language of all those who come to live in our country, the way forward to social inclusion along with the right to knowledge of the language of our country.

Given the impossibility of applying the directives and measures proposed in this plan across the board, the objective is to try the experiment out initially in seven municipal areas, so that each in its own context will be able to experience the proposals, the actions... and so that, once the necessary corrections have been carried out, the latter will be able to serve as a model which can subsequently be extended to other localities.

2. Aims and objectives of the Pilot plans for increasing knowledge and use of the Catalan language

The aims and objectives here are:

- a. Set up coordination and cooperation with all entities and organisations in each of the areas taking part.
- b. Facilitate learning of the language in the case of newcomers to Catalonia, in a coordinated way, coordinating between the local government administrations and other bodies in the corresponding territories.
- c. Try out new ideas for organisation and action, complement training and education with knowledge of the culture and the environment, incorporate new technologies in language teaching and extend the use of language voluntary workers.
- d. Propagate the ideas and experiences referred to in the previous section such that, once necessary adjustments have been carried out, they will serve as a model that can be extended to other localities.
- e. Cover the basic training needs.

3. Principles of action and basic ideas which will encourage application of the plans

The basic, fundamental principles that will encourage the actions planned and programmed within these projects are the following:

- The effort of learning a language and making use of it, should not fall solely on the shoulders of those who come to live in our country, but should be conceived as a great collective task which demands the mobilisation and complicity of the whole of society.
- A language is much more than a means of transmitting information. A language is also a means of identification and of characterisation of one's personality and way of being and doing of a given community sharing many things. The language makes it possible for a person to integrate into a community without having to relinquish their individual traits and characteristics and way of being. These two aspects of language, having to do respectively with communication and identity are absolutely inseparable. For that reason, transmission of a language to new speakers, to be effective, needs to be *affective*. That is, it has to achieve a certain degree of adhesion and identification of the learner with the linguistic community whose language is being learned.

4. Municipal areas and criteria for selection

The local government areas where the plans are being put into effect are Badalona, Banyoles, Lleida, Manlleu, Reus, Ulldesona and Vic. Five of these municipalities –

Badalona, Lleida, Manlleu, Reus and Vic- belong to the network set up by the Consortium for Language Normalisation.

Table 1. Badalona. Origin of those born outside Spain

BADALONA					
Total population: 219,073					
Those born outside Spain: 18,556 (7.85%)					
Origin of those born outside Spain	Central and South America 29%	Magreb 26.7 % (4,566)	China 16% (2,827)	India and Pakistan 16,2% (3.018)	Eastern Europe 10%

Almost a third of the non-foreign born population were born outside Catalonia. Badalona is one of the areas where there is a considerable concentration of migrants from the rest of Spain who arrived in the sixties and seventies. According to data from the 2001 Language Census <<http://www.gencat.cat/llengua/dades>> 40% of the population claim not to speak Catalan, and 8.5% say they do not understand it. .

It is worthwhile noting that, according to the census, people from 103 countries are settled there, although there are three main groups of immigrants with cultures and languages other than Spanish or Catalan: those from Morocco, 4.566, from China 2,827, and from India and Pakistan, 3,018. Central and South Americans make up 29% of those born outside the State of Spain.

Furthermore, the counties of Barcelona are where the Asian born population is concentrated, constituting 10% of the total.

Table 2. Banyoles. Origin of those born outside Spain

BANYOLES		
Total population: 16,634 persons		
Those born outside Spain: 2,650 (15.93%)		
Origin of those born outside Spain	Gambia 32%	Morocco 28%

Banyoles is the town with the highest illiteracy rate in the Province of Girona (41% of immigrants cannot read or write, and 20% had no schooling at all). Most immigrants are from Africa especially sub Saharan Africa, although there is also a sizable group from Colombia in South America. There is also a considerable number from Eastern Europe.

Table 3. Lleida. Origin of those born outside Spain

LLEIDA				
Total population: 118,035				
Born outside Spain: 12,092 (10.24%)				
Origin of those born outside Spain	Africa 45%	Central and South America 26.7 %	Eastern Europe 20%	Asia 3%

Those born outside Spain who live in the city of Lleida belong to no less than 146 different nationalities. Some 56% of the total are men and 43.1% are women. Over the course of 2003 immigration into the area increased by 33.8%. Male immigrants are concentrated in the age range 31 to 35, and women in the age range 26 to 30. Taking the overall immigrant population on the census role, we find that the largest group are from North Africa: 16.3% from Morocco, and 6.4% from Algeria. Of the South American born, the greater proportion are from Colombia, at 9.1%, and Ecuador at 5.9%. Notably, Rumanians make up 8.1% of the total.

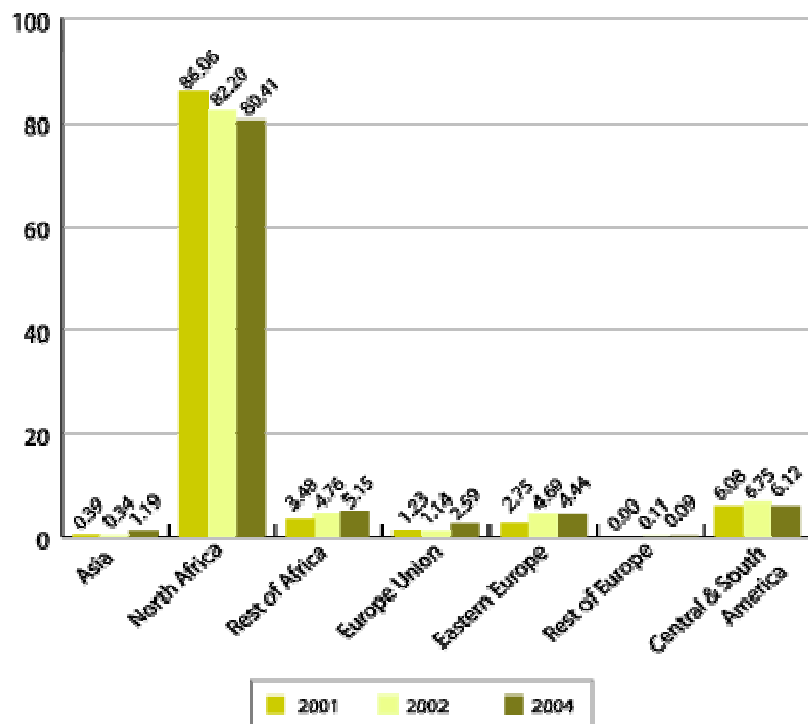
Over half the immigrant population in the city (52.4%) are concentrated in just four neighbourhoods: Centre Històric (Old City) (22.5%), Príncep de Viana-Clot (12.6%), Universitat (9.6%) and Balàfia (7.7%).

Table 4. Manlleu. Origin of those born outside Spain

MANLLEU			
Total population: 19,638			
Born outside Spain: 3,201 (1.71%)			
Origin of those born outside Spain	Africa	Central and South America	Eastern Europe
	85.56% Morocco: 80.41 %	6.12 %	4.44%

Manlleu is an administrative area that already had a large percentage of inhabitants who had been born outside Catalonia. It now has a high proportion of immigrants, especially Berbers from Morocco with Amazigh language and cultural identity, although currently these seem to take little cultural pride in the language and culture. The immigrant population is mainly concentrated in the so-called Can Garcia high rise buildings.

Graphic 1. Change over time in the percentage of immigrants from the different subcontinents: a comparison at 12/2001, 12/2002 and 06/2004



	Asia	North Africa	Rest of Africa	Europe Union	Eastern Europe	Rest of Europe	Central & South America
10/2001	0.39 %	86.06%	3.48%	1.23%	2.75%	0.00%	6.08%
12/2002	0.34%	82.20%	4.76%	1.14%	4.69%	0.11%	6.75%
06/2004	1.19%	80.41%	5.15%	2.59%	4.44%	0.09%	6.12%

Table 5. Reus. Origin of those born outside Spain

REUS		
Total population: 99,046 ¹		
Born outside Spain: 10,329 (10.42%)		
Origin of those born outside Spain	Morocco 43,76% (4,511)	Central and South America 17.78% (1,837) Colombia: 8.27% (854) Ecuador: 3.30% (341)

Reus has 99,046 inhabitants, of whom 10.42% are immigrants (10,329).

In terms of country of origin, the largest group come from Morocco: there are 4,511 Moroccans constituting 43.76% of the total immigrant population. The second largest group are the Colombians (854) followed by people from Ecuador (341). Latin Americans as a whole number 1,837 and make up 17.78% of Reus's immigrant population.

Table 6. Comparative data: the total population and the foreign-born population in the city of Reus in the period November 2002 to December 2003

31st December 2002	31st December 2003
-Total population: 95,060 - Foreign-born pop: 6,403 - % population foreign-born: 6.74%	- Total population: 97,747 - Foreign-born pop: 9,034 - % population foreign-born: 9.24%

Table 7. Ulldecona. Origin of those born outside Spain

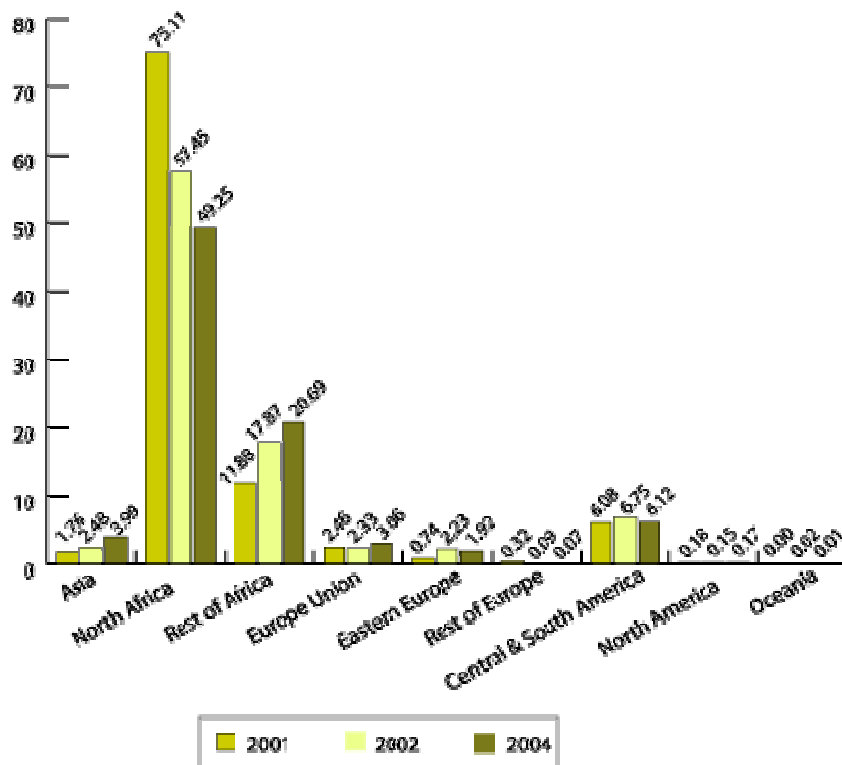
ULLDECONA			
Total population: 6,327			
Those born outside Spain: 1,393 (22.02%)			
Origin of those born outside Spain	Eastern Europe 50.94% (709)	Magreb 27.23 % (379)	Central and South America 10.41% (145)

Interestingly, Ulldecona has an unusually high proportion of immigrants from the countries of Eastern Europe –half the immigrant population in fact. Just over a quarter of immigrants are from the second largest group, those from North Africa (the Magreb). They are from Morocco and speak Amazigh (Berber).

Table 8. Vic. Origin of those born outside Spain

V I C				
Total population: 37,597				
Born outside Spain: 18.94 % (7,121)				
Origin of those born outside Spain	North Africa 49.25%	Central and South America 20.84 %	Rest of Africa 20.69%	Europe Union 3.06%

Graphic 2. Change over time: breakdown of immigrants per subcontinent in Vic with figures at three specific moments: 12/2001, 12/2002 and 06/2004



	Asia	Noth Africa	Rest of Africa	Europe Union	Eastern Europe	Rest of Europe	Central & South America	North America	Oceania
12/2001	1.76 %	75.11%	11.88%	2.46%	0.74%	0.32%	6.08%	0.18%	0.00%
12/2002	2.48%	57.45%	17.87%	2.33%	2.23%	0.09%	6.75%	0.15%	0.02%
06/2004	3.99%	49.25%	20.69%	3.06%	1.92%	0.07%	6.12%	0.17%	0.01%

The criteria which were born in mind when choosing the municipal areas were:

- Acceptance and interest of the municipal area in question;
- Agreement between the organisations involved;
- Coordination between the departments involved;
- Geographical distribution in the territory.
- A range of different sized municipalities (small, medium and large);
- Immigrants with a spread of different places of origin;
- Significant percentage of immigrants in the population.

The fact of an area being selected for the Pilot Plans in question does not indicate any kind of preference whatsoever, but simply the opportunity to assist with a project which will provide valuable experience for other areas to draw upon, once the results have been evaluated, corrections and adaptations applied if necessary, with the overall aim of making the Catalan language the common language in this country.

5. Organisations participating

- Organisations involved in the Pilot Plans are:
- Generalitat of Catalonia: Secretariat for Language Policy, Secretariat for Youth, Secretaria for Sports (Presidency Department <<http://www.gencat.cat/vicepresidencia>>);
- Secretariat for Immigration <<http://www.gencat.cat/benestar/societat/convivencia/immigracio/index.htm>>;
- Education Department <<http://www.gencat.cat/educacio/>> (Sub directorate General for Language and Social Cohesion, and Sub directorate General for Adult Education);
- Consortium for Language Normalisation;
- City councils;
- Immigrant associations;
- Parents associations;
- Cultural and leisure organizations and bodies... in each municipal area.

6. Reference document for the Pilot Plan for increasing knowledge and use of the Catalan language

The Pilot Plans for increasing knowledge and use of Catalan are based on a document providing the same structure for each individual Pilot Plan. This basic scheme was as follows:

6.1 Sociolinguistic information on the municipal area

In this section the object is to obtain sociolinguistic information in the municipality, from the general census: information on the population in terms of the four basic language skills – understanding, speaking, reading and writing, the origin of the

immigrant population and proportion of population in percentages.-, on the basis of such information it will be possible to analyse results and provide a basis for putting into writing the main aims of the project.

6.2 Knowledge of surroundings

The general objective here is to obtain information on all bodies and organisations in each of the municipal areas to be able to include them in the project. Specific objectives here are:

- a. Obtain information on bodies and organisations working in the field of immigration in the territory.
- b. Get to know the actions and plans carried out by the bodies and organisations in question in order not to duplicate them but rather to complement them.
- c. Invite these bodies and organisations to take part.
- d. Set up efficient coordination for the project.

- e. Work together, especially in the case of the Language Normalisation centres and the Catalan offices and services working with adult education centres, to guarantee Catalan courses (including Catalan literacy courses) for non Catalan speakers, to provide continuity by joining end-on with the CPNL training courses.

Bodies and organisations working together to further the aims of the project are:

Local administration, whether county/territorial or autonomous region tier; immigrant organisations; NGOs and similar organisations; adult education; official language schools; Department of Education centres (CEIP and IES); educational services; AMPAS (parent-teacher organisations); school workshops...

The indicators literally indicate the results of the coordination with the organisations and the response to the project.

6.3 Language teaching

The teaching of the Catalan language carried out within the Pilot Plan has to be based on at least the following three criteria:

- a) Unusual ideas for organisation that are innovative and effective: new times slots, intensive language courses, Saturdays, holidays...
- b) Unusual methodologies which complement the traditional ones. The idea is that students should not just learn the language in the classroom. Rather, this training should be complemented by cultural and environmental studies, where possible, with the student signed up for the "Volunteers for Language" programme
<<http://www.gencat.cat/llengua/voluntariat>>
- c) Use of the new technologies in language learning combined, where necessary, with classic language teaching methods.

The activities that are planned need to be framed according to the following scheme:

- Description of activity
- Objectives
- Aimed at?
- Organisations that have participated
- Human resources (managers and functions)
- Timing
- Budget
- Finances
- Indicators and evaluation

Activities planned in common in the pilot schemes are:

- Courses/workshops for specific groups. Courses planned for groups with specific needs (women, young people...) or courses arranged for specific reasons in parallel with the general courses. The workshops and courses coordinated with the Environmental Plans implemented by the Education Department and aimed at parents. Banyoles, Manlleu and Vic are areas that have planned in this way.
- Strategies for coping with the demand for courses outside registration periods and the intensive nature of courses needed at the CNL in Reus, for example.
- Workshops and/or activities which promote integration between native (host) and immigrant families. Banyoles, Ulldecona and Vic have programmed these.

6.4 Activities aimed at injecting dynamism or raising awareness, complementary to the Catalan language teaching courses

The common activities planned in this section –boosting and raising awareness– could be organised as complementary to the language teaching ones. The programme of activities is the same as in the previous section. Here we simply refer to the ones that are common across most of the Pilot Plans.

6.4.1 The added value of being familiar with the environment

Knowledge of the environment is complementary to the classic activities of the adult Catalan language classes. Here, we should like to underline the usefulness of these activities which situate learners in a particular context since they enable learners to find out about services – local council offices, libraries, health service centres, the general functioning of society, rights and obligations. These initiatives are in response to the idea that linguistic competence is acquired at the same time as sociocultural knowledge. "(...) And this bond between language and life, as you know better than anyone, is the only way to ensure that the investment in learning (and in teaching) will be productive and effective." ¹ Banyoles, Manlleu, Reus, Ulldecona and Vic are localities which have combined teaching of the language with knowledge of the environment.

6.4.2 Supporting the "Volunteers for Language" programme

The programme "Volunteers for language" sets out to connect on the one hand those who want to learn Catalan and in general have recently settled in Catalonia with, on the other, people who already speak Catalan and wish to help others to learn, and who meet up to talk. The objectives of this relatively simple, easy programme, are, on the one hand, to make the Catalan language the language of communication, or the vehicular language, and set up a reciprocal relationship between the two types of participants. These two objectives are totally related, such that one is not achieved without the other. The basic idea inspiring the project is that learners should acquire fluency and get to know the environment, Catalan speakers should be made more aware of the importance of maintaining social use of the language and that, accordingly, they should act in consequence. Also an effort is made for all concerned, learners and volunteers, should take part together in a variety of different activities, visits to faculties, etc. The specific compromise on the part of both sides is that they should meet up at least once a week, to speak Catalan, for a period of six months. This initiative makes Catalan an effect tool in social integration. Note that this activity is common to all municipal areas taking part in the Pilot Plans.

6.4.3 Call for awareness and for careful consideration of the linguistic attitudes adopted by the local born people with respect to newcomers

Many different types of approaches have been planned, however, that have in common the call from the learners of the Catalan language that native speakers should speak to them in Catalan. Banyoles, Manlleu, Reus, Ulldecona and Vic are conducting campaigns in this respect. The media used to disseminate the message are many and various: banners and light boxes, TV, press advertising, public announcements, press conferences... And in some instances these activities are complemented with sessions aimed to raise awareness for specific groups: local government staff, people working for NGOs, unions, parent-teacher associations, school teachers...

6.5 Timing

We need objectives too, to distribute activities during the period of application of the Pilot Plan, since this ideally will mean planning for the greatest social impact and allow work to go forward in the most comfortable and efficient way possible. What is more, the duration of the cultural visits also have to be planned and the visits to learn more about the environment organised as complementary to the Catalan classes.

Thus the objectives in connection with timing are:

- a) Delimit the overall duration of the project.
- b) Coordinate activities in each of the municipalities according to the planned schedule.
- c) Set up a schedule for the programming, realisation and evaluation of the activities.
- d) Determine the duration of each activity.
- e) Evaluated the initial schedule with the final results.

¹ Claret, Andreu: "Llengua i identitat en un entorn culturalment divers", in Actes del 3r Simposi del català a no catalanoparlants. Document Collection, 33. Eumo, November 2004.

6.6 Human resources

Human resources are fundamental. Attitude and empathy of those running the activities are of primary importance in ensuring the success of the project. Thus, we propose:

- a) Coordinating with those taking part in the different organisations involved.
- b) Assigning each of the activities to the right professional.
- c) Working in coordination with the rest of the professionals in each centre, office or Catalan services.
- d) Pinpoint educational needs for the particular groups, as these needs arise.
- e) Where necessary, train staff.

Wherever necessary, it is important to agree on the hours and the availability of qualified staff, so that staff from the offices and services of the Consortium for Language Normalization should be in charge of the Pilot Plan. The experience gained from the Pilot Plan will be directly available to these staff and will thus provide positive and negative feedback applicable to other tasks in hand.

Lastly, the human resources will also have to be evaluated at the end of the project, against the proposed objectives and responsibilities of those who have taken part.

6.7 Participant organisations and institutions

The participation of all types of institutions, associations and organisations is an important objective because these bodies become involved in the project and thus become a part of their project. Furthermore, the concepts –social use of (the) language and (the) language as vehicle for social inclusion- will gradually be taken on board in their other activities and services. Oftentimes the fact of these other organisations participating is as important as the activity itself. Therefore, we propose:

- a) Stimulate participation and commitment from other local government and other organisations in planning and execution of language normalisation policies.
- b) Work in coordination with these organisations.
- c) Demonstrate that language policy works when it cuts across all social agents in the locality where it is applied.
- d) Seek to have the shortfalls and omissions mentioned in the previous section put right by the relevant organisations.
- e) Foster awareness of the fact that use of Catalan with people who are not Catalan speakers, apart from being the responsibility of the official organs, requires the involvement of other organisations, companies...
- f) Seek to get the involvement of organisations and companies as executive members of the Pilot Plan.
- g) Consolidate coordination pinpoint gaps and omissions and put them right.

Each entity, each association, within the limits of its possibilities, can be directly or indirectly involved, and has to play its part. Any kind of participation is good and can take many different forms: human resources, economic resources, materials, premises...

At the end of the period of the Pilot Plans, we will carry out evaluation both from our point of view and from that of the other the other organisation involved, in terms of the activity and of the fact of participating in itself.

6.8 Budget allocation and finances

The budget allocated for the activities also calls for operative criteria and a set of objectives:

- a) Set up coordination with the other participants (adult education, language schools...) so that each becomes responsible for providing the economic and human resources in question.
- b) Ensure that economic and human resources allocated to the Pilot Plan in each area accomplish the objectives that have been set.
- c) Get other organisations to take part so that they too are involved in the extension of social use of the language. (For example, for activities designed to increase knowledge of the environment, the human resources of the following institutions can be drawn on: library staff, health centres, councils, sports centres... and economic assistance can be drawn on from savings banks and institutions, companies.. for joint production of leaflets advertising exhibitions for example).

- d) Make the best use of the experience, by making it applicable to other areas.
- e) Optimise the relationship between human and economical resources allotted and the stated objectives.

Lastly, we have to analyse the real cost of the venture, the shortfall, in the event that there is one, and the evaluate the cost in terms of the return on the activity.

7. Evaluation

This is the stage of the project that we are currently at. Indicators have to be applied to evaluate activities both quantitatively and qualitatively, in accordance with the following:

Objectives	Characteristics	Type
Obtain planning tools with which to measure the project.	Adequate: They need to relate to clear, feasible and relevant objectives.	Management indicators. Objective Indicators.
Enable comparison with the established objectives.	Clear: They need to be easy to obtain, to calculate or interpretate.	Temporal indicators. Indicators of participation.
Identify trends.	Useful: Well defined, with no ambiguity.	Qualitative indicators.
Carry out the analysis of the project.	Stable: They need to a useful life of reasonable duration. Comparable: They need to allow comparison across time and place (institutions). Downsized: They have to be manageable and easy to monitor.	

8. Conclusions, consequences and viability of the plans

At the present time, we do not have sufficient feedback in terms of results from the Pilot Plans which are still ongoing. Trends can be discerned in specific actions, and these still have to be measured and checked. The general impression gained from those working on the project is that the schedule for this stage is pretty tight and they will need to continue working along the same lines to check results sufficiently.

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