

Article

International Projects as a New Way to Solve Global Problems, Case Study of a European Project

Javier Fombona ^{1,*}, Maria Angeles Pascual ¹ and Ewa Listopadzka ²¹ Department of Educational Sciences, University of Oviedo, 33005 Oviedo, Spain² Department of Economics and Management, Ignacy Moscicki University of Applied Sciences in Ciechanow, 06-400 Ciechanow, Poland

* Correspondence: fombona@uniovi.es

Abstract: The new post-pandemic world scenario suggests that the design and implementation of projects and research at the international level is important. This is a challenge given the scarcity of reference models on how these initiatives should be carried out. Thus, it is important to know guidelines on research projects, especially in the international context. This is the case of an Erasmus project aimed at teachers of adults. The aim of the project is to tackle major problems, such as unemployment, social exclusion, and ignorance of European heritage. This case is shown with a descriptive approach of the main activities, the necessary justification, the innovations observed in companies, and the quantification of final achievements. In these initiatives, it is important to describe the results both at a tangible level, as well as intangible ones. The intangible results are difficult to quantify, but also important, such as the increase in knowledge, the creation of bonds of friendship, or the dissemination of innovations on media and networks.

Keywords: adult education; project design; Erasmus; unemployment; social inclusion



Citation: Fombona, J.; Pascual, M.A.; Listopadzka, E. International Projects as a New Way to Solve Global Problems, Case Study of a European Project. *Sustainability* **2022**, *14*, 11006. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su141711006>

Academic Editor: Eddie W.L. Cheng

Received: 2 August 2022

Accepted: 1 September 2022

Published: 3 September 2022

Publisher's Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



Copyright: © 2022 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

The recent pandemic situation prompted and convinced to establish international collaborations to solve global problems [1]. Carrying out projects is a challenge that should be faced from all areas, and especially from the educational field where new technologies encourage us to leave, or rather go beyond, the classroom and connect with the whole world. It seems necessary to be transparent and show the keys that make these initiatives work that go beyond national borders.

Usually, the projects try to establish a path to achieve several objectives; in this proposal, the material and human resources are managed within a certain period of time. Unlike other activities, the projects have a specific character, marked by a singular theme and a duration limited to a few months or a few consecutive years. Once this time has elapsed, the achievement of objectives is quantified and it is concluded.

The design of projects is an important task to stimulate the life of educational institution. These projects are sometimes focused on teaching, and they open interactions with other institutions while responding to society needs [2]. In this sense, governments, whether regional, national, or international, set calls/guidelines and directives that projects should assume to achieve a specific improvement in society, whether at a cultural, labor, or any other level. For instance, it is a constant objective in every educational system that students have certain levels of reading comprehension, but it can be a specific objective for a territory to improve the reading comprehension through digital tools, and it is the educational administrations that constantly set new goals with a more concrete perspective.

Carrying out a collaborative educational project with the staff of a school, or any other institution, is an increasingly common activity. However, the organization of a proposal that involves several schools, or institutions, is a more complex job, and it requires effective

coordination among the members. This is difficult to maintain during the duration of the project. Sometimes, the characteristics of the teaching profession, the inertia and rigidities of the system, make it difficult to maintain fluid and efficient interaction for long periods. These formal obstacles are multiplied when looking for members from other countries to be part of a work team. In this sense, several circumstances converge that increase the complexity and problems in these initiatives.

Society asks us to respond to their demands through different calls for projects, whether in the field of research, innovation, or in more specific aspects of education. A project is a great challenge from the first moment in which it is designed; it competes in a call, its implementation is considered, and until its culmination [3]. The limited scientific literature that addresses this topic is one of the main reasons for the preparation of this article, and its contents may be of special interest to those who want to know the guidelines for project design, implementation, dissemination of results, and impact on society. This knowledge gap is intended to be covered by describing a specific case as a real example. In this case we show the international project “Teachers of adults implementing successful and innovative models for employment and social inclusion; improving our European educational heritage and its consolidated values. Project KA204: 2019-1-ES01-KA204-063815”.

Adult education, beyond the times of compulsory training, has a great impact on our society. After the global pandemic, the segment of the adult population has been affected in a very different way from the young [4]. This project is an initiative with far-reaching repercussions for members, the adult teachers; and the impact is multiplied when considering that it has reached other indirectly related people, such as the readers of the publications or the students who will receive the training by the teachers involved in the project. All those students will know the effects of the project in the future.

2. State of the Question

The scientific literature related to the design and management of projects is small, that linked to the didactic academic field being even more limited. We can highlight the works of Sapag and Sapag [2], Baca [5], Pinto [6], and Gómez [3] as researchers in the thematic context of economics. Other articles have focused on the generic evaluation processes of plans, programs, and projects [7]. The cases that describe projects for the educational environment usually focus on the design of specific training programs [8]. In this line, there is abundant scientific literature that reports on the results of educational projects, although there are few publications that describe the development of the implemented initiative and its management aspects.

It is interesting to highlight Cerda [9] who determines some fundamental components in the design, such as the justification, the theoretical and social contextualization, the precise delimitation of measurable objectives, the specification of results/products, and the description of the profile of recipients.

We can mention the increase of virtual projects with the collaboration of the different members through interaction on the Internet [10]. In this line, it is important to highlight that each project arises from an institutional and public proposal or call, which usually sets the guidelines for its correct implementation. These sources of information are very relevant to understand each of the parts of the projects that are registered in that given call. Thus, it is common to find calls for innovation projects aimed at teachers and dependent on regional or national educational administrations; calls for research projects for university professors and postgraduates; calls for research and development projects aimed at researchers with a broad scientific career; applied, industrial, medical, social research projects, among other topics, managed by expert researchers on very specific topics. This typology is complicated when the proposal acquires an international dimension, e.g., a continental project, such as Erasmus in Europe, or a global one, such as the initiatives of the World Health Organization on the global response to a disease [11]. In any case, each project design must follow the guidelines indicated in the text of the corresponding call, and these official proposals clearly define the objectives to be achieved, the criteria to participate, the allocated resources,

and the obligations which the participants fulfill. The globalization forces the creation of networks between professionals from all environments, and to a greater extent research must be nourished by advances and synergies outside national limits [12]; for this reason, the projects international organizations are increasingly important in the development of innovation.

In the case of the Erasmus project and the reference case described here, “Teachers of adults implementing...” is part of the Erasmus + Program Call EAC/A03/2018 published in the Official Journal of the European Union C 384 of the 24 October 2018 [13]. Subsequently, it is the national agencies of each country that organize and manage the projects that participate in the respective calls. These entities have very valuable information on the requirements and operating guidelines of these projects, for example, showing guides for carrying out the projects in their web spaces, as is the case of SEPIE [14].

3. Objectives and Methods

This paper has a general objective focused on showing and disseminating the operation dynamics of the projects. The main aim of this paper is to show how international research projects can be carried out using a case study as a reference. This goal is divided into two more specific objectives: 1. Show the generic parts of the projects in the educational context; and 2. Show the components and results of a specific case, a real international project, the case of the AEI (Adults, Employment and Inclusion) Project.

As a case study, we worked from a qualitative point of view, and the article collects an experience where the authors participated, being a model of action research. We believe this case can be a rigorous reference to know this type of activity in depth and within the real context. This methodology allows to understand how important the contextual conditions relevant to this type of case are [15]. These methodologies are suitable for answering complex or challenging research questions [16], such as international projects; in this sense, we are dealing here with many variables, not all of which can be described. The article as a story is a way to facilitate the response to similar situations or proposals in a larger population of cases [17]. More specifically, and following Yin [15], we completed these phases of the analyzed case study:

- Scientific literature review
- Definition of study objectives
- Choice of the case based on the theoretical framework
- Analysis of the relevant parameters
- Data collection and analysis of results
- Discussion, conclusions, and recommendations

3.1. Choice of the Case

We chose the AEI project as the object of analysis, since it is a specific case that has passed the selection tests in an international public call. We can also analyze it in depth, and we can generalize its main characteristics. This rigor arises within a university scientific research group of recognized quality, and the design and implementation of the project is subjected to strict external controls of transparency and validity for each of its activities.

The AEI project is an initiative led by the University of Oviedo aimed at learning about good practices in adult education. The general objective of the project was the solution of major problems such as European unemployment. The methodology was a qualitative descriptive type in a research-action process with an established validity for similar cases [18]. It was intended to observe and take as a reference successful and innovative models aimed at employment and the consequent social inclusion, through the systematic and driving action of the teaching staff.

In Figure 1 we can see the generic scheme of a research project. It is a circular structure where the initial objectives of the project are connected with certain activities and with results that produce a certain impact in society or elsewhere. This impact is evaluated to verify if it coincides with the initial objectives.

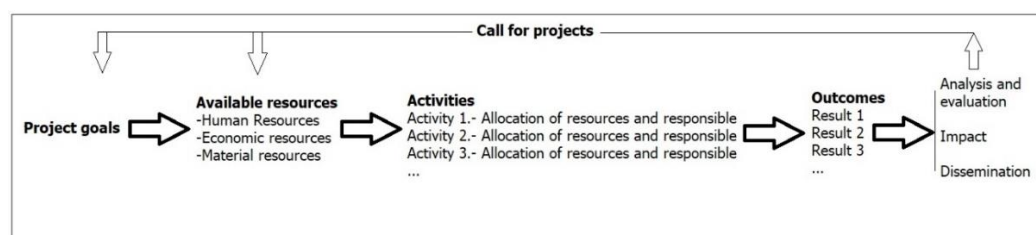


Figure 1. Basic scheme of organization of stages of a research project.

3.2. Analysis of Relevant Parameters

Each project has a limited space for action, a specific scope, and a duration divided into different phases with achievements in each of them. Thus, in the case of the AEI project, it was carried out from 2019 to 2022. The participants were teachers and teaching managers from the Ministry of Education of the Junta Castilla y León (Spain), from the Provincial Center for Adult Education in Padova (Italy), from the Vocational Training Center Ignacy Moscicki University of Applied Sciences in Ciechanow (Poland), and the Borgå Folkakademi educational center (Finland), together with the faculty of the University of Oviedo. The project planned trips to learn about the successful, real, and similar experiences in each context. In meetings, these innovative reference models were shared; for instance, Castilla y León showed its most significant formative examples, Italy the best schools for training adults, Poland showed its vocational training centers, Finland exemplified the keys that make this educational model one of the best and constantly reduce their unemployment rate, and finally the University of Oviedo presented its PUMUO program for the elderly.

3.3. Method of the AEI Project

The method of the project was the observation of the form and content of certain educational experiences. The observers were academic specialists in adult education, and this enables a contrast of expert opinions [19]. Their observations were contrasted in internal debates until reaching an agreement of opinions; this procedure has been determined as valid [20]. The project received financial support of €155,000 and carried out 5 management visits that directly involved 40 trips for educational managers, and another 100 training trips for adult education teachers. The actions do not focus only on traditional training activities, but rather raise the perspective of training in companies [21]. This is how the experiences of Arcelor-Mittal, Capsa, Jovellanos Maritime Rescue Center, among other Asturian entities, or of Polish industries such as Fanar, Lubaz, Europol Gaz in Ciechanow were learned, as well as many other companies.

Regarding social inclusion, it should be noted that Europe is the core of the democratic world and faces its diversity with 50 countries, 743 million inhabitants, and hundreds of languages and cultures. This causes disintegrating tensions and attracts people from less developed countries. This diversity needs integrative approaches and systematic, effective, and innovative actions. In relation to the European cultural heritage, we highlight its social and educational value. In this line, although each European country maintains its educational system, the 1999 Bologna Plan agreements have standardized many educational aspects, and the European educational model is a world reference. However, in this great diversity, there are characteristics to know and consolidate, references for social insertion and to create employment.

Education and teachers are central to these strategies, in formal and informal learning. The experience of international partners is diverse and enriching. Thus, each member shows illustrative cases of specific cultural actions, an innovative form of employment, where there is an intercultural relationship among teachers and adult students.

3.4. Activities of the AEI project

Each of the activities of the projects must be oriented to achieve the initial objectives. Training activities for teachers are central to this project, also involving people with the capacity to legislate in adult education. These activities will serve to learn about the innovative experiences that can be implemented in the contexts of each member. Each project action must be justified and detailed (Table 1).

Table 1. References for project design based on the AEI project.

Project Component	Description of the Component in the Case of AEI Project	Justification
CONTEXT of the call, program or initiative where is the project	Erasmus projects are part of a European Union program and the European Executive Agency for Education and Culture EACEA of the European Commission is ultimately responsible. These calls are oriented to the field of education for the personal and professional development of citizenship. The core objective focuses on the construction of a united Europe with cohesive countries, values, cultures, and languages. This Agency delegates management and evaluation responsibilities to the Erasmus agencies of each EU country.	The projects respond to government initiatives that have specific policies, and to respond to the medium and long-term needs of citizens.
COMPONENTS of the call, program, or subprograms	<p>Key actions of various types are proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type 1 for mobility of people, mainly focused on international trips and stays for the training of students and teachers. Type 2 for cooperation between organizations on a small and large scale. This is the context of AEI project. Type 3 to develop educational policies. 	Project calls usually offer different possibilities to channel and regroup different profiles of participants and different objectives to achieve.
GENERAL OBJECTIVES and common priorities to all projects	<p>The general target is to achieve a more inclusive and digital Europe. These are great challenges hardly quantifiable, which are specified in the specific objectives. In the case of the Erasmus program, some general objectives are set: carry out educational actions that contribute to quality employment, social cohesion, innovation, and European identity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overcoming obstacles for the inclusion and co-existence of diversity. Overcoming obstacles to digital transformation. 	<p>These challenges arise from big problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The goal of inclusion responds to the flows and migrations in Europe. This priority is justified by the need to respond to a diverse citizenry, of varied economic, geographic, and/or cultural origins. Society goes from being analog to digital, this transformation requires support in digital skills for the use of the Internet, mobile devices, electronic signatures, etc. On the other hand, Internet tasks are on the rise due to COVID.
Supplementary rules	<p>The projects have formal operating guidelines, for example, linked to the results, the materials produced will be freely available and accessible to all people; and linked to the mobility, the following is required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of the European health insurance card; Travel insurance; accidents and serious illnesses; Death and repatriation insurance; Civil and professional liability insurance. 	These formal operating guidelines are usually mandatory and anticipate future problems.
Keywords and basic descriptors	<p>The basic terms in this case are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education for employment, adult training, vocational training, Teacher training, innovation, contributions from companies, Digital skills, artificial intelligence, robotics, Big Data analysis, Social inclusion. 	It is necessary to synthesize the words that will be the core of each action. The keywords give an orientation on the specificity of the proposed project.
Specific Goals and Activities	Unlike the General Objectives, the Specific Ones Are Concrete and Quantifiable Achievements	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate mobility of people in the European educational context. 	The mobility of people between countries is one of the cornerstones that generate the phenomenon of immersion and attachment to other contexts. It has been found to be necessary and irreplaceable.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To achieve multilingual proficiency in at least two languages. 	The European linguistic variety, where there are 24 official languages, forces us to address this disparity with language training actions. Lack of language skills is one of the main barriers to participation in international projects.

Table 1. Cont.

Specific Goals and Activities	Unlike the General Objectives, the Specific Ones Are Concrete and Quantifiable Achievements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognition and validation of skills, training and qualifications obtained in other countries. 	<p>These projects focus on educational actions, with a simple international recognition of this training and qualification. Europe has developed, among others, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) valid at the university level, and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) to relate different countries' qualifications systems to a common reference framework.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissemination of project results from a planning, recipients, channels, types of results, calendars, and indicators. In this sense, the platform of results of the Erasmus+ projects is important https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/ (accessed on 12 March 2022). 	<p>Carry out communication and dissemination activities of the results derived from the projects necessary to guarantee their impact at different levels.</p>

In any case, the established institutional objectives are considered a priority. Thus, the EU promotes social inclusion and the construction of cohesive societies, through the keys: Aging, migration, employment, and sustainable development. In the case of education, the challenge for 2020 was having at least 15% of adults in permanent training. Currently, the headline target of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan has set the challenge that 60% of all adults should be participating in training every year by 2030 [22]. Thus, this project justifies its actions:

1. Adult education needs to show its possibilities in a society that requires continuous training. However, this training needs to be promoted by educational and public awareness policies;
2. More and more adults arriving from abroad need some specific learning. Therefore, the society needs a different adult education, with an international dimension;
3. Adult students need a different educational methodology from young people, i.e., different time management, different ways to motivate, a personalized analysis of each context, and teachers must know new methodologies and specific content for the development of transversal skills in the 21st century;
4. It is necessary to show/know the best models to follow in educational planning and adult education, in order to systematically implement these innovations in our centers and other institutions.

Indirectly we also obtain:

- Training in transversal skills for job placement.
- A relief from school failure.
- A strengthened space for European coexistence.

3.5. Developed Tasks in the AEI Project

The project focuses on teaching adults, that is, those over 25 years of age in continuous training, into regulated qualifications (such as a high school diploma for adults), or into a specific training for employment (such as a specialization course). This is an emerging training in developed countries, with more and more students, and with a high impact on job search and the consequent processes of social inclusion.

When designing projects, it is necessary to make a scheduled forecast of tasks, and people responsible in charge. Among the activities carried out in this project the following stand out

- Selection of innovative and effective models of adult learning.
- Joint training actions of 5 days of duration.
- Creation of guidelines for the institutionalization of innovations and systematization of reference models, this guarantees sustainability.
- Dissemination activities: Academic and informative publications, creation of educational material, organization of an international event (CyLaei2022 international

conference), creating an open website, and dissemination on networks, Facebook and Twitter.

4. Results

As a result of our initial goal of showing the parts of educational projects, we summarize the main components and the following basic structure for a project:

1. Study and analysis of the context, both of the official call and its general guidelines, as well as of the specific scenario where the project will be developed;
2. Specification of the objectives to be achieved; these goals will be specific, relevant, measurable, achievable, and time-based;
3. Design of strategies and procedures to achieve the objectives;
4. Design of the specific activities to be carried out, sequenced in the duration of the project;
5. Selection of the material and human resources, necessary and associated with each activity to be carried out;
6. Implementation of activities;
7. Collection and analysis of data obtained;
8. Dissemination and exploitation of findings;
9. Assessment of the results, and verification of achievement of the initially set objectives;
10. Final report.

In the organization of projects, it is necessary to quantify and evaluate the results, the impact, and the actions to spread this impact in society. Thus, in each project activity, we must collect a specific result; for example, the observation of a training activity in the Acelor-Mittal company has shown an effective innovative methodology in the training of workers, such as the use of gamification. In this sense, the analysis of the AEI project helped us to know and show the results of a specific case, this being another of the objectives of this article. We collect the observed methodologies and implement them in other contexts to achieve a more effective educational performance. This has an impact on the students who receive this methodology and can improve their academic performance. In the end, these students will have an improvement in their professional qualification and will have greater access to employment and social inclusion. All this information is measured and quantified, showing the number of students and how many have found work. In other words, we have worked to achieve the initial goal of solving the problem of unemployment and therefore of social exclusion.

In this case, the results can be immaterial, intangible things, or material, tangible products. Thus, the intangible outcomes are the following:

- Creation of friendly links, cooperative and professional links;
- Knowledge about innovative forms of employment, in each member country;
- Opening doors for the mobility of teachers and staff, and the construction of a cooperative and supportive EU aimed at a sustainable and inclusive future.

The tangible results are quantifiable through real products and figures reflected in certain indicators (absolute and relative) related to the number and percentage of adults inserted in society: community life, access to institutions and their benefits (justice, security, education, health, dependency and housing). To highlight, among others:

- Creation of new educational programs based on the innovative training models observed, and on the best effective practices of companies. These materials should be useful for adult education, and it must show new methodologies (objectives, contents, methods, resources, evaluation, and certification), and new ways of training in generic skills (self-learning, ICT, communication skills, skills to get a job, knowledge of the specific social and cultural context, rural environment, history, etc.);
- Number and type of people who participate in training activities and their possibilities (to join a social group, housing, community life, etc.);

- Organization of events to disseminate the findings, in this case, an international conference;
 - Publications in scientific and informative journals, social media, and social networks. The indicator is the number of hits or downloads;
 - Number of teachers who implement the methodologies described in the project.
 - Number of institutions implementing the activities of this project;
 - Amount of derived research, for example, doctoral activities on these topics or related papers/conferences;
 - Number of students involved in the activities of the project.
- The final impact is related to the initial objectives, that is:
- Creation of better trained adult teachers to solve the problems of unemployment and social inclusion, from a European perspective;
 - Development of a European feeling of solidarity among the participants;
 - Creation of international links for cooperative work;
 - Knowledge of each regional context and the links generated: with companies, educational administrations, and other institutions, as well as the cultural heritage;
 - Assumption of new employment strategies in related institutions;
 - Establishment of educational innovations and achievement of sustainability objectives.

5. Limitations

Every study has limitations and here we have tried to minimize its scope. As already indicated, there is a limitation of previous studies on the subject, and there is hardly any related scientific literature, so the case presented here may be a scientific reference of special interest. In this sense, we carried out an exhaustive bibliographic review in bibliographic bases of literature of high scientific impact, that is, publications within the Journal Citation Report database. This led us to lay the foundations to define the research problem as an opportunity to identify new paths of study, comparing this case with others in future analyses.

Methodologically, it is a qualitative work, where people are involved both in the observation process and in the data analysis. The information collected has been verified by each entity and by the observers who analyzed it. We are aware of the possibility of contaminating this information with subjective assessments, which is why a multi-observation triangulation process was chosen, comparing the results observed from various points of view, and always based on the analysis of university experts, this reduces possible biases in the data.

The sample size may be small, since the volume of cases is not significant in qualitative studies. Thus, we have a limited number of variables, and the samples refer only to five specific regions, that is, Asturias and Valladolid in Spain, Padua in Italy, Ciechanow in Poland, and Borga in Finland.

There is another limitation of a transversal nature, and the results refer to the situation of four European countries, which are a reference for generalizations in this continent, but which may not correspond identically to what happens in other global scenarios. This is a limitation related to external validity.

At the content level, this study has a greater possibility of being generalized and applied to the educational field. Extrapolation to other areas may limit its potential since international educational projects vary depending on the type of student analyzed in each case. However, the new methodologies presented are not focused only on students, but also on teachers.

On the other hand, the research has tried to analyze experiences outside the atypical situation of COVID-19, that is, without considering constructions linked to the isolation typical of those moments of pandemic. This does not prevent the study from compiling interesting and innovative results, such as the incorporation of online training strategies, or the creation of digital materials for self-learning. In any case, it could be interesting to

explore the effects caused and the strategies that are maintained in the medium and long term, after the pandemic.

Adult education does not have stability as it is a dynamic model with many different cases. However, the scientific features of the research and the study's findings provide valuable information about specific countries where it is being implemented. Although the results add an updated European view to the existing body of research, they do not align with more common approaches that generally identify a specific educational level or academic achievement. Even so, the research reaches the stated objectives, and in this sense, the results could be real and rigorous references.

6. Discussion and Conclusions

The projects are actions that provide an effective response to certain objectives of our society in a timely manner. For this reason, it is important to know the design of these initiatives, especially from the international dimension. The case studies and the action-research character are valid references for other similar proposals [23], and the descriptive works probably show examples with direct application in academic practice [24]. We concur with Polonsky, Waller [25], and Zina [26] highlighting the outcomes evaluation phase as a main part of the projects. We agree with Leyva, Infante, and Alonso [27] that the results of the projects are as important as knowing the development of the activities that lead to those results, and only some cases propose the description of the project itself as an innovative reference for education. In the case described, some actions to solve the problem of unemployment and social exclusion in Europe are shown and justified. The progress and future of society depends on education and not only on initial training time, but on training throughout life. All this supported the action of teachers who need to know the solutions in other countries [1]. This is much more necessary due to the phenomenon of globalization caused by digitalization and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Society and our students increasingly use new tools and educators are waiting for suggestions such as incorporating new methodologies. We agree with De Ocaña, García, and Colomo [28] in stating that training must be explored as a process of continuous updating of citizens, and that process can never be interrupted and adults need constant training to participate as active citizens at a global level. The case of this project describes the guidelines on how to design this type of action, responding to the specific needs of citizens, through practical and innovative training actions. These innovations are relevant, not only for teachers and students, but also for researchers who can find new guidelines for their work.

In any case, it is necessary to make the project findings reach the possible recipients; this generates an impact and a high social repercussion, and its objectives will be achieved. In this sense, it is a priority to disseminate the actions/competencies of teachers in institutions for adults. The pandemic situation prompted tele-training and many adults have been left out of this innovation process [29]. In this sense, these schools were always little known, and this project contributes to making these lifelong learning options visible, from basic skills levels such as reading, writing, numeracy, and ICT, to professional levels and beyond. Thus, for example, in a small region of Spain, Asturias, there are 11 schools for adults with more than 11,000 students. Vocational training centers for adults offer job-adapted training and professional updating for adults throughout Europe. In this line, universities with activities for the elderly are emerging, as is the case of the University of Oviedo and its PUMUO program, which should also be disseminated.

The pandemic drove the most skilled people with technology, especially young people [30], into a new ubiquitous learning model, which can sometimes collide with approaches of coherence and freedom [31]. This brought a new kind of educational materials that have had to supply face-to-face training [32] where adults can be left behind.

Among the findings of the AEI project, some contributions to the academic community can be highlighted. Among them, a relevant element to combat failure in adult education is personal motivation; thus, for example, the design of a particularly pleasant physical

environment in the classroom is attractive and crucial for students. The economic difference between northern and southern Europe is significant but does not determine academic results. Instead, new methodologies are important, but they must be adapted to adult people, to each person and his/her specific context, having very flexible educational designs, with eminently practical teaching activities. Training strategies without spatial or temporal borders are necessary, that is, ubiquitous learning lessons adjusted to the demand of each person. In any case, the connection between vocational training, adult training schools, companies, and administrations dedicated to employment seems to be very effective.

Having a job opens the door to inclusion in society, but it is not the only condition, which is why we agree with other research in pointing out the existence of other excluded groups. In addition to the unemployed, there are other groups at risk of social exclusion, such as the elderly, inhabitants of rural areas, people with disabilities, or immigrants, among others.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, methodology, investigation, formal analysis, writing—original draft preparation, J.F. and M.A.P.; writing—review and editing, E.L. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research was funded by Erasmus+ Program of the European Union, grant number 2019-1-ES01-KA204-063815.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable. It is a study on educational methodologies and resources not involving specific people.

Data Availability Statement: The data supporting reported results can be found on the website <https://www.unioviado.es/aei/>.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

1. Wenham, C.; Eccleston-Turner, M.; Voss, M. The futility of the pandemic treaty: Caught between globalism and statism. *Int. Aff.* **2022**, *98*, 837–852. [CrossRef]
2. Sapag, N.; Sapag, R. *Preparación y Evaluación de Proyectos*; McGraw-Hill Interamericana: Naucalpan de Juárez, Mexico, 1989.
3. Gómez, C.A. Los proyectos y sus dimensiones: Una aproximación conceptual. *Contexto* **2018**, *7*, 57–64. [CrossRef]
4. Michail, D.; Anastasiou, D.; Palaiologou, N.; Avlogiaris, G. Social Climate and Psychological Response in the First Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic in a Greek Academic Community. *Sustainability* **2022**, *14*, 1576. [CrossRef]
5. Baca, D. *Evaluación de Proyectos*; Mc Graw Hill: New York, NY, USA, 2010.
6. Pinto, J. *Gerencia de Proyectos*; Pearson: Bogotá, Colombia, 2015.
7. Sineace. *Guía para la Realización de Evaluaciones Intermedias, Programas o Proyectos Guía G-DEP-001*; Sistema Nacional de Evaluación, Acreditación y Certificación de la Calidad Educativa; Sienace: Lima, Peru, 2020. Available online: <http://repositorio.sineace.gob.pe/repositorio/handle/sineace/6432> (accessed on 1 July 2022).
8. Ojeda, J.D.; Greca, I.; Meneses, J. Realización de proyectos empíricos puestos en práctica en la formación inicial de maestros en la enseñanza de las ciencias. *Rev. Grupo Investig. HUM-974* **2019**, *3*, 57–59.
9. Cerda, H. *Cómo Elaborar Proyectos: Diseños, Ejecución y Evaluación de Proyectos Sociales y Educativos*; Cooperativa Editorial Magisterio: Bogotá, Colombia, 2001.
10. Hernández, J.S.; Tobón, S.; Ortega, M.F.; Ramírez, A.M. Evaluación socioformativa en procesos de formación en línea mediante proyectos formativos. *Educar* **2018**, *54*, 147–163. [CrossRef]
11. World Health Organization. Proyecto de Plan de Acción Mundial Sobre la Respuesta de Salud Pública a la Demencia. Consejo Ejecutivo EB140/28. 26 September 2018. Available online: https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/273319/B140_28-sp.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (accessed on 12 June 2022).
12. Anantamula, V.S.; Thomas, M. Global Projects: How to Manage Them Successfully? In Proceedings of the PMI Research Conference: Defining the Future of Project Management, Warsaw, Poland, 16 July 2008; Project Management Institute: Newtown Square, PA, USA, 2008.
13. Council of Europe. *Call for Proposals 2019—EAC/A03/2018 Programa Erasmus+ (2018/C 384/04)*; C3894/4; Official Journal of the European Union: Strasbourg, France, 2018.
14. SEPIE. 2019 Call. Convocatoria Easmus+. 2019. Available online: http://sepie.es/doc/convocatoria/2022/2022-erasmusplus-programme-guide_en.pdf (accessed on 2 June 2022).
15. Yin, R.K. *Case Study Research and Applications*; SAGE Publications: New York, NY, USA, 2018.
16. Remenyi, D. *Case Study Research*; Academic Publishing International: South Oxfordshire, UK, 2012.

17. Gerring, J. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices (Strategies for Social Inquiry)*; Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK, 2017.
18. Colmenares, E.; Mercedes, A.; Piñero, M. La investigación acción. Una herramienta metodológica heurística para la comprensión y transformación de realidades y prácticas socio-educativas. *Laurus* **2008**, *14*, 96–114. Available online: <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=76111892006> (accessed on 1 June 2022).
19. Andranovich, G. *Developing Community Participation and Consensus: The Delphi Technique*; Community Ventures: A Western Regional Extension Publication, Pullman, USDA: Washington, DC, USA, 1995.
20. Bass, B.M. *Organizational Decision Making*; Irwin: Homewood, IL, USA, 1983.
21. Puig-Calvo, P.; González-García, J. La Formación por Alternancia-Dual. Interacciones Empresa y Centro de Formación: Acompañamiento y Experiencia. In Proceedings of the 3r Congrés d’Economia i Empresa de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain, 17 May 2018; Available online: https://www.scipedia.com/public/PERE_GARCIA_2018 (accessed on 23 June 2022).
22. European Commission. The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan. 2021. Available online: <https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/adult-learning/adult-learning-initiatives> (accessed on 19 August 2022).
23. Townsend, A. Action Research. In *Educational Research and Inquiry*; Qualitative and quantitative approaches; Hartas, D., Ed.; Bloomsbury Publishing: London, UK, 2010.
24. Gibson, W. Qualitative research analysis in Education. In *Educational Research and Inquiry*; Qualitative and quantitative approaches; Hartas, D., Ed.; Bloomsbury Publishing: London, UK, 2010.
25. Polonsky, M.J.; Waller, D.S. *Designing and Managing a Research Project: A business Student’s Guide*, 4th ed.; Sage Publications: New York, NY, USA, 2018.
26. Zina, O. *The Essential Guide to Doing Your Research Project*, 3rd ed.; Sage Publications: New York, NY, USA, 2021.
27. Leyva, P.; Infante, A.; Alonso, L. Los proyectos escolares: Alternativa para desarrollar la formación laboral. *Opuntia Brava* **2019**, *11*, 1–13. Available online: <http://200.14.53.83/index.php/opuntiabrava/article/view/736> (accessed on 3 February 2022).
28. De Ocaña, J.M.; García, E.A.; Colomo, E. Educación de adultos e inclusión social. Experiencias y opiniones de un grupo de estudiantes. *Rev. Int. Educ. Justicia Soc.* **2018**, *7*, 95–112. [[CrossRef](#)]
29. Mozina, T.; Klemencic, S.; Radovan, M. Study on adult education during COVID-19—Experiences for the way forward. *Sodob. Pedagog. J. Contemp. Educ. Stud.* **2021**, *72*, 70–88.
30. Lockee, B.B.; Clark-Stallkamp, R. Pressure on the system: Increasing flexible learning through distance education. *Distance Educ.* **2022**, *43*, 342–348. [[CrossRef](#)]
31. Houlden, S.; Veletsianos, G. The problem with flexible learning: Neoliberalism, freedom, and learner subjectivities. *Learn. Media Technol.* **2021**, *46*, 144–155. [[CrossRef](#)]
32. Ramya, D.; Poongodi, O.T. A Study on the usage of Information Communication Technology tools in the Teaching—Learning Process of Engineering Education. *J. Appl. Sci. Eng.* **2022**, *25*, 321–326. [[CrossRef](#)]