

Integrating Disadvantaged Ethnicities through Adult Learning

The THEMIS-IDEAL Handbook for Teachers

November 2014 (second and revised edition)



Lifelong Learning Programme



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IDEAL is the international version of *Themis*

www.themis-participatie.nl (in Dutch) / www.ideal-participation.eu (in English)

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Introduction

IDEAL (Integrating Disadvantaged Ethnicities through Adult Learning) has been a multilateral *Grundtvig* project under EU's *Lifelong Learning Programme* (LLP). IDEAL was partly funded by the EACEA (*Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency*) and was launched on October 1st, 2011. The project has had a lifetime of two years.

This *THEMIS-DEAL Handbook for Teachers* describes in detail the relevance, background and methodology of IDEAL, the implementation modalities, characteristics of the target group, and opportunities and limitations of the approach. It provides for extensive instructions and recommendations on implementing IDEAL in adult education for the target group in Europe, and to make it fit to local conditions and circumstances. It further provides for useful examples of classroom situations. Also the necessary competences and attitudes of IDEAL teachers are outlined. Instruments for measuring progress are included as well: on language acquisition and on progress on levels of participation, for baseline and evaluation purposes. Finally it includes advices on additional and follow up activities. This THEMIS-IDEAL Handbook is available for free on the website: www.ideal-participation.eu.

Four partners have been involved in IDEAL: *Themis* in cooperation with *Stichting Mooi* in The Hague, the Netherlands, *Settlementet* in Copenhagen, Denmark, and *Hyllie Park Folk High School* in Malmö, Sweden. All organisations are specialised in working with disadvantaged, uneducated and marginalised participants and have experienced how traditional methods of facilitating fall short, when applied to the target group. In each country pilot groups were established, consisting of 10-15 participants (women only). In Denmark they chose to have Turkish, Arabic and Urdu speaking participants and three mother tongue facilitators in one group. In the Netherlands they had Berber/Arabic speaking participants and a facilitator who, because of her Moroccan background, is very well acquainted with the languages and cultures (Berber, Arabic and Dutch), and in Sweden they had Arabic speaking participants and a mother tongue facilitator.

The already existing Dutch Themis modules were taken as the starting point. This method builds on mother tongue based and participatory facilitation by well-educated similar background role models, for marginalised non-western female immigrants. The Themis modules were first translated into English. The Danish and Swedish partners translated the modules further in their respective languages. Together the IDEAL-partners developed this Themis-IDEAL Handbook for Teachers.

The materials of Themis - IDEAL

1. Five modules, including extensive instructions (lesson plans):
 - Getting acquainted
 - Gossip
 - Health
 - Fending for yourself
 - Child Upbringing
2. Objectives for each module
3. Learner handouts
4. Tests for Modules 3, 4 and 5
5. Pictogram's and the Themis-IDEAL Tree
6. Handbook Themis - IDEAL

In Dutch more modules are available, see www.themis-participatie.nl

Objectives of IDEAL

IDEAL aims at the empowerment and participation of disadvantaged, uneducated, non-western immigrant women. Large numbers of immigrants from non-western countries do not fully participate in the EU-countries of their arrival, especially uneducated women. Many among them suffer from low self-esteem and low self-confidence, and from various psychosomatic illnesses, which on their turn hinder their full participation in society and as such their citizenship. Working with these participants, the teacher (facilitator) faces methodological challenges. With no experience with formal learning, no literacy as a method of memorising, but with an extensive use of oral and visual memorisation processes instead, our participants have different pedagogical needs as compared to a student with a well-developed educational background. The IDEAL method will help them to acquire the necessary knowledge, attitudes and competences for becoming an empowered active citizen of EU-member states.

The method built upon is the participatory psycho-social Themis approach. This method is described further below. All IDEAL partners have already successfully implemented the IDEAL method and experienced its relevance.

Main outcomes of the IDEAL project are the results of the three pilots by the IDEAL partners, in Copenhagen, The Hague and Malmö respectively (see Evaluation and Lessons Learned, page 7 – 11 hereafter), and this Handbook for Teachers, to be implemented in nonformal adult education of the target group in Europe.

The additional teaching material provides tools for teaching, on the basis of the Themis method. Each chapter includes a brief description of the purpose of the different lessons and tasks, and offers methodological instructions for the facilitators, and a description of risk factors. It is developed in English, Danish, Dutch and Swedish. The teaching material is accessible on the IDEAL homepage, but under certain restrictions for guaranteeing a proper implementation via imperative trainings and for avoiding misuse of copyrights¹: www.ideal-participation.eu.

¹ The copyrights of these materials (five modules, with tests and teaching aids), in each of the languages, belong to Themis / Rogier van 't Rood.

Evaluation Outcomes

Some implementation modalities at precondition level differed, comparing the pilots in Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden, due to other circumstances in these respective partner-countries. The nature of this pilot project allowed for these differences. It was interesting to observe as to whether these differing implementation modalities had any effect on the respective outcomes. The schedule below provides for a concise overview of the respective implementation modalities at completion:

Modalities	Denmark	Netherlands	Sweden
Composition of the participants group at completion	Participants from different countries, three different mother tongues	Berber / Moroccan participants, all from Morocco	Arabic participants, from different countries
Mother tongues (L1)	Arabic, Urdu, Turkish	Berber (and some Arabic)	Arabic
Target languages (L2)	Danish	Dutch	Swedish
Cultural background of facilitator(s) / assistants	Arabic, Pakistani, Danish respectively	Berber Moroccan born, raised in NL	Iraqi (Arabic), recently migrated to SE
No. of facilitators / assistants per group	3 facilitators, one for each language	1 facilitator, with 2 volunteer assistants	1 facilitator
Education background of facilitator(s)	Higher education	Higher education	Higher education
No. of participants (start / end)	14 / 11	13 / 10	12 / 7
Gender of participants / facilitation	female / female	female / female	female / female
Recruitment of	compulsory participation	voluntary participation	compulsory and voluntary

participants			participation
Supervision frequency	weekly	three-weekly	weekly
Contact hours (in class)	approx. 250	approx. 350	approx. 350
Extracurricular activities	one activity	five activities	no activities
Stand alone or embedded in larger organisation	stand alone, follow up will be provided	embedded, follow up will be provided	embedded, follow up will be provided
Frequency of lessons on average	3 p/w	3 p/w	3 p/w

Language acquisition differs from country to country, with the most significant achievements in the Netherlands. It should be noted however, that in Denmark the actual implementation time has been shorter, due to the collapse of the first group. In Denmark the implementation modalities differed significantly from those in the Netherlands and Sweden, with the Danish group using three different mother tongues in their pilot group. Also the backgrounds of their facilitators, as compared to their participants, differed partially.

Outcomes suggest that significant progress has also been achieved on enhancing the self-confidence and self-esteem of the participants, as well as on their communication skills. These achievements are reported by both the participants themselves and by their facilitators. These are the first but imperative steps to taking control over their own lives and resources (= empowerment), which is reflected in progress on the participation ladder. On this ladder improvements are reported (most significantly in the Netherlands), as well as on language acquisition (the latter of course being a prerequisite for effective participation). Nevertheless, outcomes differ from country to country, most probably due to the differing implementation modalities and conditions (see above).

Regular supervision meetings of IDEAL-staff with the facilitator(s) appear to be very necessary and are highly appreciated by all involved as being indispensable and essential for the efficient and effective implementation of the lessons, and not the least for maintaining and enhancing the quality of outcomes.

Gender sensitivity & equality, empowerment

Gender sensitivity and striving towards gender equity is at the backbone of IDEAL.

Especially Module 4 has raised awareness among the participants on their right to strive for their own needs and perspectives. At the start they showed a large lack of understanding of gender equality, lack of skills as how to adjust traditional ways of child upbringing to gender balanced societies. Also a lack of understanding of their roles, as of how to bring their resources to bear in society was imminent. Through role plays tools for effective communication have been trained. These role plays were to a large extent inspired by approaches developed in the seventies of last century, for female emancipation purposes. The effects have been tremendous, resulting in significant increases on self-confidence and self-esteem by the participants. They report more peace at home and more tranquillity / less psycho-somatic complaints, due to improved communication skills. Also the child upbringing module enhances equality among boys and girls (Module 5).

Health awareness (preventive and curative)

Module 3 was developed and implemented to make the participants aware about the functioning of their body, and about the origins of physical complaints. Also communicating effectively with the doctor was an important element. This module was highly appreciated and well understood by the participants. Language came almost automatically with the handling of body parts and organs, and the complaints. And with the role plays on communicating effectively with the doctor.

Child upbringing

Foremost in the Netherlands Module 5 on child upbringing has brought forward significant effects:

- Most participants (except for one) are better organised at home (rhythm cards exercises), and because of introducing a daily rhythm they experience that they are less tired, having more time for their children and themselves
- Physical punishments decrease
- The attitude of negative reinforcement (nagging, shouting, etc.) is changing towards positive affirmation (giving compliments, listening to the child, playing with the child), with a reported better atmosphere at home
- The development phases of the child (puberty!) are better understood, allowing mothers to imagine themselves better into the situation of the child.
- Children and husbands have noticed a change in the mothers, that since they are in better psychosocial health they are more present and happy at home and participating in the activities of the family and social life with others.

- Generally a better understanding among participants about the importance of positive affirmation (instead of negative reinforcement).

On child upbringing the participants have become aware about the importance of a positive attitude towards their children: less complaining, nagging and negative reinforcement. And more positive affirmation instead: they understand that it is important to compliment the child and to listen to him / her:

- By structuring their household better (daily rhythm cards exercises), they have obtained ample time to pay better attention to the children. They also understand now the importance of paying attention, within the context of their parental responsibilities: these are not just limited to practical daily care, but include social elements as well. 7 out of 10 participants report a more efficient use of their time.
- Better understanding of the mental development of the child (puberty!), resulting into less physical punishments and threatening. They also shout less, and have tempered their voices. Previously a number of mothers punished their children by holding the child's finger in a flame. They have abandoned this practice.
- The participants describe the relief of sharing experiences and how they feel now that they are not alone with their thoughts and daily life's joys and difficulties with their children. They have been encouraged and have helped each other with suggestions and support.

Participation

- In The Hague 8 out of 10 the participants now consult the doctor for more simple issues, without an interpreter. Before they made use of an interpreter (husband, daughter), except for one, while 9 out of 10 participants now report more effective contacts with the school of their children. Before they made use of an interpreter (husband, daughter, sister in law), except for two. With 10 out of 10 participants reporting effective contacts with Dutch people. Previously contacts were limited to Moroccan people only, except for one who already maintained contacts with one Dutch woman: participation level 1 (see page 12).
- Also in the Netherlands 6 out of 10 participants express their wish and motivation to continue their education in a more formal manner (MBO 1 level – the lowest level of advanced formal education in the Netherlands, enabling to acquire the least basic competences for paid labour): coming close to participation level 3 (see page 14/15).

See appendix 3 for the full evaluation of Themis - IDEAL in the Netherlands.

Lessons learned

1. It is very well possible that the level of homogeneity of the group of participants (mother tongue, cultural background, women only) correlates positively with the outcomes. The same applies to the cultural background of the facilitators.
2. There could be a positive correlation as well between the recruitment of the participants (attending classes on a voluntary basis) and the outcomes.
3. The intensity of IDEAL asks for additional support to the facilitator: same background volunteers assisting her could be an advantage. Supervision meetings on a regular basis appear to be imperative, effective and supportive.
4. Safety appears to be a crucial aspect of the IDEAL approach. Therefore it is imperative to make use of a mother tongue based approach, and of female facilitation being fully acquainted with the mother tongue and the social / cultural background of the participants. The aspect of guaranteeing safety also underlines the importance of supervision meetings, in which safety issues that could emerge will be examined. This would also allow the facilitator to act as an effective role model, if she has a similar cultural background. Her education background should be equal to higher education standards, because of the analysing capacity needed when implementing the lessons. She should also have a cheerful attitude and not be suffering from mental hindrances, and obviously be very moderate and even reserved in expressing her personal opinions (also see page 25-29 for further elaborations on the facilitators' qualities).
5. It has been realised by all partners involved that regular supervision meetings of IDEAL-staff with the teachers / facilitator(s) appear to be indispensable and essential for the efficient and effective implementation of the lessons. These supervisions are thus imperative for maintaining and enhancing the quality of the outcomes. Further implementation of IDEAL elsewhere, should therefore include supervision trainings (pre-service and ongoing e-mail coaching). For this reason, and also for avoiding copyrights misuse, it is necessary to restrict the dissemination of the modules: these can be made available only under certain conditions which safeguard the quality and the copyrights. This Handbook however, is made available on open source.

6. General time recommendation for the IDEAL modules 1-5 is approximately three hours, three days a week during one year, thus approximately 300 / 350 contact hours in total.
7. Offering literacy lessons for illiterates in extra meetings, starting during Module 4, when empowerment is making its take-off and participants most probably raise their need for becoming literate, could further enhance the outcomes.
8. Extra-curricular and follow up activities in a general participatory mode could further enhance the outcomes and the perspectives on active participation as well.

The Target Group

Characteristics

The target group for IDEAL is immigrant women/refugees from non-western countries with one or several of the following characteristics:

1. None or only a few years of primary education (illiteracy, functional illiteracy)
2. Very limited knowledge and understanding of the western society
3. None or limited command of the language of their host country
4. An experience of their own knowledge and skills not being appreciated in the host country
5. Low self-esteem and self confidence
6. Limited communication skills
7. Suffering from physical, mental, or psychosomatic illness², often resulting in a predominant “illness identity” overshadowing other possible self-perceptions
8. Lack of understanding of gender equality, lack of skills as how to adjust traditional ways of child upbringing to gender balanced societies
9. Lack of understanding of their roles, as of how to bring their resources to bear in society
10. Very often social problems in the family
11. Experiences of stagnation and failure, the conviction that a transformation of one's life is impossible.

Many have previously participated in study programs without mentionable results, reinforcing the experience of failure and fossilisation.

One or several of these characteristics impede full participation and active citizenship in society. Many also lack the understanding and skills for child upbringing in democratic gender balanced societies, sometimes resulting in problems with immigrant youth. The target group's marginalised position causes frictions in society and could even disturb overall social cohesion. Furthermore, European societies miss out on the resources and competences owned by this group of citizens. There is a serious sense of urgency in Europe regarding the active citizenship of some groups of non-western immigrants. In all our countries there have been methodological struggles as how to reach the described target group effectively. Traditional methods and pressure by financial means has

² Examples of illness might be: (physical, psychosomatic) back pain, muscle tensions, migraine, diabetes 2, overweight, high cholesterol, arthritis; (mental) anxiety, depression, and phobia.

proven to be without significant effect. By increasing the participation of disadvantaged immigrant women, IDEAL contributes to a solution. IDEAL provides an effective alternative learning approach for the target group and we envisage a larger participation and improved active citizenship of the participants because of improved self-esteem, self-confidence, understanding of the dominant culture in the host country, language competences, and communication- and participation skills.

IDEAL aims at helping participants to:

- Increase their command of the target language
- Increase effective communication skills
- Raise awareness about own needs and opportunities
- Challenge them to consider other views and visions
- Provide effective strategies to reach one's goals
- Provoke a change in the participants' self perception ("self control" replacing "illness identity")
- Add to increased self esteem and self confidence
- Create better conditions for active participation in society.

Participation levels

The following outcomes with regards to sustainable active citizenship/participation have been envisaged, on the basis of previous Themis experiences:

Participation level 1:

- The competence to visit schools and to talk about the performance of their children (either a child or someone else)
- The competence to visit doctors without the assistance of a child or a family member (but might probably still need the assistance of a professional interpreter when more complex issues are discussed)
- The competence to make use of public transport without any assistance, and / or to undertake leisure activities
- The competence to visit public facilities (like libraries, sports facilities, leisure facilities, cultural facilities like for instance museums, municipal authorities, insurance companies, etc.) without any assistance
- The competence to travel without any assistance to other shopping areas than those in their own vicinity.

Participation level 2:

- The competence to undertake voluntary activities, like the care for sick / disabled family, neighbours, or friends; or

- The competence to undertake voluntary activities in the own neighbourhood, like support to street festivals, or taking care for collective facilities; or
- The competence to undertake internships or voluntary activities in school, health centres, sports clubs, libraries, shops, nursing homes, cultural centres, etc.

Participation level 3:

- The competence to work in an undertaking of a family member, or
- The competence to work for a salary in a (part-time) job, or
- The competence to start an undertaking.

Given the background of many participants and the previous experiences, it is a realistic assumption that most progress is achieved on various aspects at Participation level 1, with a few scoring at Participation level 2. Level 3 is assumed to be still too far away for most participants, but some might quite well be able to attend follow up courses enabling them to reach to the 3rd level.

Another major outcome has been the enhancement of communication skills empowering the participants, and of democratic and gender balanced child upbringing within the context of positive affirmation.

How to use the material

A limited educational background is a common feature in the target group of the project. However, “poor schooling” is a broad characteristic covering divergent subgroups of participants.

A participant with a few years of formal education in her home country and a person that has never learnt to read or write in any alphabet will have different approaches and needs in an educational setting in the host country. A person with a few years of education has gained experience with formal schooling, has acquired an understanding of the symbolic function of writing, understands basic strategies of encoding and decoding and might also have developed functional learning strategies.

Illiterates have no experience with formal education whatsoever. They have, however, alternative strategies and channels of memorisations, mostly relying on visual and auditory input. Imitating a role model, listening to instructions, memorising lists of objects or things-to-do etcetera might be the preferred way of acquiring new knowledge. Being able to read and write is not a prerequisite for being able to acquire and remember new knowledge.

However, experience shows that for a facilitator trained and educated in a formal Western educational setting it may be difficult to imagine that a true illiterate will not even *miss* literacy as a tool of memorisation. Imagine how you used to acquire your mother tongue and a broad variety of skills as a child. It probably never even occurred to you that you would need the support of written notes in order to learn. Although adults and children do acquire languages in different manner, writing is never a prerequisite. As a matter of fact, writing is a rather new invention compared to the long history of mankind full of innovation and progress.

This does not mean that literacy is not valuable. Coping with life in a modern western society is difficult without any reading or writing skills, so whenever possible it is advisable to gain at least a basic understanding of the Latin alphabet. Education is power, but education does not necessarily have to build upon full literacy. In fact, the IDEAL project aims at educating a marginalised target group without the requirement of full literacy.

IDEAL makes use of the mother tongue (L1) of the participants as the language of instruction, gradually moving towards the target language (L2) of their host country.

Time - combined with additional activities

A target group whose starting point is lower than other comparable groups will probably need more time in order to accomplish the same goals. In this case it is advisable to extend the lesson plans and spend more time on each lesson. Make sure to give the participants time to “digest” the input and to grasp the challenge. Never push the participants or rush them through the curriculum. Bear in mind that conservatism has a function - it grants safety and stability to persons who feel alienated in their (host) society and have not yet found their own position in it. Also see next chapter on participatory education.

Pushing the participants, you run the risk of achieving the opposite of the desired effect: when confronted with a threat to the familiar perception of the world without yet having been able to identify a new, more appealing one, clinging to the existing identity and mind frame will be the most probable reaction. Besides, getting used to new ideas takes time. Give people the time to accept new thoughts and ideas.

Use of the target language (L2)

Imagine the volume button on a CD player where you can turn up and down the volume gradually. Use L2 the same way. But bear in mind that focusing on decoding a foreign language and focusing on the content of the message is a double challenge that should rather be avoided when the group's L2 command is limited.

Whenever embarking on a new exercise, please start with assessing the main purpose of the activity (L1 is the mother tongue, L2 the language of the host country):

1. Is it awareness rising? → L1
2. Are you giving information where details are important (communication of knowledge)? → L1
3. Do you want to explain the meaning of L2 words or the structure of L2 grammar? → L1
4. Do you want to train L2 practically and give the participants the opportunity to practice? → L2

The more the participants understand, the more you can increase the amount of L2 in the three last issues. Awareness raising exercises, however, should always be done in L1 unless the linguistic proficiency of L2 is close to a native speaker's (which very seldom is the case).

Use of written material / literacy

Basic writing and reading skills are useful. However, in the case of some participants psycho-social barriers block for the acquisition of language when the focus is too much

on literacy. Some students have previously been enrolled in language courses without any success - another experience of defeat in a long line of others. Being illiterate without any formal schooling, traumatised or suffering from anxiety disorders, PTSD³ or depression (resulting in concentration problems and learning difficulties) and perhaps advanced in years, the task of acquiring literacy might be too big to overcome. Do not underestimate the mental block that some participants experience when confronted with written material - due to prior failures, the experience of "not being able to learn" and low self-esteem and self-confidence in general.

Sometimes, written material also turns the focus of the group to the letters at the expense of the actual message of the exercise.

We thus preferred working with pictograms, photographs and symbols as much as possible. Imagine the use of written material as a scale you can slide back and forth on (or imagine the volume button of a CD player). If the group is capable of working with written material, use it. If you assess that too much energy is spent in the process of encoding and decoding, avoid it. In this case, produce additional picture material for the lessons - take pictures yourself, download legal photographs from the Internet, draw symbols and do the exercises orally as much as you can. But make sure that the pictures selected relate to the mind frame of the participants; thus no blond blue eyed women, if not functional for the issue at stake.

Given the description of the target group and the challenges this group usually struggles with, the main goal of the IDEAL project is a psycho-social development for active participation and empowerment, the acquisition of basic linguistic tools (L2) as well as knowledge about the host society. The written L2 command (literacy) must be considered secondary to these goals.

³ PTSD: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

The role of supervision

Since the general approach of IDEAL might quite well differ from existing experiences among the facilitators (teachers), it is of crucial importance that they become well acquainted with the participatory approach and the principles of mother tongue teaching, and that they are going to feel at ease in implementing these integrated methods. Therefore new facilitators should be supervised on this approach.

For that purpose it is strongly advised to organise regular supervision meetings, at which the implementation modalities are discussed and in which experiences and challenges are shared. On the basis of the facilitators' needs these meetings could be organised on a weekly basis, but a less intense schedule like once per three weeks appears to be appropriate as well. If more facilitators are involved, collegial intervension could be considered. In the other case (one facilitator only) regular supervisions with an experienced other staff could provide for the best support. Weekly evaluations forms are to be the starting point of each meeting. These forms are part of the method. Critical and professional self-reflection and being accountable are fundamental aspects in these meetings. Further it is of essential importance to be enabled to discuss successes and hindrances in a very safe and conducive setting, allowing expressing uncertainties openly, without any negative consequences. Such supervision meetings could take approximately two hours.

The Empowerment Triangle (see Module 4) could be a useful instrument for self-evaluation during intervension / supervision, by raising the following questions: what did I do in class (activities), what has been the purpose of what I did (objective), how did I implement the lesson and how do I know whether I have been successful (approach, assessment)? Follow up questions: What went well - and where did I face challenges? How come - what made the difference?

The IDEAL methodology

The IDEAL project is built on the Dutch method of *Themis – for powerful participation*⁴, that is developed and successfully implemented and evaluated in the Netherlands from 2002 onwards, on the wave of urgent and heated public debates on integrating non-western immigrants. Many politicians concluded that their integration had been a failure. They demanded for tougher approaches.

Themis took an opposite position, raising questions about the actual practice of existing integration courses: do these fit to the needs and opportunities of the participants? Based on extensive experiences in Third World countries, studying effective learning approaches, it was decided to develop an alternative approach, with a special focus on disadvantaged immigrant women, and using effective and validated experiences from those Third World countries, as well as emancipation experiences used in The Netherlands in the seventies. With the help of the municipality of Leiden a pilot started, implementing the so called participatory psycho-social methodology of Paulo Freire, adapted to Dutch conditions and circumstances, and including various successful non-formal adult education approaches implemented in the South (like REFLECT by Action Aid, Training for Transformation by Ann Hope & Sally Timmel, GRAAP from Burkina Faso) and emancipation approaches developed in the seventies (Goldstein method, for instance).

Participatory education

The basic philosophy of Themis-IDEAL, as seen from a methodological perspective, is fuelled by Paulo Freire. Paulo Freire (Recife, Brazil: 1921 – São Paulo, Brazil: 1997) is the inventor of participatory approaches in adult education. He said it outspokenly: "*(...) education is cultural action for freedom and therefore an act of knowing and not of memorisation. This act can never be accounted for in its complete totality by a mechanistic theory, for such a theory does not perceive education in general and adult literacy in particular as an act of knowing*". What is required is "knowing": an insight into the causes of the status quo, linked with an insight into one's own wishes and needs. Knowing that the causes are cultural, because they are determined by people and that culture is therefore changeable. This insight can lead to the transformation of one's own environment, of the existing cultural context. Change for the benefit of one's own

⁴ The Themis method is evaluated and recognised by *Movisie* as an effective intervention. Movisie is the Netherlands centre for social development. Its mission is to promote the participation and independence of citizens. Module 5 (on child upbringing) is recognised by the scientific committee of the *Netherlands Youth Institute* (NJI), as being scientifically valid.

expression, for the benefit of liberation from subordination and the apparent adjustment connected to it. The knowing (wo-) man has become aware of his / her influence.

Freire: "*Alienated man is a nostalgic man, never truly committed to his world. To appear to be rather than to be is one of his alienated wishes*". Meaning that the alienated man or woman seemingly adjusts, but is not truly an intrinsic partner in his own environment and is therefore not in a position to change that environment, i.e. to transform. What is required in knowing and understanding, an insight into the causes of the status quo, linked with an insight into one's own wishes and needs: knowing and understanding that the causes are cultural, because they are determined by people and that culture is therefore changeable. This insight can lead to the transformation of one's own environment, of the existing cultural context. Change for the benefit of one's own expression, for the benefit of liberation from subordination and the apparent adjustment connected to it. The knowing man or woman has become aware of his influence and possibilities, and the need for transformation in order to create room for this.

In Freire's view, education is "*cultural action for freedom*". This places an important task upon the shoulders of those who are initially responsible for learning processes: the teachers / facilitators. This is a task which also requires insight into their motivation, in addition to insight into how to present this type of education. This is quite demanding. The latter point, however, has received much attention from educationalists such as Freire. In any case, one cannot speak of good education in Freirian terms, if and when merely mechanical transfer of knowledge is taking place ("memorisation", "a mechanistic theory"; see above). Knowledge learned by heart is necessary, but should not be left at that.

In many non-western countries, but increasingly also in metropolitan areas of Northern industrialised countries, an ever increasing group of powerless and marginalised people is being formed. They have no access to a better future. Unacknowledged feelings of inferiority bring them to translate their feelings of powerlessness and anger into forms of violence. This could colour the future of many more illiterate or barely educated people, as long as no sustainable measures are taken with and for them, offering a way out of this dead-end street. Following Freire here, illiterates and barely educated people are considered people who do not understand the power of the word. They often cannot read or write, but even if they could (to some extent), they would not be sufficiently capable of using that skill in a way that would be recognised by the centre. Thus, they would not have the positive self-esteem and self-confidence they need to organise themselves in order to improve their position. Purpose should be the ability to

truly choose, to actually live, to be able to meet the surrounding world with insight and self-confidence.

Reading is a tool with which you can learn from others, learn about developments in society. Writing is a tool with which you can react, to let others know that you exists with your own priorities and perspectives. Acquiring these tools, however, does not teach you how you can react adequately - adequately, in terms of your own existence and assertiveness. In order to be able to anticipate adequately, it is necessary that you know and understand your own position and possibilities in relation to your environment. An environment has various layers: domestic and outside, with different levels and possibilities of influence. That is why other tools, besides reading and writing, are essential in order to escape from the marginal position of an illiterate: tools that assist in building up self-confidence through insight into the power of the word and tools that contribute to building up a reasonable existence in an ever changing environment. Collectively, these tools provide one with the opportunity to acquire basic skills, in order to become a functional part of the surrounding world. Learning within participatory education is a dynamic process; a process which does not stand on its own, but rather is part of the surrounding world and the dynamism that goes with it, from the word go. Participatory education can provide the participant with the opportunity to acquire skills that will make him or her part of society, a participant who is capable of choosing and who can function in a dynamic environment.⁵

The starting point of the IDEAL modules and successive lessons is the existing mental framework of the participants. This includes the identification of their needs and possibilities, and the development of safe tools for transformation to create room for these. In order to fit to the mental framework of the participants, and to their needs and possibilities, IDEAL has used comprehensive modules on the basis of existing experiences in participatory (Freirian) education: the already existing Themis method.

Participatory education provides people with a toolbox for constructing one's own personal education map (ownership!): a box full of comprehensive tools necessary for acquiring new skills; skills to develop strategies and power in order to escape from the periphery, providing people with the opportunity to acquire 'empowerment'. The tool box offers people the opportunity to liberate themselves from their often deteriorated living conditions (at least socially) and a prospect of acquiring the role of an active participant in his or her own economic, social, political and cultural environment, instead of being a spectator. Through a process of well guided and safe awareness rising, the

⁵ Rood, Rogier van 't: "Empowerment through basic education, a foundation for development", Cesø/Nuffic, The Hague: 1997 (published with support from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs). This text refers to the ideas of Paulo Freire as described in his publication "Cultural action for Freedom" (1974).

mental framework is challenged and stretched by adding small bits of information, for opening new horizons and thus options for the participants for transforming their environment.

Gender sensitivity and striving towards gender equity is also at the backbone of IDEAL. At the start participants show a large lack of understanding of gender equality and a lack of skills as how to adjust traditional ways of child upbringing to gender balanced societies. Also a lack of understanding of their roles, as of how to bring their resources to bear in society is imminent. Through role plays tools for effective communication are trained. These role plays are to a large extent inspired by approaches developed in the seventies of last century, for female emancipation purposes, resulting in significant increases on self-confidence and self-esteem by the participants. Ideally they will report more peace at home and more tranquillity/less psycho-somatic complaints, due to improved communication skills.

Basic characteristics of the Themis-IDEAL participatory approach are the following:

- Participatory: themes are connected to the mental world of the participants (Paulo Freire!)
- Safe: self-help among participants, self-developed rules, facilitator as a role model (well educated facilitator has a comparable background), women only
- Focus on achieving empowerment: being able to take your life in your own hands
- Robust: challenging static views and beliefs, in a safe and respectful manner
- Theory and practice are connected, through debates, games, guided fantasies and role plays
- Focus on enhancing participation
- Semi-concentric structure for better understanding (subjects are repeated under differing conditions)
- Pictograms: imagination and identification + memorisation
- First: strengthening of self-esteem, self-confidence , communication skills and self-reflection
- Afterwards: knowledge and understanding of the host society and active participation in this society
- Language skills through themes: language is a means and not a goal in itself and language acquisition is connected to the theme at stake
- Empowerment is the final goal: self-organisation, daring to choose and to act.

Mother tongue in participatory education

The mother tongue based approach of Themis-IDEAL gives the participant the opportunity to express herself in her mother tongue in a grown-up and nuanced manner. She does not feel herself reduced to a minor person who has to manage with an insufficient foreign language or is depending on an interpreter.

You cannot raise awareness in a language you do not master. Thus, groups with a non-existing or very weak command of the language of the host country can only participate in programmes like IDEAL when dual language principles are applied. This makes it possible to reach out to those subgroups that assumedly need the IDEAL approach most of all. Linguistic comprehension is crucial for the participant to be able to take conscious decisions with full ownership of the process.

This participatory approach involves the participant in a manner different from the traditional, formal teaching approach. It appeals to and makes use of several senses (the cognitive, visual, auditory, kinaesthetic and communicative); by doing so, it involves different types of learners and their strategies. The approach was developed in order to foster learning and development in Third World countries, thus including activities, learning strategies and memorisation techniques that meet the needs of a population with little or no formal education. This way it also supplies the needs of the target group in question. By sliding back and forth on the scale of literacy, the approach can be adjusted to the target group without interfering with the contents or the activities.

Our results show that even participants who have not profited from more formal teaching will experience progress and be able to redefine themselves as individuals capable of learning. The success boosts the motivation and encourages them to continue the struggle to strive for other changes.

Taking the mental framework of the participant as a starting point is a crucial aspect of this approach, as well as a safe and conducive learning environment. The participant is invited, through questions, debates, role plays, games, etc. to reflect on her knowledge, values, norms and beliefs, and to transform oneself to becoming an active participant in society.

The IDEAL approach also builds and maintains the important aspect of safety and trust that are needed when dealing with difficult and sensitive issues.

The Facilitator and facilitator qualities

Language proficiency

The command of two languages on a high level of proficiency is, obviously, one of the important qualifications a bilingual facilitator needs to master. The level of proficiency has to be close to a native's, granting the ability to express yourself easily and with an appropriate vocabulary - not restricted to practical knowledge, but also including the ability to express feelings and reflections.

The bilingual facilitator is able to switch codes without problems and can express complex matters in different ways, thus moving easily back and forth on the scale of elaboration and style (e.g. academic - non-academic).

Sensitivity towards connotations and nuances, “culturally variable” uses of concepts

Being bilingual also implies being sensitive to (more or less) hidden connotations certain words might have in different languages. An example is the concept of “criticism”, which can be both positive and negative (yet used with a dominant focus on the negative aspects in everyday use). If a concept cannot be translated properly with one matching word, explain the possible nuances.

Purposes of L1 and L2 in teaching settings

As mentioned above, the choice of L1 and L2 respectively depends on the purpose of each activity. Awareness rising should thus always be conducted in L1 (mother tongue of the participants), whereas communicative language exercises in L2 (language of the host country) should be done in L2 (apart from instructions, grammatical explanations and translation of vocabulary).

Sharing knowledge about the host society, role plays etcetera can be done either in L1 or L2, depending on the level of proficiency among the participants, the domain and the complexity of the matter involved.

An example: If the purpose of the role plays is to enable the participant to cope with a situation (doctor, employer, caseworker, school) it is advisable to do the role play in L2. However, if the role plays aims at practicing skills in relation to persons from the participant's own network, that is: speaking the same language, it is logical to do the role play in L1.

Determining which language to choose requires that the facilitator is aware of the different kinds of categories the IDEAL exercises represent. But the lesson plans provide for clear suggestions about which language to be used when.

The facilitator in the participatory approach

A participatory approach is emphatically learner centred. Each debate takes the various views of the learners as a starting point: their comprehensive knowledge, experiences, motivations, values and attitudes (their mental framework). If necessary the facilitator adds new knowledge step by step and challenges the participants to reconsider their views. Through this reflective process awareness is raised about the roles, rights and responsibilities of the learners: the start of a process of *empowerment*. In other words: not the knowledge to be achieved (= *interactive approach*) is the starting point for capacity building through empowerment, but the existing views among the learners (= *participatory approach*).

In participatory programmes it is of crucial importance (and even salient) that all facilitators and staff have fully internalised the following qualities, for purposes of effectiveness and for being a role model. This is even more important in programmes in which issues like gender and safety are fundamental, like in IDEAL.

The facilitator assumes an inquisitive position and he/she has a strong and well developed capacity for mature critical self-reflection. This makes it possible to stimulate the thinking of the participants and other beneficiaries themselves, without any interference from personal prejudices, irrational loyalties, traumas, hang ups, fears or irritations on the side of the facilitator. The facilitator facilitates self-reflection about the own positions, qualities, problems, needs, and opportunities by the participants. During this, the facilitator makes careful observations, whereby he or she tries to allow everyone to express him or herself individually.

Moreover, it is important not to push too hard: the participants determine both the speed and the content of what they intend to tell/express. The facilitator should not be suggestive, because this would pre-empt them and take away their chance of putting forth a thought, expression or idea. The facilitators must take the answers and expressions given seriously at all times, even if they themselves do not agree. After all, they (the facilitators) are responsible for guiding a process of awareness, development and education. The participants have their own truth and reality, a truth which is appreciated without prejudice and should be valued according to its own merits. Without this appreciation beneficiaries will fall silent. Thus, they must never experience rejection and must be shown trust and respect at all times.

This participatory pedagogical approach aims at enforcing beneficiaries' (students) self-esteem, self-confidence and the development of a positive and realistic self-concept (self-image), and thus aiming at enhancing individual empowerment and the capacity to organise one-self for future development. Furthermore this approach aims at creating

an environment which allows respect for characteristic and sometimes differing cultural features. Facilitators try to accommodate and support every individual beneficiary and her specific needs and possibilities. *This support is limited: when participants suffer from serious psychiatric problems, like for instance border line, they cannot function in a group.*

Seen from this angle facilitators must have freed themselves fully from any prejudice to gender-aspects and/or from any irrational loyalties related to ethnicity, class, nationality, race or religion. Because prejudices and other irrationalities enforce *exclusion*: meaning that the other human being who does not belong to the same sex, ethnicity, race or religion could be treated with less respect. It is the great challenge of each and every facilitator to fight with zeal for a climate of *inclusion*: meaning that all human beings, irrespective their sex, race or background, should be treated with equal respect, not looking at the others *ascribed* (given) positions, but only by giving full value to his or hers individual and *achieved* qualities and competencies. Only then processes of empowerment and development can be fully fostered and facilitated.

Altogether, for being an effective IDEAL-facilitator it is necessary to have well developed communication skills in both languages, a mature capacity for critical self-reflection and a well-developed analysing capacity. Therefore it would be best to make use of facilitators with a background in higher education and some years of experience in teaching/facilitation. Ideally they also have an immigration history and a cultural background matching with the background of the participants. That would make them an almost perfect role model as well.

Sharing the cultural background of the target group

Being a bilingual teacher will very often imply that the facilitator shares the (geographical, linguistic, ethnic, etcetera) background of the participants.

In the IDEAL project, we have experiences with different types of facilitator backgrounds:

1. Facilitators born and raised in a foreign country, thus sharing the experience of migration, as well as the ethnic and linguistic background of the target group, having acquired the language of the host country as a second language - but still with differences depending on the age at the time of migration (Swedish pilot);
2. Facilitators raised in a Western society, yet with immigrant parents, being fully bilingual and with one leg solidly planted in each society (Dutch pilot);

3. Facilitators that 'ethnically' belong to the dominating Western majority, yet have acquired an in-depth knowledge of the language and the background of the target group (Danish pilot).

A facilitator belonging to the same ethnic, religious, and linguistic group has large advantages when dealing with the target group. There will be an implicit and explicit expectation that the facilitator understands references to regional, national, religious and social customs and traditions, as well as shares puzzling, unpleasant and surprising experiences with the host country and its society, etcetera. Very important advantage is the role model effect.

The facilitator is able to understand connotations and implications connected to certain concepts. This may spare both parts - the facilitator and the participant - for the detour of long explanations, assumed that the concepts involved are conscious and explicit. Sometimes, the underlying circumstances might be implicit and unconscious. But in all cases it might be easier to picture these circumstances when the facilitator is familiar with the background of the participant: traditions will probably be well-known; the social status of demographic groups defined on the basis of gender, age, religious belief, castes or clans will be self-explaining to a person sharing the same background.

However, being a part of a (local, religious or ethnic) society can also imply being part of hierarchical relations (younger-older, female-male, clans or castes) - clashing with the roles of the facilitator and the role as group member. The facilitator can also be familiar with gossip, social and economic problems and other circumstances that may be difficult in a professional relationship. When both the facilitator and the group members know of the existence of such problems, this can disturb the professional relationship even when the facilitator does not display her awareness of these factors. Therefore it is very important that the facilitator does not have close family ties with (some of) the participants.

In some cases - when the facilitator shares traumatising and disturbing experiences such as war, escape, torture, or the violent death of family members or friends - it can be an overwhelming and painful task for the facilitator to be confronted with the group's memories and experiences during group discussions, guided fantasies, etcetera. In our experience, this situations demands professional supervision and a very conscious and explicit handling of one's own past. When the facilitator is being employed this subject should be raised. In case there is a risk that the facilitator has major traumas that are not processed this facilitator might not be able to take part as a facilitator in IDEAL.

A facilitator quality of invaluable importance, is the shared language and the role model factor, making it possible that the participant is able to speak her mind in her mother tongue, can express her thoughts and feelings in an adequate manner - as the adult she is - and that the facilitator comprehends her narration accordingly. Sharing a language is the prerequisite for the mother tongue based approach and group debates, group conversations and guided fantasies in L1. ‘Sharing a language’ in this context implies also the sharing of or at least sensitivity towards different sociolects or dialects. The Arabic language ranges over a wide area of countries, comprising different regional, national and social varieties. A facilitator speaking a highly academic and sophisticated variety of Arabic may not convey a sense of commonality, but might even highlight differences in class, education, and geography.

Therefore, to make the best of bilingualism and “biculturalism” and to tap their full potential, the bilingual and “bi-cultural” facilitator needs a self-critical attitude and an analysing capacity, as well as the ability to take one step back and reflect upon oneself from a critical distance, while applying her linguistic, social, and other competences.

Guide to the modules

The lesson plans of each module already provide for extensive instructions. This guide provides for additional or some in depth information.

Module 1 - Getting acquainted: building trust and safety

The main objective of the first module is to build an atmosphere of trust and safety in the group.

Bear in mind that your group of marginalised, vulnerable participants is about to embark on the challenging process of awareness rising together. Later in the process, they will deal with sensitive issues and explore own habits and models of thinking. Each of them will share these experiences with a group of others of the same ethnic origin. As minority groups often are characterised by complex interdependent social relations, social control is a widespread phenomenon. This applies especially to women in socially vulnerable, marginalised immigrant subgroups.

The modules-to-come, modules 4 and 5 in particular, touch upon very personal topics such as setting boundaries, exploring own desires and hopes, and child upbringing. This requires that the participants open up and dare to share their findings. Without honest discussions and group debates, the material will not tap its full potential.

All this requires an atmosphere of absolute trust and safety. *Therefore, safety and trust are crucial to the participatory approach!*

Safety requires that you know the others (starting with their names!) and can rely on their discretion.

The objective of safety has implications for the use of languages. In the first modules, the mother tongue (L1) is the preferred language. The mother tongue creates an atmosphere of recognition and familiarity, it is a language the participants know and master well. It is the language of their adult life.

Learning something new and unknown - whether it is a new language or new knowledge- always implies an intrinsic element of being unsafe. This should not be part of the first lessons. Confine L2 elements to frequent and probably already known speech acts, e.g. greetings or saying 'thank you'.

The importance of evaluation

Speaking your mind and expressing your opinion is an important component of the development process. Moreover, evaluation is an integrated part of the Northern European (working) culture - whenever you attend a course or have a meeting, the activity will most probably be concluded by an evaluation.

However, participants with a low educational background (probably within an authoritarian framework) and a low self-esteem, not being used to somebody actually asking for their opinion, will have difficulties in expressing criticism.

Give the participants time to get accustomed to evaluating.

Start with an anonymous evaluation. Draw a happy and an unhappy smiley on the whiteboard. Say goodbye to the participants and make sure you keep yourself busy with some other task (with your back to the whiteboard). In the meantime, let the participants walk past the whiteboard and tick off the smiley they find adequate. This does not require any public statement, but is a first step towards evaluation.

From lesson 01.04 onwards, the participants will work with small cards containing L2 expressions as “good”, “not good/bad”, “normal”. These can be used during evaluations. The card can simply be shown to the class, and one single sentence in the mother tongue, motivating the choice of card, can be added.

Alternatively, print and laminate two big smileys (happy and unhappy). Pass them on to the participants. When holding the happy smiley, the participant has to mention one good thing in her mother tongue. Repeat the procedure with the unhappy smiley.

Start adding an extra sentence from module 01.04 or 01.05: Is there anything you would have preferred more of?

NB: Evaluations should always be done in L1 (apart from maybe saying “good”, “not good/bad” or “normal” in L2). Take evaluation seriously and make sure there is time enough for it at the end of each day.

Lesson 1:

The aim of the first lesson is an introduction to each other’s names. Knowing the name of your partners is the first step to get to know each other. We have positive experiences with repeating name games at regular intervals. This first lesson is deliberately not as long as all the others. There will be administrations issues to take care of and it is also important that the participants have enough time to get acquainted with the facilitator, the group, the facilities and also the IDEAL philosophy and

programme. Build a nice, calm and warm atmosphere from this very first lesson and make sure that the participants feel comfortable.

*Remarks *Birthday calendar**: some Muslims do not celebrate birthdays and consider it questionable or improper, at least when focus is “too much” on the self esteem. You might therefore encounter resistance to the idea of a birthday calendar and birthday celebrations in class. The basic idea though, is to attach value to the individual participant and make her feel valuable and appreciated. It is a celebration of the fact that this particular person has been born and exists (bear in mind that the target group often has a low self-esteem).

When you encounter resistance, explain that celebrating birthdays in class does not imply any extravagances or economic expenses. The celebration will consist of a birthday song and a birthday present: each participant mentions one positive thing about the birthday child. Especially the last element is important and is quite effective. Of course cakes etc. will enhance the joy.

Lesson 2 & 3:

There might be some reluctance to participate in the games. Be prepared for reactions - some participants will probably be surprised by the difference between the “school” they are used to and the IDEAL activities. Listen respectfully to the objections, yet ask the participants to give it some time.

When some participants are shy or reluctant to participate in physical activities (“dance from own regions”, “meetings dance”, or “mirroring of movements”), keep on inviting them in a friendly and respectful tone of voice, but do not push them.

Remember to check whether the birthday calendar is complete!

Lesson 4:

The “circle of confidence”: Be very careful that there are no gaps in the circle. As this is about trust, it would be very unfortunate if one of the participants fell to the ground. Keep an eye on the circle and try to discover gaps as quickly as possible.

Guided fantasy:

As a facilitator, be prepared for possible emotional reactions. Sometimes a word, a mental image or the atmosphere described in the fantasy triggers a reaction based on similar experiences or associations connected with the word.

Be prepared to let anger or sorrow find their way of expressing themselves, wait and do not interfere. Make it clear that there is room for these feelings, too. Give the

participant time and space to express her feelings and show that you are listening. It is not your task to “fix” the problem. Just make sure the participant does not feel “shut off” - never close the topic down out of your own insecurity or fear of “negative feelings”! Be mentally present and alert.

Safety in the group is crucial. Showing your innermost feeling can be shameful when you do not trust your classmates and do not know how they will handle the information they have about you. Sharing traumatic experiences in a safe environment, however, can be healing and relieving.

However, be aware of own limitations - facilitators are not psychologists. Never try to “treat” participants. Just listen and confirm.

Lesson 5:

The Shark Game:

Some participants may not be comfortable with competing and pushing each other away. Listen to their complaints, but continue the game. Give the participants the possibility to share their experiences (pleasant as well as unpleasant) after the activity.

Drawing exercises:

Participants might be shy and feel they are drawing badly. Stress the fact that the exercise is not about art - drawing is only a means of reflection. Do not feed their ambitions and focus on the aesthetic aspect of the task. Instead, keep inviting them to give it a try. Consider alternative ways of achieving the same goal (e.g. a representation of yourself or your partner) - provide newspapers and magazines to cut and paste from, suggest forming figures out of modelling clay or playing dough, etcetera. Always keep in mind what you want to achieve (the purpose of the exercise) and be open to suggestions.

Lesson 7:

We have experienced that participants was disappointed because there was “nothing in her box” - the box was empty. Do not try to suggest things to put into the box. Just stress the fact that the fantasy does not show a static picture of the world. The box is empty at the moment, but does not have to remain empty.

That the box is empty now means that she has not identified her wishes clearly yet. A task for her could be to reflect more on her own wishes and get closer to a more defined idea of what she might wish for herself.

Lesson 8:

Let the participants define their own rules. If you as a facilitator need to add a rule (that might be defined by the framework of your teaching, e.g. municipality, your organisation

etcetera), be clear about the fact that this is part of the framework and cannot be discussed. Sometimes, for practical reasons, empowerment has to take place within a defined framework (empowerment within limitations). Be clear about these limitations. The same applies to rules that you - as a facilitator - need to add (e.g. calling in sick in the morning).

When you have added your rule(s), step out of the discussions. Let the participants define their own regulations.

Stimulate the process by asking questions as:

- What is needed to make you enjoy spending your time in this group?
- What is needed to make this group solidly united, safe and trustable?
- What is needed to grant a safe and pleasant atmosphere during lessons?
- What kind of things could threaten or disturb this atmosphere - or the group as such?

Lesson 9:

A few times we have experienced reluctance when asked to sign the regulations of the group. Signing a document is binding - legally or morally - and can provoke fears, especially when you are illiterate and/or have bad experiences with the consequences of binding agreements. Sometimes, participants are not sure whether they will be able to observe the rules and are thus reluctant to sign them.

Ideally, these discussions ought to take place before signing the finalised document. If the reluctance is massive, discuss the issue in the group. What do the others think of it? Might some of the rules be too difficult to observe? Should there be an amendment, then?

If not, make it clear that being a part of the group means committing oneself to the rules and regulations of the group. You cannot be part of this group half-heartedly.

Make sure that the procedure of signing the regulations is a solemn act. Provide the adequate frames - candles, extra copies, a big sheet with the rules to sign, etcetera.

Lesson 10:

There might be reluctance or even resistance to sanctions. Make it clear that the group defines its own sanctions and that the participants should only suggest things they think are fair for everybody. Breaking a rule ought to have some kind of consequences.

Economic sanctions are problematic, as the target group often is characterised by financial problems. Make sure there is a thorough discussion of economic sanctions (or exclude the possibility from the very beginning, which might be advisable; again, be clear about the frames).

From lesson 8 onwards:

The IDEAL tree will be introduced, with pictogram's. See picture of the tree and instructions below. Read more here: <http://www.reflect-action.org/trees>



IDEAL tree - instructions:

The activities (IDEAL prints) will be chosen and be placed on the board. The facilitator invites the group to see how the prints can be categorised in themes (a maximum of five or six themes, writes down the themes on the board in L1 and names the categories orally in L2). Themes could be, for instance: housekeeping activities, caring activities, leisure time, activities outside the house, health related issues. The group decides which themes will be written down on the board. Then the prints will be placed underneath these themes. Check each time if everyone agrees. Then the participants will discuss which themes are going well, which themes are going "ok" and which themes are going badly. Ask: Which themes do you think need improvement? The majority rules but there must be room for a good debate.

Then the themes will be placed around the IDEAL tree, with the matching tree branches (fruits, leafs and withered). The facilitator suggests choosing one theme, preferably something that clearly needs improvement. This theme will then be the topic of discussion at the upcoming lessons. Later there will be room for other themes. Most probably the issue of health will be selected.

If the prints (pictograms) do not fit well enough to the appearances of the participants they need to be adapted accordingly. This could be done by tracing them and then by adding the right appearances.

Module 2 - Gossip and building more trust

Objectives: Avoiding the destructive and devastating effects of gossip, continue building trust and safety within the group

General remarks

This module deals with the roots and effects of gossip and is therefore a prolongation of module 1.

Gossip is an important issue; it can have devastating effects on the life of a person. But its influence can be destructive even when it not (yet) has occurred. Out of fear of gossip, the participants might not be willing to share their thoughts and experiences. This would drastically hamper the possibility of benefiting personal development during the coming modules - especially 4 and 5.

Creating a safe atmosphere in the group is therefore one of the central conditions of IDEAL. It cannot be said often enough that the facilitator needs to be alert and pay attention to any factor that might threaten group safety. Gossip is one of them.

Let the participants discuss gossip as they wish. When they need to “hide” behind the mask of “someone they know”, allow them to do it. Sometimes it is easier to tell a personal story when you can present it by saying that it happened to someone else.

Give the participants time to consider own experiences and think about them. If you have the impression that the discussion stays on the surface and is stuck with commonplace “objective truths”, give the participants more time. Ask stimulating questions (or rephrase the questions provided in the material).

It is advisable to get back to the issue once in a while, to build further upon this insight when safety and mutual trust are growing in the group.

Module 3 - Health and language

Objectives: To encourage the participants to improve their language skills with words related to ‘health and body’ as well as role play practice, thereby getting self-confidence to talk to a doctor. This module also aims at letting the participants reflect upon their own health and to find inspiration and strategies to improve it.

Since many of the IDEAL participants suffer from physical, mental or psychosomatic illnesses the health module is very important. Many of the participants have an “illness identity” which is very strong and hard to break away from. Some of the participants lack the knowledge of how to fend for their own health but mostly they lack empowerment and strategies to find a new identity.

In module 3 the participants learn to become familiar with their own body, reflect upon their health status but hopefully also begin to find strategies and set up goals to improve their health. Our experience is that the health module opened up the participants to deal with lots of complaints and pain and that many of them felt relieved after working with the module.

The IDEAL material has been developed for and tested in a group of marginalised female participants. Our assessment is that the IDEAL program will suit both men and women. For a male only target group some adjustment to the material is recommended.

Module 3 also offers language exercises. Some of the lesson plans have word lists. All word lists contain names of body parts, body functions as well as various dialogue phrases. For illiterates the facilitator needs to add non-abstract material to the pictograms supplied in the IDEAL lesson plans.

Module 3 has 15 lessons but should preferably take a bit longer. The language exercises in particular need enough repetition. The focus is to increase the vocabulary of body parts and body functions, phrases of how to describe pains and aches, and doctor/patient dialogues. A risk factor can be to focus too much on complaints and health problems. In the group discussions, participants reflect on health issues which they may never have done before as well as getting new input, knowledge and inspiration to improve their life styles.

Module 3 “Health” and module 4 “Fending for yourself” complement each other in that participants will learn to identify their current issues and desirable identity development. Module 3 focuses on language exercises and health theory while Module 4 concentrates on making a positive lifestyle change and improved communication skills.

Lessons 2-8

The participants learn some new vocabulary and obtain new knowledge about body parts, organs and functions. The vocabulary in module 3 has proven to be helpful for the daily lives of the participants. We have developed pictures and cards to use for repeating the words in a playful way. All cards and pictures are given to the participants to bring home.

If the percentage of illiterates is high in the group, written exercises should be exchanged to oral exercises instead. Also, plan extra time when working with lessons 2-8 and repeat the words and phrases.

Lesson 4

Games tend to be a fun way of learning among the participants. The game 'dribble, dribble' in lesson 4 is one example on this matter. Games lead to laughter and concentration. Even in groups with some illiterates and/or very little oral L2 skills the game 'Make up a word' is not too difficult for the participants. Together they can manage to come up with words and they can help each other.

Lesson 7 and 8

These lessons focus on body functions. Make sure that lesson 7 and 8 not primarily aims at language acquisition (vocabulary). The participants could lose interest; improving their language vocabulary only would not be meaningful. Instead involve the participants to discuss body functions related to their own lives, what health problems are related to different body parts, functions and organs. What changes could be done in order to improve their health?

Discussion might arise about sex related issues during module 3, especially in lesson 7 and 8. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a possible issue. Some women might not be aware of some physical functions, the devastating effects on physical and mental health, the matter of a cultural phenomenon rather than a religious, or that western countries treats this action as a crime. In this handbook (below) we provide for more information for the facilitator about FGM.

Lesson 9 and 10

Lessons 9 and 10 have focus on two dialogues: "Making an appointment with the doctor" and "Visiting the doctor". These tend to be very useful to the participants. After having practiced and repeated these dialogues over and over in a safe environment, it increases the participant's potential to manage/cope to do these activities more independently than before (without too much assistance from relatives or friends, or even an absence of this kind of support). The aim of these role plays is improvement of L2 (phrases and words), empowerment (self-organisation) and raising self-confidence.

Lesson 11

Drawing exercises are not always easy. There is a risk that the participants put too much focus on own shortcomings (not being able to draw nicely/properly, feeling inhibited and hampered in expressing yourself by a lack of skills...). Instead of drawing what you would prefer to look like, you could ask the participants to use another student as a model and “form” the preferred self as if the other were made of clay.

Lesson 12

The IDEAL tree is used again as a means for reflection on health status and desirable health. See more information under Module 1 in this Handbook.

Many of the participants can explain and reflect upon how their lives were before attending IDEAL and how their lives are now. Many stories are told about sickness, depression and sadness, lots of stress and pressure and pain in different parts of their bodies. Some explain that they still have these symptoms but that the symptoms are less strong some of the days and that some of the problems are almost gone. Relaxation exercises the participants do together in the class room are evaluated as good for their physical as well as mental health. It is important that the facilitator and the group during the discussion encourage each participant. The participants grow in identity when they become aware of what progress has been made individually.

Lesson 13

Theme: “Movement and sports”. Many of the participants might neither have the motivation nor feel that they have the time to do any sports. If so the discussion could turn out to be rather uninspired. The IDEAL method (in particular the participatory approach in the method) is not about giving one-sided information or input from facilitators to participants, but about letting the participants find motivation and inspiration in their own lives. That is an important feature in this approach. If the participants do not have experiences of sport activities or sports centre it might be a good idea to expose them to existing possibilities. For example, make a study visit to a safe, local health centre where the participants can try different physical activities.

Lesson 14 and 15

These lessons focus on beauty (inner and outer) and self-care. We have had discussions about these lessons whether outer beauty should be encouraged. To make use of beauty articles could be an empowering tool for some women who have never dared to put on make-up, taken much care of her skin or hair because she earlier had too little self-esteem and a negative experience of herself. There might be cultural/national differences about beauty aspects and we leave up for the facilitator to use exercises and activities in lessons 14 and 15 as she thinks suits her group of participants.

Self-esteem time: The facilitator needs to help the participants to focus - not so much "what she is good at" (activity-wise, i.e. do the laundry, cook, etc) - but rather to focus on "in what way she feels good about herself" (personal qualities). Many participants, women not the least, find it hard to say something positive about herself. Encourage these participants to go home and try to think about some positive qualities that she could share next lesson. Make sure you help each other to come up with positive things about each other as well so that something nice is said about each and every one.

Closure

As during all modules the facilitator must be responsive to her participants and adapt the lesson plans accordingly. In some of our pilot groups discussion on good food were raised and the participants required more information about this. In another of our pilot groups there were discussions about sex related issues and then the facilitator were responsive and provided for material and discussions about these issues. Here are some final and general recommendations to module 3:

Health - good food:

We recommend that the facilitators provide for some more information from nutritionists or national health agencies. What examples of food makes my body feel good? Why is it unhealthy to consume lots of fat/sugar/pills/alcohol? Why is it important to move the body? What happens if you do not do any sports? What is the difference between an active and a passive lifestyle, physiologically speaking?

Health - sex related issues

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Female_genital_mutilation

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menopause>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diabetes_mellitus_type_2

<http://www.healthyroadsmedia.org/topics/> (Health, many languages)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

A way of discussing the issue of FGM is by asking the following questions:

1. Who created mankind? The answer will probably be: "God"
2. Who created men? Answer: "God"
3. Who created women? Answer: "God"
4. Does God ever make a mistake? The answer will probably be: "Never! No way!"
5. How come then that we cut away something that was created by God?

(Source: observations by Rogier van 't Rood, made at FGM-awareness gatherings in Ethiopia (2010), Kenya (1994), and Mali (1981, 1994, 2002).

Module 4 - Fend for yourself

Objectives: the participants advance on the indicators for social development, with an emphasis on social skills

This IDEAL module is of crucial importance. In this module the participants learn to fend for themselves, by learning and practicing effective communication techniques. They also explore their desires and wishes. For many it will be the first time in their life that they start thinking about their own needs and that they develop strategies to make achievements. In fact this module is about empowerment: people take control over their own lives, through a process of awareness rising. And for taking control they need to organise themselves effectively. This process of self-organisation indicates the start of achieving self-control, thus empowerment. Through exercises they explore their needs first, and become aware about their desires. Then they learn to communicate these needs effectively, without being put aside.

Awareness rising, guided fantasies, discussions and role plays are of great importance in this module. Equally trust building and maintaining in a safe manner are fundamental. Thus never express any disapproval about opinions shared, because that would probably destroy the trust built. Better ask questions. For instance questions about the background of the idea brought forward, and about its consequences for oneself and for others. If necessary share additional information and ask the participants to consider this. Guiding these processes in a safe and supportive manner, like described in the previous modules, is of utmost importance. If it takes more time than expected, take this time. Better extend each lesson over two or even more meetings than speeding up. In our experience this module might quite well take at about twenty meetings or even more.

The effects of the IDEAL approach on self-confidence and self-esteem, as well as on communication skills, become truly visible in this module: the take-off of achieving empowerment.

Specific advices for implementing this Module 4:

Language repetition should be given ample time. When there are illiterates in the group it might quite well be frustrating for them that they cannot read the assignments. In those cases it is better to read the instructions for them and to leave out writing exercises and to make all exercises oral only.

Some participants might not like the idea of physical activities. Therefore it is advised to add an excursion to a fitness centre where the participants can try things for themselves.

In the group some questions might sometimes appear to be too complex to be effective. In those cases the facilitator should feel free of course to rephrase these questions. But these types of questions might function well in individual interactions. Just give it a try.

Empowerment: a definition and an indicator

*Empowerment is the capacity of people
to direct and control their own lives and resources:
the ability to take their lives into their own hands.*

Ann Hope and Sally Timmel (1984, rev.ed. 1995) are South African citizens who developed a triangle for the identification of problems or challenges (its aspects are: basic needs, values and beliefs, community decisions). Their triangle can be used as a starting point for further developing the concept of empowerment. Within this context the use of the concept of ‘transformation’ is crucial. Empowerment entails more than just adequate adjustment. It entails the transformation of those involved and their society.

Redistribution of power is central to this emancipation (see also Paulo Freire, from whom this concept of transformation has been taken). This redistribution must do justice to the opportunities and needs of all members of society, but must take place in such a way that it does not happen at the expense of others. Everyone’s freedom is limited the moment that freedom pushes someone else aside. Thus, freedom must be negotiable. This, however, requires that each partner in negotiations possesses the knowledge, skills and behaviour necessary to bring these negotiations to a satisfactory conclusion.

In order to transform their environment and to solve problems or face challenges, people need to organise themselves (alone and/or together with others). In this view *self-organisation* is an important indicator of empowerment: if and when people are capable of organising themselves in order to work towards self-identified goals and objectives, and when they are also capable of mobilising the necessary physical and/or human resources, they have started their own empowerment process.

This capacity includes necessary mental achievements, like self-respect, self-esteem, self-confidence and effective self-expression. In this view, fruitful self-organisation is to be implemented in the economic, the cultural, the political, the social and the physical dimensions of life.

Indicator for empowerment: *Self-organisation in a caring, a responsible and a safe way is an indicator for empowerment.*

By self-organisation we mean the following:

1. Identification of a task (problem/challenge);
2. Assessment of goals/objectives;
3. Development of a strategy;
4. Mobilisation of resources (human, physical and financial);
5. Implementation of the strategy;
6. Reflection on results (monitoring and evaluation): be accountable, learn and make improvements.

Empowerment implies (among other issues) a capacity for self-reflection and accountability. It is necessary therefore to support capacity building of stakeholders through the achievement of empowerment (and ownership). Today it does not need any further proof to conclude that the most effective way of achieving empowerment is by using participatory approaches.

This pedagogical approach is emphatically learner centred, aiming at enforcing learners' self-esteem, self-confidence, self-expression skills and the development of a positive and realistic self-concept (self-image), and thus aiming at enhancing (individual) empowerment and the capacity to organise one-self for future tasks. Furthermore this approach aims at creating an environment which allows respect for characteristic and sometimes differing cultural features. Facilitators try to accommodate and support every individual learner and its specific needs and possibilities. Most participatory methods are based on the ideas of Paulo Freire and have been developed further.

Ownership, Empowerment and Social Accountability

In democratic societies citizens should be enabled to build and strengthen their capacities (with the assistance of civil society organisations who work with the people on grass root levels) and provide them with all resources necessary (ownership).

There is no ownership without empowerment. This implies that there can be ownership only, if people have achieved the life skills of care, responsibility and safety in a comprehensive manner: they understand what to do, the purpose of their task(s), and how to implement their activities. If one or more of these aspects are missing, people (and organisations!) did not achieve ownership over their tasks yet. As a result the outcomes or results of their activities will be disappointing, thus not effective.

For accountability on its turn, it is of utmost importance that people achieve the skills and competences, but also the necessary resources, to execute their legal rights and responsibilities in an effective manner, enabling them to organise their own lives and resources, of course including education related affairs. In other words: there is no ownership without empowerment, and there is no effective social accountability without ownership.

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Module 5 Parenting⁶

Objectives: Promoting positive affirmation in raising children in a western context, and awareness rising on parenting practices.

Promoting positive affirmation

Main objective in the parenting module is to promote positive affirmation in raising children. Ideally participants become aware about the importance of a positive attitude towards their children: less complaining, nagging, physical punishments (negative reinforcement).

Further practices of positive affirmation are enhanced: the participants understand that it is important to compliment the child and to listen to him / her. And that they become aware that a negative attitude does not contribute to the self-esteem and self-confidence of the child. The participants learn to perceive their children as a conversation partner, and not as an object that needs to be trained only, also by taking children's feelings more seriously.

Rising awareness

This module also aims at reflecting on parenting practice, awareness rising on the effects of existing practices and formulating new objectives. Awareness rising, discussions and role plays are of great importance, in this module as well. If it takes more time than expected, take this time. Better extend each lesson over two or even more lessons than speeding up.

Rhythm and structure

By structuring their household better (rhythm cards exercises), the participants obtain ample time to pay better attention to the children. They also learn to understand the importance of paying attention, within the context of their parental responsibilities: these are not just limited to practical daily care, but include social and emotional elements as well. Setting and maintaining rules at home: time to be at home, bedtime, time spending watching TV or being on the internet (also checking better TV and internet subjects), sharing meals together.

Becoming more involved in the children's lives

During this module there are lots of options to make study visits; for example to the library, a school, sports facilities, centres for youths and families. Issues like children's emotions, communication with children, leisure time and media take the perspectives of

⁶ The Dutch version of this module has been recognised by the Netherlands Youth Institute (NJI).

the child. Through role plays, games, exercises and discussions these topics will be processed.

A sensitive module to implement

The parenting module is a sensitive module in many ways. The group needs to be reminded about the mutual confidence of trust within the group. Remind the women that what they talk about within the IDEAL group stays in the group. It is advisable to create excitement and to give enough introductions to the module so that the participants know what to expect. Safety is important from the start.

Most of the participants have children of their own or grandchildren, but some might not have children. There is a risk that this might be problematic and that participants without children might feel left out. Examples could be general at some times, but most discussions will undoubtedly be about joys or difficulties with the participants own children or grandchildren. We have had the experience that participants without children of their own may indeed feel comfortable and learn from the module anyway.

There is a risk that some participants might feel that the issues become too personal and that they do not feel comfortable in sharing difficulties they have with their own children. This is to a larger extent a risk factor for participants who not voluntarily attend the IDEAL course. Some of the participants in the IDEAL pilot groups have personally applied for attending the course, but some have been placed at the course from administrators from the municipality or employment office. Even if there is trust and safety in the group, parenting issues become more close and personal. Remember then not to force statements or opinions that the participants do not yet want to share. The facilitator needs to be responsive to the group and atmosphere. If some issues become too personal you may talk about your own childhood instead. Through role plays the participants might still be able to participate and find suggestions and solutions in parenting. Be aware that differences in how much the participants share is not affecting safety and the mutual confidence of trust.

The facilitator and the group need to promote positive affirmation towards each other and what everyone is doing well in her parenting. This is a concrete example to be able to promote positive affirmation towards one's own children.

The facilitator's role in the Parenting Module

Equally trust building and maintaining in a safe manner are fundamental. Thus never express any disapproval about opinions shared, because that would probably destroy the trust built (see further down for more guidelines in these situations). Better ask questions. For instance questions about the background of the idea brought forward, and about its consequences for oneself and for others. If necessary share additional

information and ask the participants to consider this. Guiding these processes in a safe and supportive manner, like described in the previous modules, is of utmost importance. Once again the facilitator's role in the group discussion is not to bring forth the right answer but letting the participants discuss different solutions.

Challenges about changing views

As stated above about the facilitator's role, it is important that the facilitator is aware of her own reactions to different statements that the participants might express, no matter how strange or remarkable statements they may be and even if she does not agree. This applies to parenting issues as well as to other issues. In case the facilitator reacts in prejudice (horrified for instance) she might block or make the participants silent when putting forth a thought or expression. The facilitator must at all times take the answers and expressions seriously. However when parental issues/actions are raised that in fact are illegal (FGM for instance) the facilitator has to inform the participants about national and international laws.

Some examples of issues on child-upbringing, which seem to be common and acceptable to the participants, but are not to the facilitator:

- Candy as a solution. Giving candy seemed like the only suggestion for the parent to help the child calm down
- Throwing away gifts. In front of the children when the gift was given to the mother it was immediately thrown away as a useless item
- Rejecting children. In the class a mother of two children kept ignoring the son's attempt of coming close, eventually pushing him away, while she hugged and communicated with the younger daughter.

On one occasion when addressing the issue of rules and discipline, the facilitator in the pilot group in The Hague asked the participants about their experiences as a parent.

Among many other examples one participant came up with the following example:

"My son had shown bad behaviour and I decided to punish him. I took a lighter and kept the flame under one of his fingers. That taught him a lesson!" Others endorsed this approach. The facilitator being shocked but immediately realising that she should not express her disgust, also realising that the participants felt safe by expressing this behaviour, decided to raise a follow up question: "have you yourself experienced this type of punishment when you were a child?" Reply: "yes, we did, but then a candle was used, not a lighter, and it is for boys only, it makes them tougher. Thus we saw it happen with brothers". Facilitator: "how did your brother react then?" Participant: "well, he cried of course, must have felt lots of pain". Facilitator: "what happened then?" Participant: "my mother tried to comfort him somehow, but he did not allow it and ran

away". Facilitator: "how did your own son react?" Participant: "by similar behaviour, thus running away". Facilitator: "and did the behaviour of your brother improve?" Participant: "not really in fact, but he became cleverer in hiding his bad behaviour for our parents". Facilitator: "so, and what do you yourself expect now?" Participant: "I do not know, maybe the same ...?" Facilitator: "is that what you would like to achieve? In other words: will this approach bring better behaviour?" Participant: "maybe not, but what else can I do then?"

At that stage the facilitator realised that an opening towards a process of awareness had been created. She could move forward now with putting an emphasis on the need for positive affirmation.

Outlook and special thanks

Follow-up activities after IDEAL

For literacy lessons and follow up activities the following could be considered:

On literacy: those being illiterate could be offered extra literacy classes from approximately halfway Module 4 onwards. At that stage they might quite well have identified their need for becoming literate. Their necessary self-confidence is probably enough developed then as well. These literacy classes preferably should be linked content wise to issues raised during implementing the IDEAL-modules.

However, keep in mind that prior attempts to acquire literacy for a considerable number of participants will be connected to experiences of failure and defeat. Be careful when assessing the need or wish uttered by the group. This wish is, as experience shows, very often rooted in the prestige formal learning possesses, but it might not always be realistic. Weigh the risk of new defeats against the obvious advantages of literacy, when deciding whether to establish literacy workshops.

On follow up activities: at completion of Module 5 most of the participants might quite well like it to continue classes. Possible options are the following:

1. Continuation in a self-guided self-help group, facilities and initial support to be made available as long as necessary;
2. Follow up integration lessons on history (incl. the EU), geography, norms and values, democracy and the political system (rights and duties, constitution), making use of institutions, living with neighbours, etc. (see for instance the Dutch Themis-follow up modules on these issues)⁷;
3. Preparation lessons for voluntary activities, to be followed by proposing and making available well guided volunteer positions;
4. Follow up formal education for those who are well-enough equipped, for acquiring minimal labour market competences.

⁷ Modules on these subjects are available in Dutch, developed by Themis.

Special thanks

We would like to give thanks to EACEA, to our organisations (Themis and Stichting Mooi in the Netherlands, Settlementet in Denmark, and Hyllie Park Folkhögskola in Sweden) and other partners (Copenhagen and Malmö Municipalities) for believing in the project and for their financial contributions. All our facilitators and volunteers have done a great job. Thanks to all our facilitators: Layla Ahmed (SE), Maha Aziz, Nicoline Sarikurt, Bano Nusrat (DK), Yamina Akachar (NL) and her volunteers / interns Samya Khaliloulu, Varoone Ishaak and Latifa Ait Moulay, and Lotte Werner and Anouck Zaadstra, at the time students at Utrecht University (NL). Without you we would not be able to implement or evaluate the IDEAL method. You have given us highly valuable input to the material.

Rogier van 't Rood of Themis wants to give special thanks to Wil' Huige (Leidse Hogeschool), Örpen Duregger and Ismet Buyurgan (Hara Women Centre in Leiden) and Christa Nieuwboer, PhD (lecturer / researcher parental advice at Fontys Hogescholen in the Netherlands), for their significant contributions to the original Themis material, and to the dozens of pictograms. And also to the participatory methods of GRAAP (Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso), Reflect (by Robert Chambers, PhD, of Action Aid, UK) and Training for Transformation (by Ann Hope and Sally Timmel, South Africa), and the many exercises developed for female emancipation in the seventies (Goldstein method, etc.), for their invaluable inspiration to Themis. And last but not least to Paulo Freire of course.

For more information about the project and the materials, please visit the IDEAL-homepage: www.ideal-participation.eu.

Appendices

1. The IDEAL philosophy
2. Language tests
3. Evaluation of Themis / IDEAL in the Netherlands

The Themis-IDEAL philosophy

Illiterates, often and increasingly live on the edge of their society, in a rapidly modernising world. They must use all their strength and resourcefulness to survive in an environment upon which they do not seem to have any decision-making influence. A resourcefulness, which is admittedly sometimes astonishingly effective, but which usually leaves existing power relations essentially untouched, and is therefore not more than an apparent adjustment. They lack the power, the insight and the knowledge (the tools and the skills to deal with this) to adequately anticipate the course of the rapidly changing world around them; anticipation, resulting in bringing the process of transformation into motion, a shift in power and influence. There is often a lack of assertiveness, the ability to verbally defend and negotiate in favour of one's own interests. This requires that the words should connect with the perceptions of all those involved. As long as this is not achieved, they will continue to live on the 'periphery' of their society, a concept coined a few decades ago and which is still useful as a general determinant of position.

Language tests

A1, A2 levels: listening

Name of participant: _____

Date of test: _____

Part 1: Interview

Question	Answer given by participant
How are you today?	
What is your first name?	
What is your surname?	
How old are you?	
Where do you come from?	
Which language(s) do you speak?	
Are you married?	
Do you have children?	
How long have you been in (<i>name of host country</i>)?	
Where do you live?	

What is your telephone number?

Part 2: Ask 10 questions about a standardised picture

Is the participant able to ask yes/no-questions?

a. Correct

Yes No

b. Pragmatically functioning

Yes No

Is the participant able to ask special questions (wh-questions)?

a. Correct

Yes No

b. Pragmatically functioning

Yes No

Does the participant know relevant vocabulary to ask questions? Yes No



Part 3: Description of a picture (free L2 production)

Is the participant able to describe the picture (situation, persons, objects) in simple phrases and with basic vocabulary?

Yes No

Remarks:

Part 4: Sociolinguistic competences

(Assessment by tester)

Is the participant able to:

- a. Greet and introduce herself in accordance with national practices?

Yes No

- b. Say good-bye in accordance with national practices?

Yes No

- c. Able to express apologies, thanks etc. (if relevant) in accordance with national practices?

Yes No

Name of participant: _____
Date of test: _____

Part 1: Interview

Question	Answer given by participant
How are you today?	
What is your name?	
Where do you come from?	
Which language(s) do you speak?	
What is your occupation here in (host country)?	
Did you go to school in your home country?	
Did you like it? + Why did you like it/dislike it?	
Do you have any work experience?	
What do you usually do in your leisure time?	

What is your date of birth?	
What is your telephone number?	

Part 2: Giving simple instructions

Can you tell me how you prepare tea (or coffee)?

Part 3: Dialogue – consensus finding

Consensus finding/making suggestions, and discussion.

Task: The tester and the participant want to do a leisure activity together. The participant starts the conversation and makes a suggestion.

Part 4: Monologue (free L2 production)

Task: Where do you live? Tell me a little about the area where you live, your housing situation etc.

Alternatively a presentation of own person (family, interests, leisure time, daily routines – e.g. morning, evening, and background: education/schooling, work, home town)

Duration: 1-2 min.

Assessment:

Is the participant able to talk about the topic in a basic language with simple phrases?

Yes No

Is the participant's basic vocabulary sufficient?

Yes No

Remarks: NB - *The participant uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes. Nevertheless, it is usually clear what she is trying to say. False starts, pauses, reformulations are still evident at this level. The foreign accent is notable.*

Part 4: Sociolinguistic competences

(Assessment by tester)

Is the participant able to:

- a. Greet politely and introduce herself in accordance with national practices?

Yes No

- b. Say good-bye in accordance with national practices?

Yes No

- c. Express apologies, thanks etc. (if relevant) in accordance with national practices?

Yes No

- d. Initiate, maintain and close a simple conversation?

Yes No

- e. Ask for clarification, repetition or reformulation?

Yes No

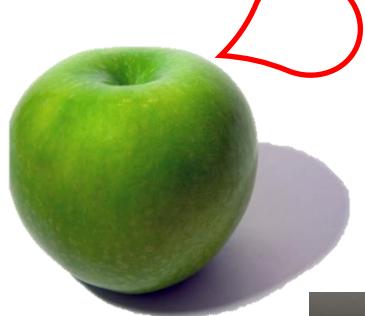
- f. Express that she is unable to follow (if relevant)?

Yes No

Part 5: Listening Comprehension



Tuesday



Instructions

The assessor (tester) reads the text out slowly (without mentioning the numbers). Hereafter, the examinee receives the print above. The examinant reads the text out once more, with the examinee looking at the pictures.

When the examinant reads the text for the third time, the numbers are added. The examinee writes the correct number into the corresponding bulb.

Alternatively (if the examinee is illiterate), she points at the corresponding pictures when the sentences and numbers are read out. The examinant checks whether the answers are right.

CEFR language levels

The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (CEFR) by the Council of Europe, is a guideline to describe achievements of learners of foreign languages across Europe and, increasingly, in other countries. Its main aim is to provide a method of learning, teaching and assessing which applies to all languages in Europe. A European Union Council Resolution (2001) recommended using the CEFR to set up systems of validation of language ability. The six reference levels (see below) are becoming widely accepted as the European standard for grading an individual's language proficiency. The CEFR describes what a learner is supposed to be able to do in reading, listening, speaking and writing at each level (Wikipedia).

Council of Europe levels (CEFR)	Description
C2 Mastery	<p>The capacity to deal with material which is academic or cognitively demanding and to use language to good effect at a level of performance which may in certain respects be more advanced than that of an average native speaker.</p> <p>Example: <i>CAN scan texts for relevant information, and grasp main topic of text, reading almost as quickly as a native speaker.</i></p>
C1 Effective Operational Proficiency	<p>The ability to communicate with the emphasis on how well it is done, in terms of being appropriate, sensitive and with the capacity to deal with unfamiliar topics.</p> <p>Example: <i>CAN deal with hostile questioning confidently. CAN get and hold onto his/her turn to speak.</i></p>
B2 Vantage	<p>The capacity to achieve most goals and express oneself on a range of topics.</p> <p>Example: <i>CAN show visitors around and give a detailed description of</i></p>

	<i>a place.</i>
B1 Threshold	The ability to express oneself in a limited way in familiar situations and to deal in a general way with non routine information. Example: <i>CAN ask to open an account at a bank, provided that the procedure is straightforward.</i>
A2 Way stage	An ability to deal with simple, straightforward information and begin to express oneself in familiar contexts. Example: <i>CAN take part in a routine conversation on simple predictable topics.</i>
A1 Breakthrough	A basic ability to communicate and exchange information in a simple way. Example: <i>CAN ask simple questions about a menu and understand simple answers.</i>

For IDEAL the focus is on achievements on the first two levels:

- | | |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A2 | <p>Can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary. Can manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort; can ask and answer questions and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations.</p> <hr/> <p>Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters to do with work and free time. Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of his/her own accord.</p> |
| A1 | <p>Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition at a slower rate of speech, rephrasing and repair. Can ask and answer simple questions, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.</p> |

Final evaluation Themis-IDEAL in the Netherlands

At Stichting Mooi in The Hague (the Netherlands) the group started with thirteen female participants, most of them born in Morocco (Berber and Arabic speaking) and with two women from Sudan (Arabic speaking). Three left the group, including all from Sudan, due to external pull factors: illness, pregnancy and remigration. All three regretted the necessity to leave the group. Four of the ten participants remaining are fully illiterate.

The facilitator in the Netherlands has a degree in higher vocational education in the Netherlands, and is an experienced and cheerful facilitator employed by Stichting Mooi, but she never worked with a participatory method before. She was born in Morocco, migrated to the Netherlands with her family when she was a teenager, and she is Berber and Arabic speaking.

She was assisted by two successive internship students from The Hague Hogeschool (higher vocational education), also from a Moroccan background. A volunteer from a Surinam background assisted in organising outdoor meetings, for putting lessons learned into practice (see below).

The first student intern assisting the facilitator appeared to have rather strong opinions about a strict interpretation of the Quran. Her explicit interpretations discouraged the participants to focus on their own self-esteem, for instance by declining celebrating birthdays, to sing songs for and to say nice things about the person whose birthday it was. After a short while she could be replaced by a far more moderate student intern who was well able to keep her personal opinions for herself. The celebrations were resumed.

The participants were recruited voluntarily, on the basis of mouth to mouth information, started by the facilitator. After a few weeks enrolments were stopped, when the group was large enough. Nevertheless, during the IDEAL-course other women continuously but fruitlessly requested for participation.

Meetings were generally held on three mornings per week, including lessons on practice. Venue was a separate classroom owned by Stichting Mooi, in a primary school and near the homes of the participants. Supervision meetings with the Themis-facilitator and her assistants were held three-weekly on average. Main focus at these meetings was each time on challenges met in class and on effective facilitation approaches.

2.1 Outcomes of focus group debates and interviews

On the basis of interviews and focus group debates by the facilitator and her assistant the following achievements are reported:

- *Saying no:* previously all women depreciated themselves and they did not dare to say no to family members (esp. husbands and mothers in law), even if they were not

able to comply with the demands posed. Because of this they experienced high levels of stress and stress related complaints, like sleeplessness, shoulder and back pains, stomach problems, headaches, loss of energy, feelings of depression.

Compensated in many cases by eating too much, causing weight and weight related problems. These complaints are reduced.

- *Setting boundaries*: partially because of priority lists developed by the participants themselves, they all became aware about important issues in their personal lives, which they want to get grip on and to enhance.
- *Increased self-confidence*: all have become less shy and withdrawn; they feel stronger and are better able now to show their needs and expectations, and to defend their personal interests. They do not want to stay offside anymore and like to join in activities.
- *Increased basic knowledge*: increased knowledge of the Dutch language and on issues they did not know before, especially on health and body, and on (un-) healthy food. Also on the Dutch society, the way Dutch people generally behave and communicate. All understand the Dutch better and show a higher appreciation for Dutch culture.

Achievements at home:

- Because of improved communication skills (Module 4), they have learned to check better the information provided by family members, by asking questions, and not take everything said for granted. This ability prevents quarrels and arguments, also by understanding that the way someone expresses himself might come across more negative than intended.
- They understand better the difference between a fact and an opinion, and are less upset about opinions of others, which they do not share.
- They are less upset about opinions of others, which they do not share.
- They give a careful thought first, before they reply, also considering now their own needs, thus being better able to care for their own interests.
- They have better structured their household activities, also saving time for themselves, making them feeling more comfortable and steady.
- They are not put aside anymore, by husbands, family in law and friends, by being less shy and modest.

Achievements in Dutch society:

- They feel taken more seriously by Dutch counterparts, like the doctor or in the school of their children: they ask for assistance and are better able to express their interests.
- They dare to criticise each other.
- They understand how important it is for their children to become involved in school affairs, and many contribute to activities in school. They also dare to ask for school performances of their children which they did not dare before.
- Because of improved planning skills they have time now for leisure activities, like sports. This helps them to discharge and to build new energy.

Specific effects of the module on health (Module 3):

- Development of vocabulary (both in Dutch and in their mother tongue)
- Better able to listen to the needs of their body; less stress and stress related complaints, thus an improved physical and mental well-being (also because of improved communication skills: see above).
- Better knowledge and understanding of the bodily functions.

Specific effects of the module on child upbringing (Module 5):

- They all have become aware of the importance of a positive attitude towards their children: less complaining, nagging and negative reinforcement, more positive affirmation: they understand that it is important to compliment the child and to listen to him / her. Previously many just threw away objects made in school, in front of the child, saying that this was a useless item (even when it was produced as a present for the mother). They now understand that this behaviour does not contribute to the self-esteem of the child.
- They now perceive their children as a conversation partner, and not as an object that needs to be trained only, also by taking children's' feelings more seriously. 7 out of 10 participants report a better communication with their children.
- By structuring their household better (rhythm cards exercises), they have obtained ample time spend more quality time with their children. They also understand now the importance of paying attention, within the context of their parental responsibilities: these are not just limited to practical daily care, but include social elements as well. 7 out of 10 participants report a more efficient use of their time.
- Setting and maintaining rules at home: time to be at home, bedtime, time spending watching TV or being on the internet (also checking better TV and internet subjects), sharing meals together.
- Better understanding of the mental development of the child (puberty!), resulting into less physical punishments and threatening. They also shout less, and have tempered their voices. Previously a number of mothers punished their children by holding the child's finger in a flame. They have abandoned this practice.

2.2 Practical extra-curricular activities undertaken

- *On sexuality* by a speaker with a Moroccan background. The participants expressed their great enthusiasm about this subject, resulting into a second meeting. Participants were very happy about the knowledge shared about the functioning of female organs, about effects of puberty and menopause and about the devastating effects of female genital mutilation (FGM). This issue of FGM was raised during the general meetings on health by the Sudanese participants (at that stage still in the group), resulting into the development of a background information sheet on FGM. The issue of puberty was raised as well in Module 5, on child upbringing. It made the mothers understand better the behaviour of their children, which they did not understand before (and thus causing lots of nagging and negative reinforcement, esp. towards girls).

- *On the mode of operation of Dutch doctors*, by a Dutch speaker. Less enthusiasm is reported, perhaps due to the fact that the speaker was not able to connect well enough to the mental framework of the participants.
- *On stress and assertive behaviour*, by an immigrant speaker. Resulted into many eye-openers, in combination with Module 4 (on caring for yourself and effective communication).
- *On domestic violence*, by a speaker with a Moroccan background. Domestic violence is better understood, both in its causes and in its manifestations, also the roles of the women themselves. Resulted into many eye-openers, in combination with Module 4 (on caring for yourself and effective communication).
- *On rising children and punishments*, by a Dutch speaker. She was able to connect well to the participants, and this meeting was a welcome supplement to Module 5.

It was observed that the participants were improving their ability to raise questions, to take active part in discussions and to tackle taboos, like sexual issues.

2.3 Observations by the facilitator and her assistants

A set back in The Hague has been the fact that a well-functioning informal day care centre established by Stichting Mooi in the same building had to be closed after some months, on the order of the municipality, because of an intruder reported in another day care centre, but without the municipality bringing about other solutions. As a result some mothers took their babies and toddlers to the meetings, causing some disturbances and loss of attention. Fortunately and with the help of her assistants the facilitator could somehow cope with the disturbances, by appointing one of the assistants to take care of the children in another corner of the large classroom. But this unforeseen change in modalities still remained tiresome.

On self-confidence and self-esteem:

These are fundamental aspects of the psycho-social participatory methodology of IDEAL. Especially the role plays in Module 4, on effective communication, have had a tremendous positive impact on the growing self-confidence and self-esteem of the participants.

In the beginning it was observed that the participants did not dare to make eye-contact with outsiders, now they do. Giving and receiving explicit complements and encouragements has helped a lot as well, throughout the IDEAL-course (including celebrating birthdays with the participants giving compliments to the person whose birthday it was): the participants experience, for the first time in their lives (!), appreciation when they try to carry out a task, as well as the fact that people are willing to assist if you ask. This experience gives them some freedom to reflect on their own behaviour and to discuss issues more in the open. Crucial aspects are however: a safe and secure atmosphere and explicit trust into each other. On these issues Module 2 (on gossip) appeared to be very important, apparently making them aware of the negative

impact of gossip. Further the safety is also guaranteed by the contract signed in Module 1 (highly appreciated by all), and by the attitude of the facilitator.

According to the facilitator and her assistants, this approach differs largely from other courses for immigrants. IDEAL in their view is learner centred, playful and taking the mental framework of the participants as starting point. Thus it is creating the necessary safe and conducive learning environment needed by these women, especially since they suffer from a low self-esteem and self-confidence, and a lack of effective expression skills. The well developed and selected pictures, role plays and discussions in combination, made the women feel safe and confident, allowing to open up themselves for acquiring new knowledge and understandings, and thus to become aware about their options and opportunities for transforming their own environment.

It would be better not to allow new participants to join soon after the start of the group, because together and step by step they build this safe and secure environment, which they have not experienced before.

On the lesson plans:

The lesson plans are well developed and easy to understand for the facilitator. She still needs time for preparations, but the regular supervision sessions were very effective in pointing out the core issues.

In the beginning, because of not being used to such an approach, many participants found it difficult to accept the methodology (since they are used to being commanded). But by an imperturbable moving on by the facilitator the participants learned to appreciate the approach and later on they fully embraced it. It appeared that many lessons took more time than envisaged, especially when discussions and role plays were involved. These are time consuming but very relevant and even crucial aspects of the approach. Sometimes it appeared to be necessary to explore a relevant side path more thoroughly, like on FGM. Time needs to be allowed for such crucial extensions.

It appeared that those women who have had at least a few years of formal education in their home country advanced much faster than the others: they have learned to learn. For the others keeping concentration and focus, esp. in the beginning, appeared to be quite problematic. Linking the two types of participants, when working in groups, has had a positive effect on the conduciveness of the learning environment, and it gave them some responsibility for their own learning processes.

Giving space to sometimes unforeseen aspects also gave weight to the involvement of the participants, making them realise that they could influence the contents and that they are real participants in their own learning processes, thus creating ownership being necessary for becoming intrinsically motivated.

The physical exercises on the basis of Pilatus (developed by a Danish facilitator, who is a Pilatus teacher herself) have been used partially and only in the earlier stages, because

the facilitator did not feel enough confident. Both the facilitator and the supervisor are of the opinion that these lessons also take too much time relatively. It appeared that the relaxation exercises already provided for in the modules were sufficient.

On language acquisition:

In the beginning the mother tongues were almost exclusively used (Berber and Arabic), but at the end Dutch (L2) had become the language of instruction for explaining and implementing the exercises, as well as for most general conversations. Still sometimes further explanations in L1 were given if found necessary, but in a very limited manner. Of course emotion related and / or more complex issues were still in L1. Thus they are showing that the command of the Dutch language had improved significantly. Especially Module 4 made a difference, creating better communication skills and not the least important: self-esteem and self-confidence, being necessary ingredients for active oral usage of the language. Even the weakest among the participants have improved their Dutch language skills.

It is observed that the participants make use of the L2 words learned, and that most of them are able now to express full sentences in Dutch (instead of just one or two loose words at most, like in the beginning). It appears that the participants understand the meaning of their expressions in Dutch. Testing was at CEFR A2 level only (orally), but it is quite well possible that at least five among them are (close to) B1. It is assumed that a "hidden but already existing vocabulary" in Dutch is also activated, because of improved self-confidence and self-esteem.

Generally the participants have moved from ("advanced") A1 to A2, or from A2 towards an "advanced" A2 level. Officially the differentiating connotation of "advanced" does not exist in CEFR, but the progress appears to be relatively significant within the A2 category and therefore the Dutch staffs have taken the freedom to add the differentiation. For an explanation of the unofficial category of "advanced" see remarks below. The illiterates moved to A2:

No.	Baseline	Final	Remarks
1	A2	A2+	Can easily make correct full sentences now
2	A1+	A2	Can make correct full sentences now
3	A1	A2	All words used are correct
4	A2	A2+	Can easily make correct full sentences now
5	A1	A2	All words used are correct
6	A1	A2+	Can easily make correct full sentences now
7	A2	A2+	Can easily make correct full sentences now
8	A2	A2+	Can easily make correct full sentences now
9	A1+	A2	Makes sentences, with some mistakes
10	A2	A2+	Can easily make correct full sentences now

On participation:

The following results on participation are reported (with reference to baseline outcomes):

- 8 out of 10 participants now consult the doctor for more simple issues, without an interpreter. Before they made use of an interpreter (husband, daughter), except for one.
- 9 out of 10 participants now report more effective contacts with the school of their children. Before they made use of an interpreter (husband, daughter, sister in law), except for two.
- 10 out of 10 participants report effective contacts with Dutch people. Previously contacts were limited to Moroccan people only, except for one who already maintained contacts with one Dutch woman.
- 6 out of 10 participants (those with A2+, all literate) express their wish and motivation to continue their education in a more formal manner (MBO 1 level – the lowest level of advanced formal education in the Netherlands, enabling to acquire the least basic competences for paid labour). Stichting Mooi is willing and able to address this wish.