

# ELECT

European Learning Communities for Training  
of People with Mental Illness

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[www.elect-project.eu](http://www.elect-project.eu)



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## The second ELECT project meeting was hosted by STAKES in Helsinki 5.-6. June 2008

The ELECT project sets out to strengthen Clubhouses as learning communities and to promote access to education and the labour market for people recovering from mental illnesses. The ELECT project began on 1 November 2007 and runs for 24 months. During this period the ELECT project has set out to hold four international project meetings and a final seminar.

The second ELECT project meeting was organized in Helsinki 5.-6. June 2008. The meeting venue was STAKES (National Research and Development centre for Welfare and Health).

All 12 ELECT project partners were represented at the meeting. In addition the International Center for Clubhouse Development (ICCD) organized their board meeting at the same time in Helsinki. The ICCD Board had the opportunity to take part in the plenary session of the ELECT project.

The project meeting began with an introduction



General session of the ELECT project meeting in Helsinki.

from the Project manager Ville Grönberg and presentations from the different Working Groups of the ELECT project. The ELECT project consists of three working groups, which are developing supported education activities in the Clubhouses. These working groups cover: **activation and motivation; support methods for education and training; and training of trainers.**

After the working group presentations, the Fountain House in Oslo shared experiences from their local study project. The afternoon session started with a lecture

from the study's psychologist Juha Nieminen from the University of Helsinki. He told about mental health and learning and studying (see page 4). Workshop sessions for the working groups followed after the lecture.

After a hard day's work, the seminar guests had an opportunity to spend a social evening by the sea. Dinner was served on a sightseeing boat, which toured the Eastern archipelago of Helsinki. The second day of the project meeting started with a lecture on social phobias. Lecturer Liisa Ängeslevä told how peo-



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Sightseeing tour in the Eastern archipelago of Helsinki.

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ple can alleviate stage fright. She told about general principles and demonstrated exercises for relaxing and concentrating. After the lecture, the seminar guests had an opportunity to visit the Clubhouse of Helsinki.

Day 2 and the seminar finished with one more working group session

and a final plenary session. The working groups each made plans for the next steps, while the place and host of the next seminar was confirmed. The third ELECT meeting will be hosted by the German Clubhouse Coalition in Munich 3.-5. November 2008.

*I would like to thank all seminar guests and working groups for their good work. Looking forward to meeting you again in Munich!*

Ville Grönberg  
Project manager

## Learning opportunities in a Clubhouse community

**The working group on activation and motivation presented findings at the second ELECT meeting from a survey questionnaire sent to 39 Clubhouses in Europe. The survey looked at how Clubhouse communities motivate their members to learn and take part in in-house education. A total of 24 Clubhouses (62%) participated in the survey.**

According to the questionnaire results, courses on computing and languages skills were the most commonly available in the Clubhouses. In addition, there were a variety of additional courses and learning groups, such as literature, mathematics, career guidance, art, sports and performance skills. The courses were most often organized by Clubhouse members or staff. Teachers, volunteers and students also offered some courses.

Members were actively asked and motivated to take part in available courses by 95% of clubhouses. In-house educa-

### Learning opportunities during the Work Ordered Day

- Computer skills
- Handling hand tools
- Cooking
- Selling drinks/snacks
- Communication training and techniques
- Handling conflicts
- Work in the garden
- Answering the phone
- Renovation
- How to organize the sparetime
- Discussions about how to live the standards
- How to make films
- Cleaning/hygiene skills
- Economics
- Book keeping/to manage the cashier/register
- Introduction of new members

tion opportunities were promoted in the Clubhouse meetings, Clubhouse newspapers and info boards. Some Clubhouses had made a study-program leaflet.

The survey also studied learning in the wider perspective. Learning can link not only with education but also with everyday life. Rehabilitation processes can be described as learning- and a lifelong learning-process. According to the survey, the Clubhouses provide many learning opportunities for people recovering from mental illnesses. Learning situations can be very practical. It is possible to learn

such skills as cooking, hygiene, cleaning and economics as a part of normal Clubhouse activities.

As a social environment, the Clubhouse offers possibilities to learn how to handle conflict situations and how to cooperate with other people. This kind of learning is very valuable because it gives people more confidence. It positively affects the recovery process and activates individuals to learn even more.

*“Learning can link not only with education but also with everyday life”*

#### WHAT IS A CLUBHOUSE?

“A CLUBHOUSE IS A COMMUNITY INTENTIONALLY ORGANIZED TO SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS LIVING WITH THE EFFECTS OF MENTAL ILLNESS. THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN A CLUBHOUSE PEOPLE ARE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITIES TO REJOIN THE WORLDS OF FRIENDSHIPS, FAMILY, IMPORTANT WORK, EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, AND TO ACCESS THE SERVICES AND SUPPORTS THEY MAY INDIVIDUALLY NEED.”

WWW.ICCD.ORG

## Planning of the ELECT pilot course in good progress

**The partners of the 'training for trainers' workpackage made good progress during the second ELECT meeting in Helsinki. Initially we decided to work with other working groups to gain more insight into the proposed outcomes from each work package. This proved to be a good decision as we were able to use this information to plan our next steps.**



Training of trainers working group working...

The Scottish coalition will formulate a questionnaire, to be sent to all ELECT partner Clubhouses, asking what expectations and hopes they would have if invited to attend a 1-week 'Supported Education' training. The results of this questionnaire will be collated by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2008 and used to give further guidance for the pilot course.

Our group did a lot of planning for the 1-week pilot course, to be delivered by Mosaic Clubhouse in March 2009. It was decided that 8 participants from 4 Clubhouses would be an ideal number. As ICCD training bases, Helsinki & Malmo Clubhouses should

attend the training. From a research perspective, we agreed that one large Clubhouse and one smaller Clubhouse would be the ideal mix. An application form has been drawn up and is available from [n.brown@mosaic-clubhouse.org](mailto:n.brown@mosaic-clubhouse.org).

All completed application forms to be received by Mosaic by October 1<sup>st</sup> 2008. All submitted applications will be assessed by the WP4 group at the next ELECT meeting in Munich, Germany in November, where the decision will be made to choose the final 2 Clubhouses to attend the pilot course.

Work got underway planning a schedule for the one-week pilot course and started to take shape. The group

will work on this in the coming months and have a proposed schedule by November. We need articles to support the training, so we ask all partners to submit any articles for consideration as soon as possible (to above e-mail address).

Training materials will also be collected from the outcomes / findings of WP2 & WP3 (particularly the experiences from Oslo and Copenhagen Clubhouses) and other ICCD accredited Clubhouses throughout the world.

Overall, I feel that our group made really good progress during the meeting and our outcome seems not only realistic, but I believe the pilot course can be a big success. The meeting was a great way of building a stronger European Clubhouse coalition and I am looking forward to working with all the partners further in the coming months and meeting again in Munich.

-Neill Brown, Training Coordinator, Mosaic Clubhouse, London



...and relaxing!

### WORKING GROUPS (WORKPACKAGES) OF THE ELECT PROJECT:

1. MANAGEMENT
2. ACTIVATION AND MOTIVATION
3. SUPPORT METHODS FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING
4. TRAINING OF TRAINERS
5. EVALUATION
6. DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION

## Existing study-support practices

**The working group on support methods for education and training prepared a summary of the current study-support methods used by the ELECT project partners.**

The summary reveals

that current study-support practices can be divided into six categories: *information about education; contact with educational institutions; practical help; education or classes in the Clubhouse; tutoring*

*(individual/groups); and study techniques.*

The working group reflected on the survey results during the meeting, concluding that the existing study-support methods were

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Support methods working group in process.

## Download

Seminar presentations  
from [www.elect-project.eu/download](http://www.elect-project.eu/download)



actually more diverse and structured than expected.

The working group partners also felt that the survey results were inspiring and will help in further developing practices. One good example was the Clubhouse Suvimäki (Finland), which arranges an annual student get-together in the

Clubhouse, where it invites local educational institutes.

The final goal of the working group is to create a review of the education-support methods (Working title: "**Support methods and tools: assisting people with mental illnesses to study in educational institutes**"). As the next step, the working

group decided that every partner will work closely on one of the study-support methods identified in the survey. The goal is to describe each of the study-support methods so as to disseminate good practices among European Clubhouses and educational institutes.

*"Good day of studying is like a good day of work: set times for both work and free time."*

## Mental health, Learning and studies

Study psychologist Juha Nieminen from the University of Helsinki gave a lecture on Mental Health learning and studies for the ELECT project partners at the Helsinki meeting.

Nieminen explained that many of the challenges faced by students with mental health problems are similar to those faced by all students. For example, a degree of anxiety is often a normal part of learning new things. However, the intensity of problems may vary of course, and some students require more intensive support than others.

Students are often unaware how common their problems are. They overestimate the abnormality of their own reactions. Nieminen also emphasized that everyone's situation is slightly different. It is good to realize when one is too ill to study and needs to rest, while at the same time, getting back to studies fairly soon is sometimes

better than waiting for perfect health.

### **What does a student need?**

According to Juha Nieminen, students who struggle with their studies need encouragement and help in making realistic study plans. Often students need to turn their negative cycle of thoughts into a positive one. Positive experiences are important in showing that "my efforts are productive".

Nieminen advises students to use the "SMART" goals method. Study plans can be Specific, Measurable, Attractive/Acceptable, Realistic and Time-bound.

### **Studying and well-being**

Juha Nieminen emphasized that studies should never be the only thing in one's life. A good day of studying is like a good day of work: set times for both work and free time. Social support is important and peer sup-

port may have great significance too. Nieminen told about successful peer groups for students whose studies have become prolonged for different reasons.

### **Institutional Challenges**

Students with mental health problems and other difficulties that interrupt full-time studies face "institutional challenges". Part-time studying may be the best solution for some students. However this can be difficult to arrange because financial support is based on a full-time presence. Another problem is that some study programs have little flexibility.

Educational institutes need to continue their study support and guidance. Nowadays services might be too fragmented. In a large educational institute, getting help and information usually demands a lot of effort and patience from students.

## SMART

### GOALS METHOD:

*IT IS GOOD IDEA TO DO:*

**SPECIFIC,  
MEASURABLE,  
ATTRACTIVE/ACCEPTABLE,  
REALISTIC AND  
TIME-BOUND**

STUDYING PLANS.

JUHA NIEMINEN, STUDY  
PSYCHOLOGIST, UNIVERSITY OF  
HELSINKI

## From Clubhouse to the Adult Education. Hannu's Experiences about supported education

**Hannu Salo is an active member of the Suvimäki Clubhouse. Hannu has been participating to a local educational program in the Clubhouse and he has attended to all ELECT project meetings.**

This autumn he will start his studies in the Institute of Adult Education in Jyväskylä (Finland). Here are some of Hannu's thoughts about ELECT project and the meaning of the supported education to him.

### Hannu's experiences about Elect –project:

- I think that the most important and useful things have been to learn about practices of other Clubhouses in Europe and deepening the co-operation with other countries. Also telling about our own practices and comparing them with others. The spirit of the meetings has been very positive and warm.

- Workpackages (WP) have improved their working while people know each other better.

### Hannu's thoughts about supported education and its meaning:

- Very soon I am starting my studies and I am not yet quite sure about how much support I'm going to need. But if I need some support I know I can get it from the Suvimäki Clubhouse. I don't know exactly what kind



Ulla Lehtinen and Hannu Salo attending to the Support Methods working group during the ELECT meeting in Helsinki.

of support I might need.

- Suvimäki educational program was very useful for me when I applied to the school (Jyväskylä Institute of Adult Education). I and Ritva [staff person from Clubhouse] went to the school and applications were filled with the tutor from the school. I also got a lot of useful information about the school at the same occasion. I was a little bit nervous but the whole situation was very encouraging.

- In generally I think there are lot of members who find out the supported education measures very useful in their studies.

### Meeting with tutor in Jyväskylä Institute of Adult Education:

- I had a need to study and because the Clubhouse has an educational program it seemed to be natural to orientate to the studies with it's help.

- Many times when I

have had plans to start the studies applying progress have been a stressful thing to me. Ritva helped me in many things like contacting the school and before that to get information about the school.

- Applying to the school itself was very different from

the actual applying exam. Tutor of the school interviewed me and then me and Ritva had an opportunity to make questions face-to-face to her about the studies. We asked everything from the local busses going near to the school to the questions about the schooling in general.

- The actual being in the school building and getting to know the place where I am going to start my studies, was very important to me. It also helped me to know that the busses go near by from my home to school.

- The tutor gave me a very friendly impression about the staff of the school.

### Plans for the future:

- I am going to finish my studies and orientate to the working life or maybe study more.

Text:

Hannu Salo & Ritva Partanen



*"Educational program was very useful for me when I applied to the school ."*



The Clubhouse of suvimäki in Jyväskylä (Finland).

## MHE seminar greetings from Aalborg

**The manager of the ELECT project Ville Grönberg and Esko Hänninen (Director of STAKES' Tampere Satellite Office) participated in the annual seminar of the Mental Health Europe (MHE). This annual seminar took place in Aalborg, Denmark.**

The main topic of the seminar was "Diversity in Mental Health and Well-being - an opportunity for intercultural dialogue". The seminar explored multiculturalism and promoted the development of mental health policies in Europe.

A most impressive speech was given by European Parliament Member **Poul Nyryp Rasmussen** from Denmark. He presented a 10-point recommenda-

tion for the development of mental health services in Europe. He emphasized *adequate resources in mental health* and pointed out that *recovery orientation should be a dominant paradigm in care and rehabilitation activities. Humanitarianism is the main value behind everything and help must be available when needed.*

### **Elect project presentation at the Kildehuset**

The ELECT project cooperated with the Clubhouse of Aalborg (Kildehuset) during the seminar. Information on the ELECT project was



Seminar visitors at the Kildehuset.

available at the Kildehuset's exhibition desk and the project manager gave a short presentation on the ELECT project during a visit to Kildehuset. The visit to Kildehuset involved some 20 seminar participants.

### **Links:**

<http://www.mhe-sme.org>  
<http://www.kildehuset-fountainhouse.dk/>

*"recovery orientation should be a dominant paradigm in the care and rehabilitation of the mentally ill"*

*Poul Nyryp Rasmussen  
European Parliament member*

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knowledge for welfare and health



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