



## COOPCOM Erasmus+ funded training in Valencia 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> November 2019

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Erasmus+ Programme  
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Paul McKillop, Dawn Smart, Beverley Burgess and Pat Suttmann travelled to Valencia last week to participate in training session for bid-writers. The group consisted of participants from Greece, Romania, Portugal, Turkey, France, Spain and the Isle of Wight.

Each day began with morning energisers in the park which surrounds the city. These aimed to help the group get to know one another and overcome some of the barriers to groupwork. Some exercises such as drawing other members of the group without looking at your paper were hilarious, whereas others such as creating a web of elastic for people to lay on required concentration and trust. Learning basic phrases in other languages was also interesting and fun, helping the group to gel better.

The aim of the visit was to start to write a new European funded project based on intergenerational skills, IT and environment, which some or all members of the group might later sign up to. Initially, before we got to know one another, we worked in country groups. Our team created the idea of a 'Sharing bus' which would take students out into the community to teach the local ageing community IT skills.

After this we all discussed the general idea of an app to teach elderly people how to save energy which young people would teach them how to use. We then split into multi-national teams: Bev used her librarian skills to help with the research, Pat helped the team writing the process to become familiar with Erasmus+ procedure and forms and Paul led the digital production team. By now the teams were really starting to gel and we were very productive.

In order to use google tools we then had an exercise finding our way to various attractions in the city by google maps. Dawn led our group having never used google maps before and successfully navigated us to the University of Valencia where we made a brief video to prove we had found it. Bev's team went to the Science park and Paul's team to the Bioparc (zoo).

Finally, we worked in different teams to create the content of the app, to start a media and dissemination team and to include a social element to the project where senior citizens could teach young people new skills such as gardening. We also started writing the project on the application form and came up with some ideas for names for the project.

We had some free time to explore the beautiful city of Valencia and do some souvenir shopping and experienced a demonstration in the city centre for care workers' rights. Each evening we would cook and wash up together and one evening we went out for a traditional paella.

The highlight of the whole week for everyone was the opportunity to work with new people from a range of cultural and religious backgrounds. We learnt about wedding ceremonies in different countries, how to cook regional dishes and snippets of other languages. Dawn became inspired to learn another language and has started teaching herself Spanish. By the end of the week we felt like a family, supporting one another and befriending each other on facebook. Everyone appreciated the opportunity to practice their English with native speakers and it was humbling to experience one participant who spoke no English at the beginning of the week holding a conversation at the end due to our support and encouragement.

We learnt new skills such as bid-writing, google tools, ice-breaker exercises and project management and have been asked to run some training sessions at the final meeting in France in May. But most of all we believe we have made friends for life.