



Erasmus Thematic Network Project
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Consolidation and further development of CCN

The Consumer Citizenship Network has reached the middle of its first three year cycle. Interest in the network grows and increasingly more universities, research institutes, organizations and governmental authorities cooperate with CNN. The application for the third and final year of the CCN's first three-year cycle has been completed and submitted to the Socrates program. The application emphasizes the importance of continuing to carry out the original intentions of the network while also further developing the structure of the network, the contents of the products, the didactical methodologies employed in consumer citizenship education and the manner of disseminating the outputs of the project. Here is the project summary for year three:

The Consumer Citizenship Network (CCN) was established in 2003 as an interdisciplinary network of educators, researchers and representatives of non-governmental organisations who share an interest in how the individual's role as a consumer can contribute constructively to sustainable development and mutual solidarity. The participants have worked to develop interdisciplinary approaches to central issues dealing with the balance between material and non-material well-being and how one can translate ethical values into everyday practice through conscientious participation in the market. The Consumer Citizenship Network has brought together expertise in the fields of citizenship-, environmental- and consumer education to develop good practice for teaching and accessing consumer citizenship education. The Network consists of 113 institutions in 29 countries. CCN provides channels for dialogue and cooperation in research and development work related to consumer citizenship education.

The project targets lecturers, researchers and teacher trainers in higher education in Europe, students, professionals working with children and young people, public authorities, and associations dealing with citizenship training, sustainable development and consumer issues.

The main outputs are: the further development of communication channels for dialogue and debate; curriculum surveys and competency analysis; teaching and learning guidelines; annual conferences; reports; development of the database of relevant literature; newsletters; maintenance of the CCN web-site; an intranet service and dissemination of the results to a wide audience. In addition the CCN will, in this third and final year of its first three year cycle, initiate several improvements in terms of network structure, content, didactics, dissemination and evaluation in order to increase the efficiency and impact of the work done.

The final application has been sent to all the partners per email. If you have not received it, kindly contact the Core Unit.

Reports available

Two reports of the activities of CCN's first project year have been completed and sent per email to all the partners. One report is the official final report for year one written in the Socrates report format. The other is a more easily read, illustrated and shortened version of

the first report. The reports cover the period from October 2003-October 2004. The illustrated report is suited to sharing with colleagues and staff as well as other individuals interested in the CCN. For printed copies of the illustrated report, feel free to print out the pdf file sent to you or contact the CCN Core Unit and a hard copy of the report will be sent to you.

Please note: *absolutely final registration date 15. April 2005*

The Second CCN Conference **May 26-27 2005**

Bratislava, Slovakia

Public appeal

At the CCN conference in Paris, the suggestion was made that a recommendation or “public appeal” be composed by the CCN which could be presented to university and college leaders, to educational authorities and to politicians. Such an appeal would state what consumer citizenship is and what its goals are. The appeal would explain the importance of consumer citizenship as a constructive tool for social involvement and sustainable development. It would request support for including consumer citizenship in educational programs. The CCN steering group and the thematic groups, particularly in their work preparing teaching/learning guidelines about consumer citizenship, have recognized the need for such an appeal. A draft of an appeal is being prepared and will be presented at the conference.

CCN curriculum surveys and index of experts

During the autumn a number of CCN partners contacted the Core Unit to inquire why their institutions had received a curriculum survey questionnaire which closely resembled the questionnaire the CCN had distributed in the summer. The explanation was that the European Commission’s Directorate for Health and Consumer Protection had hired the Academic Cooperation Association to carry out a survey for them in order to identify experts with the field of consumer education and what topics are taught in the area of consumer protection. On the basis of the results a needs analysis will be prepared to give the Directorate guidance in what needs to be taught and who might be able to do this. The Directorate for Health and Consumer Protection has not previously been directly involved in activities related to former education at the level of higher education. The CCN was asked to assist the ACA in their work and has shared the CCN partner index (the responses to the first questionnaires of October

2004) and the curriculum surveys done by the CCN partners. In this way, the CCN partners will be spared the task of completing many different surveys and the information can be compiled and presented collectively. The Directorate for Education and Culture approved of this suggested (and future) cooperation between the CCN and the Directorate for Health and Consumer Protection.

Launching of the UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development

The CCN, both as individual partners and as a collective network, have participated in the launching of the UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) during the recent months. In Tessaoniki, Greece, in November 2004 a conference entitled: *Cultivating Responsible Lifestyles* was held to signal the start of the DESD. Germany has initiated extensive roundtable discussions which have included the topic of sustainable consumption and consumer citizenship. The CCN in Norway hosted a multifaceted event to launch the DESD on March 15, International Consumers Day. The activities which were sponsored by four governmental Ministries in cooperation, included testing of the UNESCO/UNEP *YouthXChange* toolkit by a group of teachers from around the globe, the holding of a Nordic Council seminar about “*Youth, identity and consumption*”, as well as the annual gathering of the Norwegian UNESCO Commission’s ASP school network. Denmark has also launched the decade with a series of conferences around the country at which several CCN partners have contributed to. For more information about launchings see:

www.UNESCO.org The DESD has 15 key action themes which are being focused on:

- quality education
- overcoming poverty
- gender equality
- health promotion
- HIV/AIDS
- environment
- corporate responsibility-human rights
- sustainable consumption
- sustainable tourism
- rural development
- intercultural understanding
- cultural diversity
- governance
- indigenous knowledge – climate change
- media and ICTs
- biodiversity
- disaster reduction
- market economy
- peace and human security
- water

The Second CCN Conference

May 26-27 2004

Bratislava, Slovakia
The University of Economics

Responsibility means to be “answerable”, to be accountable. “Taking responsibility” is an act of mature civic participation by which we, individually or collectively, contribute to the development of a more just and caring society. In order to be accountable, people must have clearly defined criteria for positive action. Legislation provides one important set of conditions for responsible conduct; public opinion another. Both laws and public opinion should evolve from a process of open, informed debate if they are to be more than mere peer pressure. It is this debate to which the second international CCN conference seeks to contribute. By examining responsible lifestyles, indicators which provide guidance for sustainable consumption can more clearly be viewed.

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The CCN partners are encouraged to INVITE a representative from business and/or your government to attend the conference and participate in the debate on “taking responsibility”.

Their participation can provide a valuable dimension to the discussions about

- the burden of bearing responsibility
- the placing of responsibility where it belongs
- the dynamics of shared responsibility.

(Please note that the Network can not pay for the travel and subsistence expenses of these guests)

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At the moment there are 110 persons registered for the conference. There is still the possibility of applying for a travel grant. The grant can only be awarded to individuals from institutions which are CCN partners. You do not need to apply for a grant if you are making a presentation or are a regular member of a thematic group, have previously attended the thematic group meetings, and will attend the thematic group meeting on Saturday the 28th of May. Please note that the thematic group meetings on Saturday start with a collective meeting 9.30-10.30 together with the CCN steering group and continue until 13.00 when there will be lunch. The thematic groups will continue from 14.00 until 16.00. The main topics of the thematic groups will be to further examine the teaching/learning guidelines, prepare strategies for working with educational authorities and media for disseminating the work and outputs of the Network. A complete agenda for the meetings will be distributed in advance of the conference.

Teaching/learning guidelines

The five CCN thematic groups have worked actively to prepare a draft of a set of teaching/learning guidelines for consumer citizenship education. The draft will be available for all CCN partners to review and comment on at the Bratislava conference. To assure the quality of the guidelines it is important that as many partners as possible examine them and give their comments.

Humanities Archipelago

The Consumer Citizenship Network is now a part of the Humanities Archipelago. The previous year's experience indicates that participation in the Archipelago provides opportunities for Erasmus thematic networks to share experiences and give valuable feedback to the Commission. As several of the other thematic networks involved in the Humanities Archipelago deal with subjects that are closely related to consumer citizenship, cooperation can create useful synergy. The Archipelago intends to arrange a seminar in late autumn/early winter 2005 to which a limited number of participants from CCN can attend. If you are interested, let the Core Unit know and you will be sent further information.

Partners in Africa, Asia, S. America?

The concept of consumer citizenship is based on thinking globally and acting locally. To secure global perspectives in the CCNs debate, dialog, production of materials and dissemination of ideas, the CCN is finalizing its application to Erasmus Mundus (Action 4) in order to try and include partners from outside Europe in the Network's activities. Consumer citizenship, developing responsible lifestyles and sustainable consumption, is a global issue and the perspectives of partners from other continents can contribute positively to the diversity which has already given the Network valuable insights. There is still a need for a few suggestions for partner institutions from other continents. If you work with an institution which you feel confident would be an active partner in CCN, kindly inform the Core Unit before 15 April. Please send the name and contact information (including name of institution) of the individual you recommend and include a few remarks as to why you feel they would be a valuable addition to the CCN.

Website developments

The member site (intranet) with information specifically for CCN partners has functioned for over half a year now. Evaluation of the partners' use of the site indicates that there is not the need originally anticipated. The partners report that they have too many online sites to use, passwords to remember and systems to keep updated about. Communication between CCN partners is carried on foremost per email. As the membersite constitutes a significant expense for the Network, and due to the fact that the partners feel the information there can just as well be available on

the public CCN website, the CCN steering group has decided to close the membersite and transfer the information to the public site. This is also in keeping with the spirit of consumer citizenship in which complete transparency is valued. For news and updates check regularly www.hihm.no/concit

Dates for you to remember

15. April Final registration for CCN Conference in Bratislava (26-27th May 2005)

15. April Final date for submitting papers to be presented at the CCN conference

28. May Steering group meeting and thematic group meetings, Bratislava

1 June Submission of timesheets for work done so far

10 July Final date for submission of reimbursement requests for travel to Bratislava conference

Future activities and funding

There is a clearly expressed hope from many of the partners that the Consumer Citizenship Network continue after its first three-year cycle is over. The CCN has achieved numerous accomplishments in the short time it has existed but much remains to be done to develop and spread the concept of and education about consumer citizenship. Should the CCN decide on applying for a new three-year cycle, the pre-proposal must be completed this fall (for a cycle which would be from October 2006-October 2009). At the coming conference in Bratislava as well as at the thematic group meetings, discussions will be held about the future directions and activities of the CCN. However, if any of the partners would like to send their suggestions directly to the steering group (via the Core Unit) this will be most welcomed. A major challenge of the third year will be to secure funding for future activities. The Norwegian government has contributed significant funds to the initiation of CCN but funding from the Ministry will be reduced after 2006, due to other priorities. A basic strategic plan for future funding for CCN has been made but the Network needs volunteers who would be willing to assist in the process of finding sources of funding. The CCN steering group has decided to establish a fundraising committee. If you are interested in, please contact helping the Core Unit.

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