

ICT and social inclusion in the everyday life of less abled people

**Key Deliverable
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EMTEL - General preface

The European Media Technology and Everyday Life Network (EMTEL) was funded by the European Commission (grant number HPRN ET 2000 00063) under the 5th Framework Programme. It was constituted as a research and training network within the programme, Improving Knowledge Potential and oriented towards “creating a user friendly information society”.

EMTEL conducted interdisciplinary social scientific research and training between 2000 and 2003. This report is one of 12 submitted to the EU in September 2003 as final deliverables for the project. Copies are available on www.lse.ac.uk/collections/EMTEL and a full list of the publications can be found as an Appendix to this report. Contributing partners were as follows:

- ASCoR, The University of Amsterdam
- COMTEC, Dublin City University
- IPTS, Seville
- LENTIC, The University of Liège
- Media@lse, London School of Economics (co-ordinating centre)
- NTNU, University of Trondheim
- SMIT, Free University of Brussels
- TNO, Delft
- SINTEF, Trondheim.

EMTEL sought to bring together young and experienced researchers in a shared project to investigate the so-called information society from the perspective of everyday life. It undertook research under two broad headings: inclusion and exclusion, and living and working in the information society. It then sought to integrate empirical work and developing theory in such a way as to engage constructively with on-going policy debates on the present and future of information and communication technologies in Europe.

Roger Silverstone

EMTEL Co-ordinator

LENTIC Director's Preface

LENTIC is a multidisciplinary research centre of the Faculty for Economics, Management and Social Sciences at the University of Liege (Belgium). This centre focuses on economic, organisational and social aspects of innovation processes, with special emphasis on Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). For many years, LENTIC has been involved in many researches related to the emergence of new organizational forms and the social implications of ICT. Ordered by both Belgian and European institutions, as well as private companies wishing our researchers to ensure a socio-organizational follow-up of the implementation process of ICT, LENTIC's researches cover on different subjects such as the evolution of work linked to ICT, the development of network organisations, the social implications of distant working, ICT use in the non-profit sector, the users involvement in innovation processes, the management of ICT innovation, etc.

Under the framework of the *European Media Technology and Everyday Life Network* (EMTEL), LENTIC supervised one pre-doctoral research fellow hosted by ASCoR at the University of Amsterdam. This research fellow conducted one of the seven individual projects of the EMTEL Network and this report constitutes one of the seven Key Deliverables submitted to the EU in September 2003. Copies are available on www.lse.ac.uk/collections/EMTEL. This project investigates the so-called Information Society and social implications of using ICT from the perspective of everyday life and the user. The research is to be placed in one of the two broad headings of the EMTEL Network, namely *inclusion and exclusion in the information society*, and focuses on people whose involvement in education and labour market is made difficult by such factors as lack of physical abilities, lack of skills and qualifications, lack of incomes, ageing, etc. In continuity with organisational and 'user-oriented' research undertaken within LENTIC for several years, this report investigates the capacity of ICTs to ease integration of 'less abled people' into two privileged fields of everyday life —the training and the working spheres— and tends to translate this empirical and theoretical work into policy recommendations in relation to the development of the European Information Society.

Prof. François Pichault

Director of LENTIC

Executive Summary

This research examines the ICT use in the everyday life of less abled people. Political programmes often designate these people within vulnerable groups excluded or at risk of exclusion. These groups include the unemployed, physically disabled and older people. The aim in this project is to go beyond utopian beliefs in the social impacts of ICTs to argue that while ICT use may be a prerequisite for participation in the information society, it may also create new forms of exclusion. Thus, the main objective of this research is to understand the relationship between ICT use and inclusion/exclusion experiences in the everyday life of less abled people.

The analysis addresses the inclusion impacts of specific diffusion initiatives in the form of two cases studies, an ICT training program for unemployed people and a call-centre employing physically disabled people, and the ICT appropriation processes which contribute to individual “self-designated” trajectories of inclusion among the three selected groups.

The two main research questions are:

- How do the organisational factors and project management resulting from the translation of political aims into a specific context of use influence the translation of various interests (political, local, organizational, individuals) over time to create inclusion or exclusion of less abled people in their everyday life?
- How do the values imbedded in ICT use through appropriation by the less abled contribute to the construction of a “self-designated” inclusion or exclusion in various spheres of their everyday life and so to a multidimensional construction of inclusion?

Both case studies highlight how translation processes operating overtime may influence the relative success or failure of diffusion projects. On the one hand, the investigated cases partly succeeded in giving less abled people their first opportunity to participate in socio-economic processes. On the other hand, they partly failed to achieve their original goals of inclusion. Comparative results from both cases point out many obstacles in the translation of ‘diffusion’ political aims into everyday inclusion experiences.

The comparison of various individual interviews raised the issue of the incorporation of specific values through the appropriation of ICT use. The analysis of those values lead to a distinguishing between three transversal categories representing three specific appropriation

modes that were observed among the three less abled groups and among people having various socio-demographic profiles. Those appropriation modes also reflect different constructions of inclusion through ICT use and vary from “utopian” to rational or “dystopian” attitudes vis-à-vis ICT use and social inclusion.

In conclusion, the research report raises some key-questions for the development of European *e*Inclusion strategies and suggests some innovative ways to better address everyday experiences. The main political question concerns the realism of ICT-based projects for an inclusion policy in the everyday life of less abled people.

Introduction

There is a growing concern among academics and politicians about the increasing presence of information and communication technologies in different spheres of everyday life. In particular, the concerns centre on social impacts, the digital divide between “information-rich” and “information-poor” and the participation of citizens in the new economy and society. In this context, ICTs are represented by contradictory views that range from the utopian to the dystopian. On the one hand, ICT use is considered a prerequisite for participation in the information society; on the other hand, it is perceived to create new forms of exclusion from different social processes. In order to address those various controversies and assumptions about inclusion and exclusion within the information society, this research focuses on the everyday life experiences of groups at risk of social exclusion. The experiences of these groups are considered within the specific contexts of local initiatives launched under the framework of European policy and its translation into national programmes. Fieldwork was conducted in the main French-speaking region of Belgium — Walloon — where the European Social Fund (ESF) favours various social insertion actions. The other main region of Belgium, Flanders, was not targeted in this research for linguistic, methodological and contextual reasons. Indeed, the targeted European funded actions are launched exclusively in Walloon and Brussels, notably because those regions are considered as being more disadvantaged than Flanders.

The main objective of this research project is to understand the relationship between ICT use and inclusion or exclusion experiences in the everyday life of less able people. In particular it will seek to counter utopian and deterministic perspectives through a consideration of “human agency” (Loader, 1998) and social construction of technology (Bijker and Law, 1992). First, it aims at developing an analytical perspective of the social impacts of ICTs – in this case, the computer and the Internet— in the everyday life of less able people, a category that will be defined later in this section. Through the analysis of comparative qualitative data from individual interviews and contrasted case studies, this project seeks to assess the capacities of such technologies to help integration and to improve the quality of life of vulnerable groups. Second, it seeks to suggest alternative scenario and to generate policy recommendations.

The theoretical background of the research draws on different analytical views on ICT use, such as the diffusion or translation theories. In particular, it focuses on the social construction of ICT use through users’ social profiles and symbolic universes, as well as on

the interactions and negotiations that influence innovation processes. The report uses recent studies that argued there is a need to go beyond one-dimensional perspectives on social exclusion (Anthias, 2001; Bhalla and Lapeyre, 1997; Chapman *et al.* 1998; Commins, 1993) and to question the prevalence of the economic sphere on other dimensions of everyday life. In doing so, it highlights the multi-dimensionality, dynamics and contingency of inclusion processes. Finally, the report uses a combination of both approaches to create an integrated analytical and constructivist approach of ICT potentials in terms of inclusion experiences in everyday life.

Since little qualitative research has been conducted on ICT use experiences among less abled people, the methodological framework used in this research and presented in part three consists of different kinds of data and methods. Part two of this report examines the focus on two specific cases of ICT-based projects in the fields of work and training and on individual experiences of three target groups. Results of the analysis are presented in parts four and five within a constructivist approach of ICT use towards inclusion or exclusion processes among less abled people. The report concludes with the political implications of experiences.

1. Context of Research

1.1. Political concerns

This project addresses a hypothetical gap between the following: (i) The political objective, embodied in European and national programmes, of giving all categories of citizens equal opportunities to access ICT. This is seen as a prerequisite for digital and social inclusion. (ii) Individual and social representations about technology, needs for developing *e*-skills and to participate in socio-economic processes. This concern about a potential divergence between political aims and everyday life or contextual realities is evident in European and national political discourses.

Current European discourses about the Information Society are well represented in various documents such as *eEurope* Action plans in 2000 and 2002 or *Strategies for jobs in the information society* (European Commission, 2000). The content of these discourses focuses on a series of strategies developed by the European Union to foster innovation and bring Europe on-line. They stress the potential of *eEurope* for growth and propose initiatives to accelerate Europe's transition to the Information Society. *eEurope 2002: An Information Society For All* (Council of the European Union, Commission of the European Communities, 2000) suggests clustering initiatives around three main objectives: improving

Internet access, developing skills in the knowledge-based economy and stimulating the use of the Internet. The three objectives embody “diffusion” propositions that contend it is necessary for European politics to insure the so-called “e-inclusion”. The *eEurope 2005: An information society for all* report follows a similar line of argument when it “aims to stimulate secure services, applications and content based on a widely available broadband infrastructure” (Commission of the European Communities, 2002, p. 2).

With *e-Inclusion. Le potentiel de la société de l'information au service de l'insertion sociale en Europe* (Commission des Communautés Européennes, 2001), policymakers target the “information-poor” of European society, propose to provide equal opportunities for participation in society and to enable people to acquire adequate skills needed in a knowledge-based economy. *Flash Eurobarometer 125* (2002) reveals considerable inequality between European households in Internet use, for example, 29% of Spanish households, 41% of Belgian households and 65% of Dutch households, have access to the Internet. Inequalities are also reflected in gender, education levels and age. Types of usage also vary considerably between countries. However, the report does identify an overall increase of Internet penetration rates since 2000 from 28% to 40% of European households. Other reports present similar results. *Eurobarometre 50.1* (1999) found that only 8.3% of European citizens use the Internet in their private life compared to 13.3% who use it at work. In contrast, *Eurobarometre 55.2* (2001) found that 34.3% of European people use the Internet. Taken together, these last two reports show an increase in the use of the computer. In 1998, 30.8% of European people use a PC at home and 40.5% on their workplace, compared to 44.3% in 2001. The reports also highlight significant disparities in use depending on age, education or professional status.

Eurobarometre 55.2 (2001) also suggests possible actions that could improve the ICT access of the less favoured categories of European population. Similarly, European discourses seek to promote increased ICT access. Suggestions include greater use of computers and the Internet in schools, providing jobs in the ICT sector. The stated aim is to improve social participation and fight social exclusion. This assumes that increased ICT use, especially in the work and the training fields, will have a positive and “natural” effect on social inclusion processes but this assumption is particularly problematic. The argument relies heavily on assumed links between the economic potential of the information society, the quality of life of European citizens and the social participation of discriminated groups in society as a whole. The focus on ICT as “the” potential tool for improving social inclusion – and by extension on the dangers of digital exclusion for those who are not using it – in these political discourses and strategies makes it possible for them to ignore the idea

that social exclusion is a multidimensional phenomenon. That is, the complex and structural causes of such exclusion extend beyond Internet access or a job in the information society. Furthermore, these discourses make little reference to possible limits on the positive impact of ICT use.

There are some parts of the European discourse – for instance, *Building an inclusive Europe* (2000) and *Strategies for jobs in the information society* (2000) – that seek to promote job creation in the information society through “further articulation between employment, economic reform and social cohesion” (European Commission, 2000). In doing this, they recognise the importance of structural barriers to social inclusion. However, the primary focus remains “the potential new forms of social exclusion, which may emerge with the move towards the knowledge economy and society” (European Commission, 2000). Where discourses do reflect issues of social inclusion that go beyond employment or level of income – like social rights, health, education – the main emphasis is still on access to technology and promoting participation in the information age. The danger is that greater social inclusion is promoted only as a means by which European economies and societies can adapt to accelerated technological and knowledge based innovation.

In order to better understand how a specific awareness of social exclusion entered the European agenda, it may be useful to refer to some observations made in a research report produced for the European Commission (*Social exclusion in European neighbourhoods – processes, experiences and responses*, pp. 40-45). The report argues that initially European policy was drawn up to fight long-term unemployment through the creation of the European Social Fund in 1957. Until 1974, European programmes primarily focused on economic aspects of exclusion or poverty. However, increasingly policies came to recognise the social importance of employment and the European Labour Market and so sought to co-ordinate and promote the exchange of experiences between member states. Then, the focus on social cohesion was officially included in political plans in the nineties and priorities were formulated in terms of housing, health, ageing, etc. However, action remained focused on integration of the Labour Market and improvement of working conditions through different categories of population. Action Programmes such as “Integra” or “Horizon” — the basis of the second case study in this research project — have been launched during this period. The primary focus on economic aspects of inclusion may be perceived as reductive in the development of social inclusion in the everyday life of discriminated groups. This report will look in more detail later on this potential divergence between political discourses, their translation into European and national action programmes and everyday life experiences.

These European objectives of the development of the information society and the improvement of social inclusion are translated by member states in terms of their own political agenda, notably through such institutions as the European Social Fund favouring local initiatives in the framework of European funded national programmes. Different action programmes, such as “Objective 3”, “Horizon” or “Equal”, are or have been launched in Belgium whose national context is quite representative in terms of ICT penetration and social exclusion in the European Union. Thus, Belgian figures for ICT penetration into households and among citizens are close to the European averages. Eurobarometer 50.2 (1999) estimates the penetration of Home-PCs in Belgium at about 33%, compared to the European mean of 30.8% for PC use at home and 40.5% for use on the workplace (Eurobaromètre 50.1, 1999). Internet penetration rate among Belgian citizens is about the same as the EU-average of 8% in 1998 (Eurobaromètre 50.1, 1999; Eurobarometer 50.2, 1999). In 2002, 41% of Belgian households have an access to the Internet at home compared to 40% of European households (Flash Eurobarometer 125, 2002). Similarly, social indicators used in the “National action plan for social inclusion” (PANincl, 2001) presents Belgium as relatively representative of the European situation in terms of social inclusion.

However, if the Belgian context as whole is representative of the European average, the same cannot be said of Walloon. The region diverges from the Belgian average in terms of ICT penetration rates, and in social and economic terms. A survey by the Walloon Agency for Telecommunications (Agence Wallonne des Télécommunications, 2001) found favourable penetration rates of Home-PCs - 44% of Walloon citizens compared to 44.3% European average but with a lower penetration of the Internet use. Only 23% of Walloon citizens used the Internet in 2000, compared to the European average in 2001 of 34.3%. Walloon also has higher unemployment than the European average. In 1998, 13.5% of the Walloon population was unemployed, which surpasses the European average of 10.1% and the Belgian average of 9.2% (DOCUP Objective 3 Wallonie-Bruxelles, 2000). The long-term unemployed constitute a higher proportion of unemployed people in Wallonia (70%) than in the European Union (48.6%) and in Belgium (58.5%) (DOCUP Objective 3 Wallonie-Bruxelles, 2000). There are also significant differences between Flanders and Walloon in terms of the number of multinational corporation located there, the development of small enterprises, level of income, etc.

These divergences may explain the focus of various local initiatives on the employment, education, and vocational training, and the attention given in particular to the development

of technological use and skills to improve participation in the new economy (DOCUP Objective 3 Wallonie-Bruxelles, 2000). That is also why European action programmes in Walloon give a high priority to ICT-based programmes intended to improve social inclusion of less favoured groups such as disabled or unemployed people, ethnic minorities, etc. Although many ICT-based actions are launched at the local level of those discriminated groups, there is little understanding of the relationship between socio-political objectives and perspectives on inclusion processes, on the one hand, and their everyday life experiences, on the other hand. Little attention is paid to the specific context, technological or social needs and the structural causes of the social exclusion of these groups. There is also limited understanding of durable positive affect of such initiatives on their everyday life.

This research seeks to highlight everyday perspectives about ICT use and inclusion processes through the analysis of individual stories among the so-called discriminated groups and of collective experiences in the context of European funded initiatives. The suggested approach reflects interactions between social, local and individual constructions of ICT potentials in inclusion experiences. In line with recent studies that highlight the necessity for going beyond one-dimensional perspectives on exclusion processes, this research also questions the over-emphasis on work and training at the expense of other dimensions of everyday life. Thus, it seeks to investigate the relationship between ICT use and social inclusion as a multidimensional phenomenon.

1.2. Less abled people

The notion of “less ability” is rooted in political discourses, which tend to designate vulnerable groups as excluded or at risk of exclusion because of such factors as lack of skills, lack of income, age, gender, disability, etc. This conception of exclusion embraces divergent groups and experiences, but it fails to consider social and individual definitions, that is, the “self-designation” process of included or excluded people. Furthermore, it is difficult and dangerous to designate specific groups as included or excluded in a homogeneous sense.

Therefore, this report seeks to identify specific groups that are often targeted and “hetero-designated” in social inclusion policy or ICT action programmes at European and national levels. It then goes on to investigate whether these are “self-designated” as included or excluded in their everyday context. Among those target groups, the focus is on ICT users and non-users in various spheres of everyday life; their own representations of ICT and

inclusion in different spheres of everyday life; and their respective social constraints or potentials.

In this view, less abled people may still belong to various categories, such as the elderly, the unemployed, the disabled or ethnic minorities, and a selection had to be made. The starting point was data from the European Social Fund (ESF), which seeks to develop human resources and to improve work and education systems in each country of the European Union. The ESF gives funds for national programmes, including social inclusion projects in Belgium. One of these programmes, “Objective 3”, focuses on adaptation and modernisation of education, training and employment systems. It includes prior actions for improving socio-professional insertion and social inclusion, notably through ICT-based training programmes for unemployed people that constitute the first group of less abled people. Other programmes, such as “Adapt” and “Employment”, which have been conducted from 1995 until 1999, also developed specific programmes to improve social inclusion among women, young people without qualifications, disabled people and people excluded from work. Some interesting projects, funded under the heading of “Employment”, have become permanent and are still running, for instance, a social enterprise employing disabled workers and this has provided the second target group for this research project. Finally, a third group was chosen in line with raising concerns about ICT use among older people, especially older workers or retired people. This group is increasingly targeted in *e*-strategies at European and national levels and is “designated” as a group at risk of exclusion from the Information Society. However, few ICT-based initiatives have been launched to fight against exclusion of older people and most existing experiences focus on the development of their ICT use in everyday life. Therefore, the third group was chosen outside any specific initiative but rather in relation to political concerns and how group members may appropriate ICT social potential into their everyday life. This group consists of people aged over 50, most of who had retired.

Two groups were specifically chosen because of their links to two specific ICT-based initiatives. The first selected case is funded under the heading of the “Objective 3” programme and is an ICT “pre-qualifying” training programme run by a non-profit organisation for unemployed people with very low qualifications. This project aims to enable inactive people to develop ICT skills, as well as other basic skills like a minimum knowledge of economy, the labour market or social rights. In the long term, the organisation seeks to provide them with sufficient skills and knowledge for re-integration into a working life. The second case is a call-centre, which employs physically disabled people. This project has been launched under the heading of “Horizon”, under the

“Employment” programme, and with funding until 1999. The call-centre has been developed in collaboration with a telecommunication company as a means to integrate disabled people into a “normal” working life.

2. Conceptualising ICT, Everyday Life and Social Inclusion Experiences

2.1. ICT in everyday life experiences

The two main cases were selected in two specific fields of everyday life, which are presented in political discourses as particularly relevant for social inclusion processes: the training and working spheres. However, the everyday life of less abled people reflects a more complex reality where ICT use or non-use takes place in other contexts and is incorporated in an extended range of activities. Everyday life is usually defined as a set of routine activities of human existence. “Routines, rituals, traditions, myths, these are the stuff of social order and everyday life” (Silverstone, 1994, p. 18). Everyday life, “denotes the routine activities of human existence” (Lefebvre, 1971 in Lie and Sørensen, 1996, p. 2). “Generally, the everyday is associated with what we do over and over again, today the same as yesterday, thus signifying stability and the reproduction of social patterns” (Lie and Sørensen, 1996, pp. 2-3).

Lie and Sørensen highlight a trend in social sciences towards distinguishing between work and everyday life, spheres of production and reproduction and which considers everyday life “as a residual category of what is outside work” (Lie and Sørensen, 1996, pp. 13-14). This conception of everyday life is concerned with how to distinguish between paid and non-paid work, how to consider the flexibility of work at home or working conditions, etc. However, a more useful conception would include social fields and view everyday life “as something that is related not to a specific sphere of life, but rather to critical assessments of functions or activities making connections between them in an individual’s life”, that is, “a social space, which the individual citizen is able to oversee and manage” (Lie and Sørensen, 1996, p. 15).

This research approaches ICT use by less abled people in everyday life as a multi-dimensional reality, which embeds various activities from routines to non-routines activities, from public to private activities. This approach to analysing ICT use or non-use seeks to move the “attention from research and development to users of technology” (Lie and Sørensen, 1996, pp. 13-14) and their context of use, and extends the notion of

professional or private use to the concept of domestic use. Domesticity is that reality “which subsumes home, family and household, and [...] is an expression of the relationship between public and private spheres” (Silverstone, 1994, p. 50).

This everyday perspective also tends to combine reflexive and contextual aspects of ICT use where ICT is conceptualised as one element of the everyday life of the less abled among others. Thus, ICT use is investigated in a contextual way from a user’s perspective. This means ICT use cannot be isolated in a “virtual” sphere independent from the other everyday fields. ICT use is an experience, which may exist in different spheres of everyday life, may enable them to interrelate with each other and may be appropriated in various ways depending on social or structural constraints and on human strategies. This perspective of ICT in everyday life is positioned within a debate that denounces the false dichotomy between the virtual and the real. This debate is addressed in some studies on virtual and real life communities. For instance, Bakardjieva (2003) criticises the distinction between both kinds of communities and argues that “the so called ‘real life’ communities are in fact virtual in the sense that they are mediated and imagined” (Bakardjieva, 2003, p. 4). She also cites other authors’ view on virtual community: “The Net is only one of many ways in which the same people may interact. It is not a separate reality” (Wellman and Gulia, 1999, p. 334, in Bakardjieva, 2003).

This research project follows in the tradition of Bakardjieva and suggests that virtual communities “cannot be studied and characterised exclusively by what is produced online as the cultures enacted online have their roots in forms of life existing in the ‘real’ world” (Bakardjieva, 2003, p. 5). Wellman and Haythornthwaite (2002) also insist on the evolution of research towards the investigation of the ways in which Internet is embedded and routinely incorporated into users’ everyday life.

This research does not focus on virtual communities and the behaviour of the less abled online since some of them are not using the Internet, because they do not have access or do not want to access it. Others only use a computer at work. Some have used ICT for a while and are not using it anymore. However, Bakardjieva’s view on various forms of being and acting together may be usefully be applied to an analysis of various ICT appropriation processes observed among less abled people. The continuum from consumers to communitarian usages that the author suggests characterise the Internet use of her respondents may also be applied to ICT use in general. Rational values or attitudes among consumers, like efficiency or usefulness, may either be incorporated into Internet use through infosumers’ behaviours (Bakardjieva, 2003, p. 7), or into computer use through

“jobs-oriented” or skills development attitudes. Similarly, if the Internet may be a privileged space to develop new kinds of sociability or community, mediation or social values may also be incorporated into the domestic use of a PC, especially through intergenerational, professional or friendly relationships. This conception of ICT in everyday life is the basis for the construction in this report of an analytical approach of ICT use experiences (see figure 1).

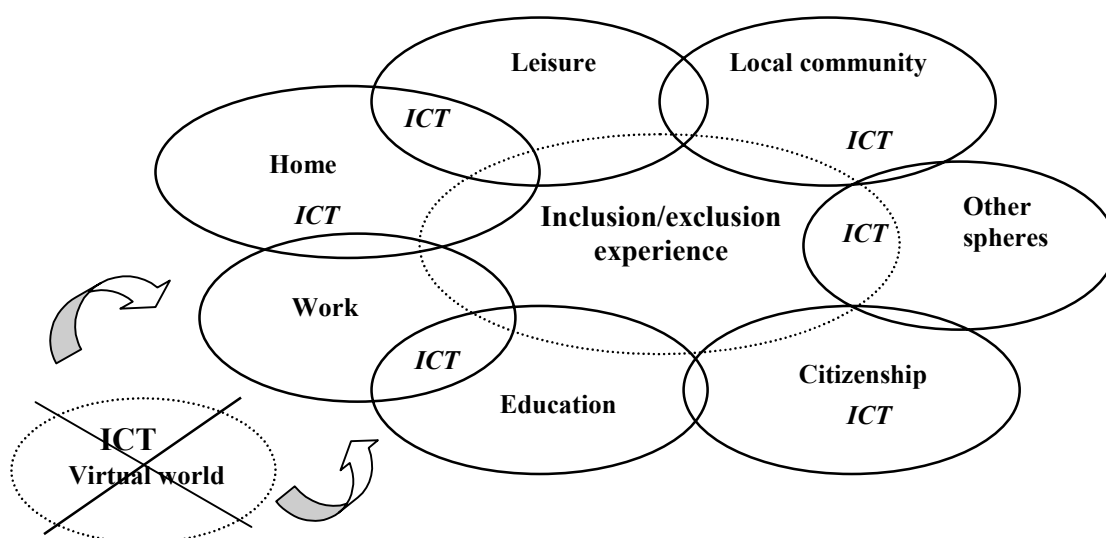


Figure 1: ICT use experiences

This conceptualisation made it possible to select cases for study based on where ICT use took place at a certain moment in time. It was found that some individuals appropriated ICT in other spheres of their everyday life or in their domestic space, that is, leisure, family, training, political participation, etc. The social impacts of ICT use on inclusion or exclusion were analysed in the two specific contexts of training and working, but also in other aspects of everyday life since “technologies potentially affect all spheres of life such as work, home, and leisure” (Lie and Sørensen, 1996, pp. 13-14). This was also why the investigation and analysis was based on case studies as well as on individual in-depth interviews. This choice of methods was also based on different analytical perspectives that emerge from the literature on ICT use. Each perspective follows its own approach and methods to investigate ICT use in accordance with its own view on technology and society. Various theories are presented in the following section.

2.2. Analytical perspectives on ICT use

There are different ways to analyse ICT use, depending on how one perceives the relationship between technology and society (Chambat, 1994). The most common approach is “diffusion sociology” (Chambat, 1994) and this has been dominated by Rogers’ theory on

the adoption of innovations (Rogers, 1962). Rogers has developed a centre-periphery model, which is essentially descriptive and normative but still widely used in studies on the speed of an innovation from its conception to its adoption among different categories of users. This model is based on a “technicist” belief, which assumes that users may adapt themselves to devices or services as they have been produced, may use them on an expected way and exploit its potentialities. Chambat explains (1994, p. 262) how social inertia may constitute a weakness for technological innovation and an obstacle for ICT diffusion and adoption. This approach also means that the adoption of ICT may be related to socio-demographic profiles, economic or social resources of potential users. Because ICT is viewed as a given in the propagation process of usages, the starting point for the analysis is the diffusion process, where it is possible to develop actions on social factors in order to improve ICT penetration rates into different categories of population.

Therefore, this perspective is often used for the construction of European and national political discourses and programmes. But this approach has been criticised for its political assumptions and because of its technological determinism, which suggests more or less futurist scenarios that are rarely based on concrete observations of real experiences, but rather on surveys and observations of general trends in diffusion or innovation processes. However, this model may be useful in helping to predict reception to an innovation where the technology is diffused and help identify socio-demographic factors influencing adoption or rejection of an innovation. In more recent versions of his theory, Rogers suggests new perspectives on the diffusion process and give more space to social networks and innovation within organisations, but still focuses on diffusion through propagation and imitation of different categories of potential users (Rogers, 1995). This EMTEL research project does not directly adopt the Rogers’ approach to ICT use among less abled people but does adapt it to characterise main action programmes, which are launched at various political levels and concern less abled people in their everyday life.

Instead, this research draws more fully on Approaches that seek to analyse ICT use in specific contexts of everyday life, in particular the social construction of ICT use in translation processes and through individual and symbolic representations of less abled people.

The translation perspective does not present innovation as a linear process of propagation but rather as an operation, that creates interest among actors. The success of the innovation is strongly related to the specific context where managers of an innovation have translated their project in different levels, according to technical, social, economical and

organisational factors (Akrich, Callon and Latour, 1988). This approach is to this project because it helps in our understanding of the important factors in the success or failure of the management of ICT-based initiatives over time and their convergence or divergence vis-à-vis initial aims. Of particular use, is the focus in translation theory on the existence of a network of links between the innovation object and the questions as to whether or not every actor is interested in using the innovation. Thus, it highlights all the convergence or divergence points between the object and interests emerging within the network (Akrich, Callon and Latour, 1988). Amblard *et al.* explain how human and non-human beings within a network participate in the social construction of innovation through permanent interactions of their interests (1996, pp. 134-135). The ability to construct appropriate innovators networks, to “choose the right stakeholders” (Akrich, Callon and Latour, 1991), to translate a project in different levels of action, to redefine alliances during the process may be crucial for the success of an innovation process. Translation actions may also help to explain the technological innovation, the context of implementation and usages emerging from different categories of actors. Therefore, the management of an innovation project is considered as crucial to the failure or the success of the project and even affect technological content.

The model suggested in this paper aims to present a retrospective analysis of innovation projects in this case, collective experiences of ICT use - and focuses on organisational and contextual factors that influence the success or failure of an innovation process over time. This approach is helpful for analysing translation processes and impacts of ICT-based initiatives, in particular for assessing the potential convergence or divergence between initial aims of the projects, defined in terms of social or digital inclusion, and the success or failure of the project in terms of ICT use.

Another useful approach is presented in the appropriation perspective of ICT use in specific everyday contexts. This looks at how individual strategies and symbolic representations developed by users and non-users may influence the construction of an innovation. This offers an “anti-determinist” approach to ICT use and society (Chambat, 1994). It highlights the productive role of users in technological developments, the influence of deviant usages compared to standard usages, the meaning and symbolic constructions related to those deviancies and the influence of individual contexts of users on this symbolic construction. The notion of appropriation also refers to the stage of incorporation in the domestication process, that is, the stage when technological devices may be used “in ways somewhat removed from the intentions of designers or marketers” (Silverstone, 1994, p. 129). However, appropriation may also be extended to the conversion stage, which constitutes a

further step in the domestication process of ICT into everyday life where technology is constructed through its relationships with the outside world. This conversion reflects different kinds of social construction of ICT use, which may vary from a consumer to a "communitarian" appropriation (Bakardjieva, 2003) depending on the individual values incorporated into the usage. Both stages of incorporation and conversion imply a "work in the practical as well as the symbolic domain" (Lie and Sørensen, 1996, p. 10). The way individuals perceive and representation technology is central to this analysis, irrespective of whether or not they use it. Thus, the technology is questioned and not taken for granted.

While the translation perspective seeks to analyse the impact of innovations, in specific social networks and collective experiences, appropriation approaches seeks to investigate users and their behaviours through individual stories. Thus, it focuses on the relationship between one or several isolated users, on the one hand, and technology or ICT, on the other hand.

However, this EMTEL project seeks to combine collective and individual aspects of both constructivist perspectives. It analyses how specific social networks manage innovation processes over time through the translation of various interests and how appropriation strategies of users or non-users participating in such networks may influence the construction of ICT use in everyday experiences of inclusion or exclusion. ICT use may converge with individual interests in some fields of everyday life rather than others, depending on the way that the network has been constructed and the process managed. Thus, this analytical approach seeks to understand how users translate ICT-based initiatives in one specific field of everyday life as well as in other spheres of everyday life through appropriation/non-appropriation by users. But it also sets out to understand interactions between translation processes and appropriation strategies. The particular focus is on the interactions circumscribed by social constraints or opportunities experienced by less able people in training and in work (the call-centre) as well as in their everyday life in the case of unemployed, disabled and older people.

2.3. Social exclusion processes

Social exclusion is a relatively new concept and few definitions reflect the whole complexity of the phenomenon. Part of the problem is the one-dimensionality of investigations, which tended to concentrate on economic life. More recently, academic discourses mostly agree on its multidimensional characteristic¹. Exclusion is conceptualised through different social processes and dimensions of everyday life. Thus, Anthias (2001) distinguishes different exclusion processes: political or institutional, cultural, spatial, social

and economic. Bhalla and Lapeyre (1997) also refer to economic and social aspects of exclusion, as well as to political factors such as citizenship, civil rights, etc. Another major argument is that integration into society depends on four main systems: civic, economic, social and interpersonal (Chapman *et al.*, 1998; Commins, 1993; Phipps, 2000). Thus, increasingly, the literature has highlighted the multidimensional causes of social exclusion and made claims for an integrated approach.

However, the concept, even viewed as multidimensional, still poses persistent problems (Anthias, 2001, pp. 838-839). Anthias argues that social exclusion is not only multidimensional in the sense that it is influenced by different processes —economic, political, or cultural— but that the concept is also “relational” because these different causes “will affect categories of persons differently depending on whether they are treated in terms of gender, in terms of ethnicity or in terms of class” (Anthias, 2001, p. 839). Other related concepts are also viewed as relative. For instance, Sen points out that equality in terms of one variable may coincide with inequality in terms of another, so for example a person may have relative equality in terms of health but not education (1992). Thus, in/equality is never absolute. This project has used both characteristics of relativity and multidimensionality in its investigation of ICT potentials for inclusion and exclusion.

Another problem centres on the assumption of a binary division between those who are included and those who are not. Here, the relativity of exclusion can be seen as “dynamic and contextual” (Anthias, 2001, p. 839). This suggests a more qualified view on inclusion or exclusion processes, with potential “in-between” cases or differential processes that go beyond the binary opposition. However, the literature also distinguishes between active and passive members of society, as if being included or able to participate would necessarily mean being active. This leads Phipps to conceive of social inclusion as “‘bringing in’ disadvantaged individuals, groups and communities, and involving them in decision-making, enabling and empowering them to develop and fulfil their potential in the full range of their social, community and work activities” (Phipps, 2000, p. 54).

There remain two related problems. On the one hand, many arguments about exclusion processes remain “systemic”, that is, exclusion is seen as dependent only on “system failures” (Phipps, 2000, p. 43). Within this perspective, social exclusion is seen as based on the “hetero-designation” of certain groups or individuals, which are defined as “the excluded”. On the other hand, many authors ignore the human potential to construct “inclusion” within one or different everyday spheres. Few concerns are raised about “self-designation” processes, the influence of identity on inclusion and exclusion boundaries, or

personal choices, which may intervene in those identities. The “danger here is a tendency to pathologise and homogenise, and produce a disqualified identity” (Anthias, 2001, p. 838).

Various conceptualisations relate inclusion or participation to more “active” attitudes within a system. This attitude is viewed positively compared to more “passive” attitudes and participation is seen as authorised or enabled by the system. Within this perspective the kind of participation proposed by Phipps does not consider the possibility for individuals to build their own participation or non-participation, that is, it ignores “human agency” (Loader, 1998). Is participation necessarily active and as such implied in actions or decisions? Does participation give a de facto opportunity to be empowered in a specific social area? Could participation not be synonymous of loyalty or “forced” participation vis-à-vis a specific field as a way to stay “in”, even under “depreciating” conditions? In some cases, “exclusion may reflect voluntary individual choices” (Bhalla and Lapeyre, 1997, p. 415).

Therefore, the difficulty many authors have in providing an adequate definition of social exclusion may be due the absence of main structural or contextual arguments and concerns about the “human agency” of different individuals or groups in participation processes. The concept of multidimensional inclusion or exclusion processes highlights the difficulty individuals or groups may experience in dealing with their simultaneous belonging to different everyday life systems. Thus, inclusion should be analysed not only in terms of collective and macro-social process and investigations but also in terms of the social identities influencing those processes.

This research uses the “hetero-designation” approach as a starting point for investigating the interaction, convergence or divergence of individual and social processes in different contexts of everyday life. A political perspective often views social inclusion as a “hetero-designation” process where discriminated groups are “designated” as excluded because of social or structural factors like having paid employment, qualifications, participating in public life, etc. However, people, do not necessary define themselves in terms of common categories; instead they construct their identities in relation to their own trajectories, as well as to social and contextual factors. Thus, inclusion is as a “self-designation” process conducted through reflexive constructions in everyday contexts and in relation to social identity. Both perspectives may converge or diverge depending on the way that individual or groups are able to construct their identity in their social context. Indeed, everyday interaction with social factors and structures and the potential for human agency may evolve

over time depending on the evolution of individual specific contexts, as well as on changes at the local and global scale.

3. Analytical Framework and Methodology

3.1. ICT and inclusion: Towards an integrated approach

Unequal access to ICTs adds a new dimension to the social exclusion debate. ICT use may be viewed as a new element of everyday life, which intervenes in exclusion processes in relation to other dimensions —political, economic or cultural²-. Current political and academic discourses tend to highlight, and sometimes to over-estimate, the role of ICT in inclusion processes. This is evident for instance in the “digital divide” discourse, which talks about digital exclusion and views reducing the digital gap as a social and economic priority. This political discourse often assumes a causal relationship between ICT use and economic or social welfare. However, similar assumptions are made in the academic literature where ICTs are seen potentially as an enabling technology. So for instance, access to ICTs may enable people to re-enter the labour market or they may “to enhance community connectedness” (Phipps, 2000, p. 45).

If ICTs are seen as the source of social and economic development, there is a real danger that will also be seen as the solution for improving social inclusion. Instead, the exclusion problem is much more complex than just “giving access” even to an adequate technology. Just as some authors define inequality in terms of differentiation and disadvantage, so the “digital divide” would reflect inequality or exclusion while also being relative to historical, social and cultural contexts (Wyatt *et al.*, 2000, pp. 5-6). Wyatt et al also acknowledge “the significance of perception in relation to inequality and disadvantage” (2000, p. 6) but extend it to include the idea put forward by Giddens (1984) that social structures and material aspects constitute conditions for experiencing dis/advantages. This means that there is no strict dichotomy between social structures and social meanings in the analysis of inequality or exclusion.

Wyatt et al also seeks to combine both perspectives in an analysis of inclusion or equality within the Information Society. Quoting Loader (1998), they note:

“whilst the negative implications of exclusion are examined in a range of contexts, the overall argument [...] is that ‘inclusion’ must be a process which is the result of the ‘human agency’ of the many diverse individuals and cultural or national groups who should help shape and determine, and not merely ‘access’, technological outcomes” (Wyatt *et al.*, 2000, p. 15).

This research project seeks to investigate how “human agency” may influence inclusion processes and the social construction of technology (Klein and Kleinman, 2002) within a framework of structural factors and social contexts. Here, structures are understood to be “specific formal and informal, explicit and implicit ‘rules of play’, which establish distinctive resource distributions, capacities, and incapacities and define constraints and opportunities for actors depending on their structural location” (Kleinman, 1998 in Klein and Kleinman, 2002). The project pretends neither to understand all structural aspects of social inclusion processes in relation to ICT, nor to give individual reflexivity all potentialities. But rather to understand the dialectical relationship between “agency” and structure as a space where ICT use may be constructed and negotiated in a move towards social inclusion.

Thus, this approach combines the reflexive and contextual aspects of ICT use and inclusion experiences, before going on to analyse the context in which the inclusive potential of ICTs could be played out. The project looks at the perspective of users but not existing in a “virtual” sphere independent from the others. ICT use is viewed as an experience, which may be translated and appropriated towards higher levels of inclusion depending on social or structural constraints and on human strategies. The research adopts a contextualized and dialectical perspective within an integrated and constructivist approach to understand the relationship between ICT use and inclusion processes in the everyday life of discriminated groups. The approach opens the possibility that different perspectives on the potential of ICTs for inclusion may be adopted and that a different research questions therefore may need to be formulated. Those research perspectives will be combined in one integrated model in order to give a rich and in-depth analysis of ICT as dis/enabling technology.

The starting point of this analysis is the political argument that stresses the role of social factors in ICT diffusion and views inclusion as an “hetero-designation” process. As explained before, most political discourses are based on the idea that ICTs may create greater inclusion. This perspective assumes a positive impact of ICT use for discriminated groups especially in socio-economic processes and it reflects frequent arguments about the necessity of raising penetration rates to improve social inclusion as a whole and to launch ICT-based actions in the socio-economic fields. This political assumption forms the starting point of the research questions. The project considers “diffusion-based” initiatives and highlights how organisational factors and project management may influence the translation of political aims in a specific context of use. It also considers how the actions of certain interests - political, local, organisational, individual- over time seek to create

inclusion or exclusion of less abled people in their everyday life. The actions of these stakeholders' actions may influence the success or failure of innovation projects in terms of achieving their original "political" goals - in this case, social inclusion through ICT diffusion in the socio-economic areas. This project investigated the influence of these translation processes on inclusion or exclusion outcomes in two case studies.

Furthermore, the analysis of "subjective" factors involved in such initiatives may help an understanding of the reflexive role of ICT users. ICT potentials may also be constructed through cognitive and symbolic representations of participants and appropriated through inclusion experiences. The aim is to understand how values incorporated into ICT use through appropriation of the technology by the less abled may contribute to the construction of a "self-designated" inclusion or exclusion trajectory in various spheres of their everyday life and so to a multidimensional construction of inclusion. Thus, the research question addresses the way that experiences of ICT use may or may not create a multidimensional inclusion depending on appropriation by individuals in specific contexts of use and on the potential transfer of experience between various spheres of everyday life - or instance, from their training experience to leisure activities. It seeks to investigate the human potential to appropriate ICT and to translate a specific experience of use in everyday and multidimensional experiences in three sets of individual interviews.

This project seeks to investigate reflexive potential intervention in the translation of political aims in specific and contextual actions and in individual appropriation of ICT use into everyday experiences. The approach presents a view of inclusion as an experience constructed through interactions between individuals and social contexts or structures, that is, the outcome of a negotiation between self-reflexivity and social norms. This constructivist approach focuses on the role of "human agency" in the construction of ICT potentials, operating in a social context characterised by structural conditions or norms that play out in everyday life and in the ICT-based initiatives in which some of them are participating. This constructivist view argues that the ICT potentials for inclusion may depend on the way in which each inclusion or exclusion experience is constructed. This process of construction takes place through interactions between reflexive and social factors, experiences that are translated over time and in relation to different spheres of everyday life.

3.2. Methodology

Methodological choices were based on what would enable the researcher to adequately observe processes of translation and appropriation. Most Internet research has concentrated on online interactions or behaviours (Jones, 1999) and has thus lent itself to methods of

data collection like using Computer-Mediated Communication for the analysis of online contents (Mann and Stewart, 2000). This project did not treat “online group phenomena in isolation from the actual daily life experiences of the subjects involved” (Bakardjieva, 2003, p. 2). Instead, it selected the option suggested by Bakardjieva (2003), that is, an exploration of the experiences and motivations that lead Internet users to develop or not different forms of social behaviours or what she calls “virtual togetherness”. This idea is extended to everyday experience of ICT users, who are appropriating a PC and/or Internet in various ways in specific contexts and experiences and not necessarily online. In an extension of the research on domestication (Lie and Sørensen, 1996; Silverstone, 1994), social construction of technology (Bijker and Law, 1992; Chambat, 1994) and on “human agency” (Loader, 1998; Wyatt et al., 2000), specific cases and individual everyday experiences were investigated through offline qualitative methods.

3.2.1. Collection of data

The fieldwork consists of two cases selected from European funded initiatives in Belgium to represent two different fields of everyday life usually addressed in social inclusion policy - training and working-. It also sought to target two different groups of less abled people who are experiencing problems in these areas. In each case, data on translation processes was collected through in-situ observations, key-actor interviews and documents; material on agency and appropriation was gathered through in-depth interviews with participants. Material on the third research group was gleaned from interviews with people aged over 50, a group often seen as being at risk of social exclusion because of low ICT penetration rates. Those interviewees are not less abled in the sense that they are or have been excluded from socio-economic processes in the sense that unemployed or physically disabled people may be. However, they are politically defined as people at risk of becoming excluded in the long run. This project focused on isolated ICT users over 50 years of age in order to offer an alternative to the usual quantitative approach to ICT use among older people and because European funded programmes in Belgium do not privilege local actions for elderly people. This group of interviewees were recruited through the so-called “snowball method” and are mostly retired.

Desk research, the literature review and the construction of the research design was done between July and November 2001. The first fieldwork was undertaken in November and December 2001 and took the form of interviews conducted among eleven ICT users aged over 50 and key-actors that fell within the two main case studies.

In January and February 2002, research on the training case study took the form of

participant observation, programme document research about the training centre and programme and six exploratory interviews with participants. It was then decided to interview participants in different training programmes and to meet the six participants of the current programme again two months after the end of the training in February 2002³. Therefore, seventeen interviews were conducted between February and April 2002: twelve with participants of the third programme (including two interviews with each of four participants of the third programme), three with participants of the second one and two with participants of the first one. Here, difficulties were encountered in contacting and recruiting former participants. One only agreed to speak at the telephone and refused a face-to-face interview. In addition, some of former participants were no longer unemployed by the time they were interviewed. Nevertheless, had they experienced a period of inactivity after the training programme and are included in the table presenting various personal trajectories of interviewees (Appendix 1).

Research on the second case study took place between April and June 2002 but with some exploratory interviews in January 2002. In-situ observations were undertaken at the call-centre over two days and management agreed to give the researchers access to the telecommunication material of the operators in order to listen to conversations with clients. Then, twelve interviews with operators of the call-centre were done and one with a former operator. The second table in Appendix 1 presents the results of this research.

In both case studies, key-actor interviews were conducted using an interview guide constructed on the basis of key concepts from translation theory and from stated political objectives outlined in the European funding programme attached to the project. Questions addressed the whole process of the project, the initial aims, the European framework, the different actors implied, the convergence and divergence of interests, the evolution of the objectives over time, etc. Each interview ended with an open question allowing for a critical view of the project and its social impacts on participants.

Most of the interviews took place at the training centre or in a more social context. Only one of the interviewees from the group of disabled workers was interviewed in his new work place. These individual interviews also followed an interview guide, partly structured around the specific cases, located in two specific fields of everyday life. These interviews began with an open question about their trajectory before training or working in the call-centre; they were asked to express their opinion about these and their view on their socio-professional situation.

Another interview guide was constructed on an open basis and were used in the three sets of interviewees — seventeen unemployed, thirteen physically disabled and eleven people aged over 50 who were not necessarily concerned by specific initiatives⁴. Here, they were asked to explain how they adopted and appropriated (or did not) different aspects of ICT over time and in which fields of everyday life. The aim was to re-construct their experience of ICT use and inclusion through their individual trajectories and within their own meanings. Interviews also ended with a more critical question about their trajectory and their future projects.

3.2.2. Analysis

A content analysis was used to analyse the documents provided by both organisations and included material submitted to the European Social Funds, presentations of the project, advertising documents, etc. This helped to identify the main political objectives of the projects and their evolution, as well as their main tactical and strategic stages. Interviews with key-actors and in-situ observation contributed to a retrospective analysis of interactions between different categories of actors such as managers, operators and clients.

The content of individual interviews among the three groups was analysed through a thematic re-transcription of their discourses, structured around the main topics that emerged from the interviews themselves. This analysis focused on usages and representations on the appropriation of ICTs in various spheres of everyday life and their inclusion or exclusion experience. The qualitative analysis of the individual experiences of unemployed and disabled people was also processed through case studies in order to relate individual stories of participants to their experience in both initiatives and to be able to identify convergence or divergence of interests and social impacts on everyday life. This represented an attempt to integrate individual, organisational and contextual factors of ICT and inclusion in the everyday life of the less abled.

Thus, in each field of investigation, different types of results were produced: a description of European and national political aims and of their translation into both cases, an evaluation of success and failure indicators of the projects and a comprehensive analysis of individual discourses.

Collective and individual results were compared in two ways. First, the cases were compared to identify convergence and divergences between the two initiatives in terms of translation processes and inclusion impacts. Second, individual discourses in three different target groups were compared in terms of the construction of ICT potential and appropriation

in inclusion experiences. This cross-sectional comparative analysis between the two cases and the three groups was an attempt to give a comprehensive analysis of ICT inclusion potential in the everyday life of the less abled.

This methodological approach meant that selected cases were compared to each other even though they do not deal with the same area, do not pursue the same objectives and target different groups. Individual appropriation processes were not compared to other individuals belonging to the same categories of less abled but outside such actions. Criticisms about lack of reliable comparisons could be addressed to the research design. However, some interviewees were not using ICTs outside the specific fields of investigation and so may be representative of other individuals of the same categories who are not using ICT. The third selected group also represents people adopting and using ICTs outside specific initiatives and their discourses highlight similar appropriation phenomenon and social constraints around ICT. Finally, the research questions address the construction of ICTs and inclusion through translation processes in specific cases and appropriation strategies adopted by the less abled in or outside specific cases. This meant it was more fruitful to compare different organisational and contextual factors and their respective social impacts in terms of inclusion or exclusion as well as to compare different individual experiences within such initiatives and with similar experiences of use under various conditions. This approach was intended to help an understanding of why, under the same un/favourable conditions, some people choose to use ICTs and some choose not to and why those who are using it, are appropriating ICT in very different ways. It also sought to help an understanding of how different groups with different socio-demographic profiles and personal experiences are appropriating ICT using similar processes and symbolic representations. However, the problem remains - how to distinguish the influence of appropriation from the social effects or contextual influences like the presence of ICTs or training levels?

4. Case Studies in the Working and Training Spheres

Political discourses tend to view training and working spheres as particularly relevant for social inclusion processes. The two case studies presented below address the question of the influence of organisational factors and project management on the translation of various interests over time in these specific spheres and beyond, as well as the potential of inclusion of such actions for less abled people. A retrospective analysis and an examination of the translation processes in both projects highlights the success and failure of the projects in achieving their original “political” goals that is, socio-economic inclusion through ICT diffusion

4.1. ICT training for unskilled and unemployed people

Policies about social inclusion and ICT diffusion often stress the necessity of training and the development of skills for participation in the information society. This participation is also linked to work where ICTs are increasingly used. Therefore, training unemployed people and developing their ICT skills are viewed as a basis for their social insertion within the information society and even in the society as a whole. However, there are few analyses of the translation process and social impact of such initiatives or of ICT potentials for inclusion in the specific context of inactive and unskilled people. This influenced the selection of the case study, an ICT training programme targeting unemployed people with very low qualifications.

4.1.1. Translation of European aims in a local context: the “TeC” project

The project – referred to as the “TeC” project - was launched by “eLearn”, a non-profit association, under the framework of the “Objective 3” programme of the European Social Fund (ESF) in Belgium. “Objective 3” is a programme funded by the European Commission (DG Employment and Social Affairs) and is scheduled to run from 2000 to 2006. In this case, the programme affects the entire territory of Wallonia and Brussels, except for the areas covered by “Objective 1”. The three authorities in charge of the budget of the “Objective 3” programme are the governments of the Walloon region and the French-speaking community, as well as the Board of the French-speaking community (for the Brussels area).

The “Objective 3” programme defines different axes of priority for actions related to the current European policy. The second axis is targeted specifically at vulnerable groups like long-time job seekers, the handicapped, foreigners, etc. It aims to promote equal opportunity and access to the job market, with a particular emphasis on individuals on the verges of social exclusion. It also favors specific actions that propose “innovation in terms of content or methodology, notably linked to new information and communication technologies” (DOCUP Objectif 3 Wallonie-Bruxelles, 2000, 110, own translation). Such actions should “facilitate the access of the targeted public to the information society and to the various training systems all through their life, and consequently to increase their adaptation skills” (DOCUP Objectif 3 Wallonie-Bruxelles, 2000, 109, own translation).

The programme outlines two types of measures. The TeC project falls under the first one, which aims to promote skills favoring the professional insertion of young and adult job seekers. It attempts to do this by supporting actions aimed at socialization, re-motivation,

professional orientation, pre-training, qualifying professional training, and assistance with job search and employment. This measure implies that the project should seek a combination of successive actions, intended to bring the person closer to the job market, and that are supported by local partnerships. It is aimed particularly at long-time job seekers or individuals that have been unemployed over the last 12 months at least.

In line with these ESF criteria, the association seeks to improve social inclusion through the development of ICT skills among unskilled and inactive people. In constitutional and operational terms, eLearn is not entitled to organise “qualifying” training courses, but only pre-qualifying ones. Thus, the project addresses the specific stages of socialisation, re-motivation and pre-training (or pre-qualification) and the trainers tend to address various issues and matters through different kinds of activities that may be helpful in the first steps of social insertion (for instance, basic knowledge of economy, simulation of interviews, etc.). Developing ICT skills, from a political point of view, may be considered as a first experience of inclusion for vulnerable groups in the sense that some of the trainees have found a job or have followed up with another qualification after training.

However, the real consequences of the project in terms of everyday experiences are not so clear and optimistic. First, there is a “correlation” between the level of skills of some trainees and their inclusion trajectories in the training or working spheres. Analysis shows that the “least” abled tend to remain excluded, in the structural or political sense of inclusion. Interviews with educational team members also identified other structural and individual sources of social exclusion. The most problematic one is the heterogeneity of the groups of participants in terms of level of skills, but also of cultures and personal stories.

Therefore, before analysing further the social impacts of such an initiative, it is important to stress the original organisational context of the training centre, eLearn, in terms of how the initiative was launched and managed over time. Data used for the analysis of this case study come from documents published by the ESF⁵, internal documents, made available by the training organization, interviews with various trainers and on-site observations among participants in the programme.

4.1.2. Organisational context of the TeC project

Two people active in the world of associations and trade unions founded ELearn, a training and educational resource center in the Liège area of Belgium, in 1986. Their experience was in developing programmes on teacher sensitization and training when computer technology was introduced in certain elementary schools in a Catholic network. The two

founders were able to develop their interests in ICTs and education through partnerships with schools, but also with an educational and transnational network that one of the founders, the current president of *eLearn*, discovered in France. This association comprises different educational partners, participating in common projects and developing play-orientated educational tools, that *eLearn* uses as educational methods in its activities. The two initiators of *eLearn* were working for the same trade union when a demand for training emerged from the delegates of this organisation, which then became *eLearn*'s main client in 1991. Since then, one of the two founding members of *eLearn* became its president and co-ordinator, the other is no longer active in the organisation

At the outset, *eLearn* was mostly a network of employees working part-time for *eLearn*, and part-time for other associations. Jobs at *eLearn* were created thanks to the contacts that were maintained by the current President with local political representatives⁶. These contacts also helped *eLearn* to rapidly become one of the most equipped associations in the province of Liège in terms of administrative structure, graphic design tools, and computers donated by IBM. Besides political support, a graphic design unit was set up to develop educational and graphic tools, but in a structure independent from training activities in order for the unit to be able to develop commercial activities. Since *eLearn* was not allowed to have commercial activities, all outside contracts were handled through the graphic unit, which also developed educational tools for the training activities. Both sections were and are still managed by the same president, which means that the training center is able to take advantage of the commercial activities of the graphic unit.

During the nineties, the ideological partnership with the trade union tended to discourage members of the centre from developing activities for other kinds of clients or participants. Therefore, from 1999, *eLearn* had to develop new activities that focused more on socio-professional reinsertion in order to continue to receive subsidies from public authorities. The organization of training for employees of the union no longer justified these subsidies, the financial consequences for the association were serious, and the development of new activities became crucial. In the associative sector, the ESF constitutes the biggest opportunity to obtain financial resources. So, though "social insertion" did not constitute the initial aim of the centre, this re-orientation became crucial if the members were to pursue training activities in line with their original interests in education and ICT. However, the structure of the association had to change. Different jobs were brought into *eLearn* and the team decided to develop projects that could be subsidized by the ESF. This new perspective challenged the link between *eLearn* and the union and, in 2001, the association left for new premises, independent from the union.

Then, the team started working with 5 trainers (2 IT specialists, one educational psychologist, one graduate in communication and one graphic designer), two administrative assistants and several external contributors. They decided to develop training activities related to office automation, information systems, communication, personal development and the economy. But, the TeC project was not the first idea developed by eLearn. The initial interest of teachers led them to conceive of a project intended to instruct trainers in the social and training sector, to teach them how to develop a training project. TeC was developed as this first project was insufficient to preserve all the jobs in the association and another activity was necessary, for example, the training of job seekers.

The TeC project was submitted to the ESF in 2000. eLearn trainers took advice from experts in the rehabilitation sector and from universities when designing the project to meet the ESF criteria. Team members also sought to include their own interests when choosing to target those unemployed who were likely to return to the employment market and were interested in using ICTs. Thus, the application form for the project specified that the training was opened to *“all job seekers with a high school diploma at the most and interested in ICT”*. Documents from different advertising campaigns also show this orientation towards unskilled people, set no age limit but were interested in ICTs. Targeted participants did not have to be long-term unemployed. They could also be persons entitled to the guaranteed minimum income or those not included in the unemployment figures, like refugees without work permits.

The different stages in the conceptualisation of the project described represent a first translation between interests of local promoters and actors, and structures that constitute the framework within which such actions must be launched. The reasons that led to the development of the project slightly diverged from the aims of social inclusion. However, because initial concerns of the team became irrelevant and even illegitimate vis-à-vis political concerns, the social and political context within which the association found itself led members to reconsider its activities and objectives.

This suggests that the way policy programmes are defined and implemented constrains local contexts and limits local organisations in terms of how they may choose to act. However, if a local initiative significantly converges with political criteria – in this case, European concerns about diffusing ICTs for improving social inclusion among vulnerable groups - the social impacts may not necessarily meet the expectations of the initial political framework. Furthermore, the way that the project is translated through various interests could influence

its affects on the everyday experiences of participants. The following section highlights how the translation process that characterised the implementation and evolution of the project over time strongly influenced the outcomes of the project in relation to inclusion aims of the programme, here social inclusion of unemployed people.

4.1.3. The implementation and translation of the TeC project

In 2000, *eLearn* received initial financing for the 2000-2002 period for the organisation of three training courses and for 36 participants, that is, three groups of 12 participants. The first programme took place between December 2000 and March 2001, the second between June, 2001 and September 2001, and the third between November 2001 and February 2002. Each training programme was free for the participants, so that it could satisfy the economic constraints of targeted groups who could also retain their rights to unemployment benefits and have their travel expenses reimbursed. During the second programme, *eLearn* installed a new computer room with 12 PCs connected in a network and one “trainer” workstation connected to a video projector.

To meet the “pre-qualifying” objectives, *eLearn* designed its programme as a four-month course around four fundamental themes: knowledge of ICT, social reinsertion and personal re-motivation; preparation to employability through an approach of the knowledge society; an internship in a company. The content of the programme was distributed chronologically to reflect levels of difficulty. The first category concerning the knowledge of ICT was planned to run over two months. The courses were mostly technical and linked to information: Windows and office software, telecommunications, and telephone tools, Internet and Networks, introduction to programming. The second category aiming at social reintegration and personal re-motivation, was planned for a one month-period and consisted in lessons in communication and team work, personal development and knowledge of one’s own aptitudes, social and cultural approach of the job market, and initiation to technical English. The third category aimed at the development of knowledge, know-how and adequate behavior in relation with the corporate world and its evolution, the adaptation to new conditions, innovation, to the job market and to the learning society. This aspect of the training was planned for a ten-day period and included sessions on the way companies operate today and on their environment, on the new forms of work organisation, on the evolution of work legislation and on the information society. Finally, the trainees were offered the opportunity to undertake a ten-day internship in a company in which they had to observe how a company operates and uses ICTs. The first programme included two internships in a company: one three-day observation internship to discover the use of ICT in

companies, and one ten-day introduction internship to give the trainees the opportunity to be placed in an actual work situation, in a company or in an ICT department.

An information campaign as well as a phase of recruitment and an analysis of needs preceded each training programme.. Toraise its profile, the *eLearn* team designed posters for distribution in various reinsertion and training organisations, advertisements were placed in local newspapers and mailshots were sent to the unemployed affiliated to the union. During the first programme, the advertisement campaign was a success and forty persons applied for the first selection.

The objective underlying recruitment and analysis of needs was to evaluate the level of each of the participants, in order to help them to progress as much as possible in the acquisition of knowledge and skills. This phase involved three aspects: basic pre-requisites (notably in French), technical pre-requisites (current office equipment) and motivation (interest for ICT-related careers). To evaluate these candidates had to answer a questionnaire during their first visit to the association. The questions that were asked were open and related to computer literacy, the Internet, general culture, etc. Candidates also had to write ten lines explaining their motivation for doing the course. This questionnaire was used as a basis for the interview where trainers tried to evaluate the motivation of the person regarding ICT training, the correspondence between the skills of the person and the level of the training, and the person's availability to take part in a training course.

When all the candidates had been interviewed, the training team selected twelve for the first training programme. They tried, as much as possible, to select people with low qualifications, to avoid choosing participants who would drop out of the programme too early to join qualifying training courses, but also to form a homogeneous group to be able to progress with everyone at the same pace. They also selected people with an interest in ICTs. All the trainees on the first programme were very interested in learning ICT use and technical aspects, probably because they were given the feeling that they were able to learn new skills and maybe to find a new kind of job through the advertising campaigns. Indeed, different information folders about the training programme presented extensively courses related to Internet and computer science, while courses about knowledge of corporations, new jobs and development of abilities and skills were only mentioned. However, once trainees were selected and the first programme began, the trainers understood that the aims of pre-qualifying unskilled people and developing technical ICT skills were not necessarily compatible. Furthermore, the level of computer and Internet-oriented courses appeared in contradiction with the status of the programme that aimed to prepare participants to follow

ICT-oriented qualifying training courses. Indeed, in the long term, the objective of the project was to help job seekers to acquire a qualification to then be able to reintegrate the job market, and more specifically the market of new ICT careers. The trainers were aware of the fact that these jobs require skills that involve much more than plain know-how. They require a good mastery of language and speech, a flexible attitude, adaptation and technical skills. Arguably, the insertion activities organised to prepare the trainees to find a job were perhaps insufficient to counter such learning difficulties.

During this first running of the programme, the trainers decided to make it evolutionary. This meant that at the end of each training course, the project provided for an evaluation of the content of the lessons and of the structure of the programme, performed by the trainers and the participants. This meant the structure of the programme was adapted to meet the needs of the less able, advice given or in accordance with choices made by the trainers. The translation process may be illustrated through different changes and decisions made at significant moments during the different programmes.

Firstly, course modules were modified several times. Certain courses were judged as too long to present a simple review of the topic and too short to provide an in-depth approach (for example, the introduction to programming). Possibly because their main interest was in ICT use, trainees showed less enthusiasm for other kinds of activities. And while the first programme comprised 60% modules on ICT and 40% modules on personal development, this distribution evolved towards 80% of courses related to the ICT in the second programme. This change could be said to diversion from the insertion aims and multidimensional inclusion. But, possibly trainees did not want the programme to address the multidimensionality of their inclusion trajectory but rather that to provide as many tools as possible so that they could re-integrate into at least one sphere of everyday life. Indeed, the participation in the economic sphere in the form of working and having regular income, is presented in many individual discourses as a prerequisite for activities in other fields of their everyday experiences. The timing of some modules was also changed. For instance, the module on personal development was slotted in later on in the programme to allow time for a group dynamics to develop between the participants.

At the end of the first programme, the trainers also became aware of the fact that they had misjudged the level of the job seekers. While their knowledge in the field of ICT (Internet and office software) was relatively homogeneous, their basic skills were quite heterogeneous. This had negative effects in terms of reinsertion rates into other qualifying training courses and in terms of group management. This was particularly difficult because

of individuals with very special personal stories or very different cultures. The level of basic skills was too low and the lack of structure for certain trainees resulted in some encountering problems finding and organising an internship. This was particularly the case in the second stage of the training, planned for a ten-day period, where there were series of failures. This was partly because of the reluctance of host companies and employers to provide trainees with interesting tasks and partly because of the gap between professional workers and unskilled people. Only half of the trainees were able to find an internship and only three out of six completed their internship.

Since the expected result in term of insertion was not achieved after the first programme and the organization of the internship failed in many aspects, the trainers decided, first, to raise the recruitment level for the subsequent programmes and, secondly, to review the internship organization. Thus, in the second programme, the recruitment process evolved so that those job seekers who had been selected to take part in the training course were more likely to end up in a qualifying training programme. The trainers tried to select trainees who were livelier, more self-motivated, spontaneous, and socialized, and the recruitment procedure evolved towards a higher homogeneity of the selected group and a more efficient management of the group during the programme. In the second programme, the internship was replaced by the development of a project to design a common web site. Participants regretted a lack of contact with the working sphere, complained of assistance during the design of the site and expressed a lack of interest on their part in the work in itself. Therefore, in the third programme, the formula was changed again. This time, the trainees were immersed for ten days in a work environment. During this period, they were asked to use this experience and results of observation as content for the conception of a website. The trainees and the teachers better assessed this activity than the first ones probably because the working experiences seemed to be closer to reality and professional projects being undertaken by the less abled.

With each programme, the trainers tried to develop a sharper educational sense, to follow an underlying theme for the revision of different modules, to give more coherence and to cut back the length of the training to three months. Certain material elements improved, notably in terms of computer equipment, and the individual follow-up became more formalized. The last structure of the programme is presented in Appendix 2.

4.1.4. Social impacts of the project in trainees' everyday life

Trainers perceived trainees to be happy with their training. For them, it represented the first positive experience of training after several academic or professional failures. For most, the

team experience was also a success. The trainees were happy to see that they were able to resume a “normal” pace, structured in time, to create new relationships, and to have a contact in a working environment. At the end of the training course, the general feeling was positive.

At the end of the third TeC programme, the trainees gave an overall positive feedback of the programme. An evaluation took place on February 28, 2002, at the end of the training. It was conducted according to a matrix with each training module assessed in terms of five criteria - relevance of the module, content, educational material, methodology and proposals for improvement - on a scoresheet from one to 10. The results of the evaluation were not representative since only six trainees out of twelve had completed the training and expressed their opinion on the different modules. Moreover, it was a particular public, for whom the “ICT orientation” was not a goal in itself, but rather a tool to allow access to further training or to find a job in a field that was not directly ICT-related, but which could involve some basic computer skills. Finally, the evaluation could not be completed since the trainers had planned a second questionnaire, but did not have the time to distribute it.

According to the analysis performed by the trainers of the answers given by the trainees in the written evaluation, the result appears to be generally positive. The margin between what they find “good” or “bad” is quite narrow and they show a very conciliatory attitude. No score is below 6 and the global evaluation was around 90%. Nevertheless, the trainers have established a classification of the different modules according to the evaluation of the trainees. A table presenting the classification of the different modules with comments on them by trainees is contained in Appendix 2.

After this written evaluation, the participants were able to express their opinion verbally on the training programme in general. They expressed a trust in the competence of the trainers who seemed to have a good command of their subject. They were also reassured by the fact that the programme had been organised for the third time. Finally, visits of external partners and eLearn’s organisation of training courses for other publics, notably companies, reassured them about the quality of the programme and gave them a sharper view on the constraints of the working world, which then seemed more accessible to them. They added that they had the impression of having access to the same knowledge as employed people. They also highlighted the positive environment and premises and the fact that all the educational material was supplied. The relations between trainers and trainees were good and they were able to express themselves freely, with no fear of being judged, in contrast to the experiences of some of them during other types of training. The atmosphere of the

training courses and the relationships between trainers and participants also created favourable conditions for giving the trainees the opportunity to appropriate ICT. Indeed, the researchers observed how trainees had to solve problems by themselves by searching on their computer and helping each other. This gave “early adopters” opportunities to develop other skills while “the late majority” spent more time developing one specific use. Finally, the trainees all expressed their satisfaction and their wish to follow another programme with *eLearn*, which is not possible since the association does not offer qualifying training courses.

Though the trainees assessed the programme very positively, some exclusionary factors persisted and these may be better understood by referring to the various interests, actors and contexts, which intervened in this case. Insertion impacts and inclusion potentials of the project are strongly related to the management of the training over time and the choices operated by the educational team. Here, the divergence between the “social” objectives, the chosen content and the management of the programme may be an obstacle to ICT potentials for inclusion. Indeed, the organisation and course content, for example the conception of a website as a first approach of the Internet, the absence of feedback from the part of the team towards the trainees about their potential evolution, etc. - are not necessarily appropriated to insertion objectives. Thus, trainees called for more regular feedback from trainers on their own progress. They needed to know what the team thought of them, but the trainers did not provide for any evaluation on progression or lack of it on the part of trainees. Individual follow-up was performed once a month for the duration of the training with the purpose of evaluating participation of the trainees and the difficulties they face. This way, the trainers tried to anticipate possible dropouts and listen to what the participants had to say about their experience. But there was no actual evaluation of the skills acquired by the trainees, apart from a few tests to help them remember what they had learned. Trainers pointed out that this individual follow-up showed a certain difficulty on the part of participants in becoming aware of their own problems in terms of comprehension and learning. Some trainees were not aware of the difficulties they had in following the course and did not ask for additional explanations. Sometimes, the trainer had to perform the exercise in the place of the trainee, which excluded any possibility of learning. The trainers mentioned these problems during educational meetings, but they had problems finding solutions.

The absence of follow-up after the training was also contributed to failure of trainees in meeting the insertion aims. According to the educational team, some of the participants were unable to use their time effectively and unable to find an activity that enabled them to develop their own trajectory or to use the skills that they developed during the training.

They had a tendency to sell themselves short and forget all the work accomplished, notably in the personal development workshops (like, job interview simulation). According to trainees' discourses, their main frustration related to their realization that they still lacked technical skills. Four or six months after the training, some trainees paid a visit to the trainers who observed that they were still a bit lost, did not know if they had to accept a job to earn a living or continue their education without guarantee of a successful outcome. These frustrations were sometimes aggravated by the fact that they had no real professional project. Here, individuals' appropriation of the training or ICT use into their everyday experiences was crucial for their further inclusion process.

At another level, the divergence of interests within the training sector itself constitutes another important obstacle. Specialised training programmes, which usually follow "pre-qualifying" ones in training policies, are often provided by large organisations where there are many applicants and the selection is strict. After contacting former trainees, *eLearn*'s trainers observed that the qualifying training courses remained almost inaccessible to them, despite partnerships with representatives of those organizations. Also, *eLearn*'s trainers expressed reservations against these qualifying training courses because there are many applicants for few available places. Many TeC participants failed to gain entry to these additional programmes or were only selected after several exams and a period of inactivity. This gap between "pre-qualifying" and specialised programmes reflects divergent interests among key actors in the training field. They seem to be targeting different categories of unemployed people and not necessarily the less able as they are designated in inclusion policies. Indeed, some "qualifying" programmes accept trainees with a superior or even a university degree to guarantee a high level of professional integration and the continuation of public funds. Furthermore, "pre-qualifying" training, such as TeC project, does not provide any official degree that is formally recognised by employers.

eLearn applied for new financing for the 2002-2004 period, an application for 5 groups of 12 participants and that has apparently been accepted. However, the organisation running the programme is now confronted with a dilemma. On the one hand, offering the same kind of training, mainly focused on ICTs, would be in line with European "socio-political" criteria and would provide trainees with some tools for socio-professional integration. On the other hand, those ICT-related skills are not necessarily sufficient for the trainees to be integrated in a new professional trajectory and the educational team is aware of this translation problem facing trainees after the programme. Thus, it is difficult for them to say how they can further develop the fourth TeC programme, since this will depend on the public they would like to target and on the orientation they will give to this training.

Reflecting on the earlier programmes, the trainers distinguish between the second and the third ones which, in their opinion, followed two different philosophies. In general, TeC II worked with a more “computer-literate” public. This public wanted to continue onto an insertion course in the careers related to ICT, but this was initially unresolved. This programme corresponded well to the initial project submitted to the ESF in terms of ICT orientation, but the insertion objectives were not correctly met according to the trainers. From this point of view, the team is uncertain about raising the level of a group to the point that they can take follow-up qualifying training courses leading to ICT careers. TeC III has operated with a lower level of “computer literacy”, but driven by the desire to “do something” and interested in ICT use. Their aim is to access training or a job, not necessarily related to ICT. This public did not consider ICT as an objective in itself, but proved to be less hesitant about using them. They considered technologies as unavoidable tools, but in relation with an already well defined job. The average age of the participants (older than 25) could be part of the explanation. This programme strayed from the project as submitted to the ESF, but the objectives of insertion in other training programmes are better met. The team of trainers believes that it has adequate internal resources for this type of training public.

With their fourth TeC programme, the trainers would like to follow the same philosophy as in the second one, which means that it would allow an orientation of the trainees toward ICT training programmes or careers. However, in order to succeed the programme should aim to integrate trainees into specialised programmes related to ICT careers. This seems only possible through the selection of ICT-oriented people who work on real socio-professional project. However, trainers highlight the difficulty of orientating trainees to a higher ICT education or training, considering the duration of the training, the level of difficulty of the courses and the demands of ICT jobs. This orientation may also lead to the end of eLearn because most of the trainees would be more keen to leave the programme before its end to follow directly “qualifying” programmes. In this case, the selection of a less “computer-oriented” and “computer-literate” public would seem appropriate. While this orientation strays from the initial project definition - the reinsertion of job seekers through the orientation towards careers related to ICT - it seems to be more relevant for the achievement of the final objectives. That is, reinsertion in qualifying training path and ultimately the job market. Adapting the programme to the specific problems of such groups would help them to construct a more “realistic” professional project and so assist in finding a new position within society, and this clearly does not only relate to equal access to technology and the development of ICT skills.

This hesitation on the part of the trainers about the next phase of the project highlights the difficulty of achieving social inclusion objectives. Any success in this in this area was due to the negotiation between ESF criteria on insertion, the internal objectives of the educational team and more “external” concerns about convergence with the needs of unemployed people. Thus, the first programme failed to meet the social insertion objective but did achieve internal objectives for maintaining the structure. The evolution of team objectives and tougher selection procedures when applying ESF criteria, meant that the higher skill level on the second programme, meant the trainees on it had a better chance of participating in more specialised training programmes afterwards. It also meant that very unskilled people continued to remain outsiders with greater likelihood of continued exclusion from further training. Selected trainees in the second and third programme had less personal problems, were more socialised and teachers were better able to manage the organisation and content of the courses. Thus if the project converged with the quantitative criteria laid down by the ESF, it failed to achieve initial insertion aims of increasing the likelihood of unskilled people gaining access to further. In which case, the diverged from European guidelines on social inclusion.

There is also the question as to whether this kind of initiative has long term social consequences in the everyday lives of the less abled. Furthermore, it may be reductive to address the complexity of social inclusion from the perspective of a project like this that targets vulnerable groups in the labour and training markets and focuses on a certain type of skills and on specific contexts. ICT potentials for inclusion depend on: (i) How each experience is constructed through interactions between individuals and contextual elements of the context. (ii) How it is translated over time by different stakeholders in a specific network – in this case, the training and social insertion sector. (iii) The ability of individuals to deal with social constraints of different spheres of everyday life and to construct their own social network in relation to ICTs. Some are succeeding and others are experiencing failures, as we will point out in the analysis of individual experiences.

4.2. Social insertion of disabled people within a call-centre

Policy on the social inclusion of disabled people, more often presents the participation of physically disabled people in the working life as problematic in terms of the obstacles they face in finding a job in “normal” or traditional organisations. A report on the initiatives launched under the “Horizon” programme notes that 43% to 54% of disabled people in the European Union are of working age (Fond Social Européen, 1996). A survey found that one fifth of them have a physical or mental problem, which poses an obstacle to their daily

activities (Fond Social Européen, 1996, p. 6). The report also links the scepticism and reluctance of employers about hiring disabled people to a lack of information about available public funds (Fond Social Européen, 1996). These findings prompted the European Commission to develop action programmes, like “Horizon”, to encourage the creation of “traditional” jobs for disabled people and to facilitate their integration into traditional enterprises.

However, authors like Burchardt (2000) have noted that little analysis has been done on the “dynamics of being disabled” and the various realities this may reflect. These studies have highlighted the influence of investigation methods on the estimates of the proportion of long-term disabled among working-age people. Using a longitudinal analysis, Burchardt examines how the proportion of long-term disabled people may be overestimated compared to those who experience disability intermittently or with some respite. Failure to make this distinction has meant that exclusion processes are often misunderstood and usual cross-sectional studies often lead to inadequate political actions.

Policy also tends to assume a suitability or adequacy of ICT-based activities for people with physical limitations. Thus, ICTs are often seen as an opportunity for them to become autonomous and “active”. Developing their ICT skills is also addressed in the information society policy as a way to improve their social insertion. Where call-centres require “intellectual” rather than “physical” workers, it is often possible to get a job with very low ICT skills and a basic knowledge of ICT use.

This line of thinking influences the choice of the second case study, the experience of social insertion by physically disabled people within a call-centre designated a “social enterprise” and launched under the “Horizon” programme in Belgium. The analysis of individual discourses among different key-actors and disabled workers, highlights the relationship between the inclusion potential of this initiative and actors’ interests, their translation over time, various organizational contexts and contrasted experiences of disability. Data used in this case study come from documents made available by the persons in charge of the enterprise, interviews with various people in charge of the project and on-site observations of operators of the call-centre.

4.2.1. Organizational context of the call-centre

The call-centre is a unit of a social enterprise launched by a non-profit organisation proposing different types of activities for persons with mental and physical disabilities. A Board of Directors (BD) comprised of parents of disabled persons created this association,

called “The Community”, in 1963. The management committee is made up of a general coordinator, an employment manager, a manager for accommodation and occupational activities, and a financial and administrative manager.

The Community comprises almost 500 disabled persons and is made up of several associations covering different types of services and activities:

- A residential and accommodation service (day and night centre)
- A daytime facility service (occupational activities)
- An Adapted Work Enterprise authorized by the AWIPH⁷
- A social enterprise (documentary logistics and call-centre units)
- An association, authorized by the AWIPH, constituted by services common for all activities.

The residential service consists of an accommodation facility housing 130 mentally handicapped people and a specific unit designed to host about 100 elderly disabled people. This unit rents out parts of its buildings to other associations and also accommodates residents from France, which gives higher subsidies to associations that provide this kind of accommodation..

The daytime facility service provides activities for people with varying degrees of mental handicap. Handicraft workshops employ about 70 people doing traditional activities producing quality goods that are then sold. There are about 100 severely disabled people and these are “occupied” with the assistance of specialist instructors.

The Adapted Work Enterprise occupies about 350 persons with a mild mental deficit in a workshop for packaging and sorting coupons. This sorting activity was performed manually since 1980 but the managers decided to introduce some automation in the form of electronic pens that read barcodes. This was the first introduction of technology to the Community.

The social enterprise mostly occupies persons with a physical disability. Around 30 persons work in the two units, the call-centre and the documentary logistics department. This department has several technology-related activities including database management, electronic archiving, design of Internet forms, etc. It also offers other one-off phone-related activities that are time limited and are in the form of a call-centre of “outgoing” calls.

The common services are coordinated by the psychosocial service responsible for the multidimensional aspects of the problems faced by the disabled in the Community. It helps

the different services to organise their recruitment in an operational and decentralized way, since the human resources manager is in charge of the global management at strategic level. The service also organizes the transportation of the workers by making a bus shuttle available from the train station of the nearest city. The Community also has union representation for all its workers and different advisers representing the occupational activities.

4.2.2. Before the call-centre, an original project: “Euro-work”

During the nineties, the Adapted Work Enterprises were called “Sheltered Workshops” and the rights of workers were governed by statute. This meant the employees in the Workshops were not protected by the minimum wage and were paid less than other workers protected by regular social regulations. Then the EU launched different action programmes designed to improve the integration of underprivileged groups and to encourage the creation of traditional jobs for the disabled, instead of “protected jobs”.

This provided the context for the development in 1994, by the managers of the Community, of a project under the framework of the European Programme “Horizon-Disabled”, one of the elements of the “Employment” European programme financed by the ESF in Belgium. This programme was organized for the second time in 1995 and was structured in two successive phases: a first between 1995 and 1997 and a second between 1997 and 1999. The “Horizon-Disabled” part subsidized different “training” or “job creation” activities that favor of the disabled. The objective was to create employment for the disabled in regular companies within projects that also included dimensions of transnationality and innovation. The managers of the Community thus looked for similar projects abroad and were contacted by a French engineer who worked on a project, which put disabled people to work on management and electronic document archiving. Community representatives established a transnational partnership with this engineer and representatives of other countries and decided to start from the same basic idea to develop their project, called the “Euro-Work” project.

The administrative manager, also the current general coordinator, and the president of the Community submitted the “Euro-Work” project under the label of “employment creation” to the first phase of “Horizon-disabled” intended to run from January 1995 to December 1997. It was decided to limit the activities of the Community to the traditional sectors for the mentally disabled where private companies created little employment and so offered few opportunities for definitive reinsertion of these people. The idea was to gradually extend the activities of the Community and to increase the addedvalue of the work done as well as the

skills acquired by the workers so as to increase the likelihood of a valuable reinsertion. They wanted to create “non-protected” employment, as well as “non-protected” economic structures for the employment of the disabled.

The “Euro-Work” project featured four main parts in relation to employment creation for the disabled.

- The creation of adapted work structure to simulate a regular company. The creation of this structure took into account, formally and officially, the social nature of the activities and the necessary protection of the people employed. This part of the project was done in partnerships with the public authorities, with private companies and social partners and with transnational partners. The objective was to hire at least 20 people in the adapted structure.
- The development of new employment initiatives by switching from protected employment to employment in private companies. The Community wanted to organize training designed for managers and the workers of the partner companies in order for them to develop the skills necessary for the integration of the disabled in their structure, as well as training sessions for the assistance and tutorship of these people. The objective were to benefit of at least 70 people from the “Sheltered Workshops” and that it would be implemented in a multidimensional vision of the integration of the disabled people.
- Presentation of signs of aging and early lassitude or aggravation of the effects of the handicap. This had to result in an identification of the problems, the organization of sessions for training, re-motivation, and the search for suitable technical markets. The objective of this action was to maintain 30 jobs for aging people, whose job was threatened in the short or medium term.
- Transnational co-operation. The co-operation, initiated in October 1994 by the Representatives of the Community, involved different European countries (Spain, Portugal, Greece, France, Italy) on the following points: joint development of training methods and approaches, know-how transfer, exchange of methodology and good practices. The initial document also provided for a major evaluation, communication and sensitization action at the end of the project, to evidence the characteristics of multiplication and volume of the action performed.

Once the “Euro-work” project was accepted, the managers tried to develop the initial idea and to reflect on the human aspects of employment and to the appropriate structures to welcome this type of worker. But if the initial project was conceived in convergence with the European criteria of the “Horizon” programme, different interests were influencing the

original project and the different actions proposed in the project diverged from the initial proposal..

4.2.3. The implementation and translation of the “Euro-Work” project

The managers of the Community noted that the proportion of workers in “Sheltered Workshops” who had found a job in a traditional company was very low and so did not place much faith in the insertion of disabled workers in existing traditional companies. The “Euro-work” project could not be developed in the context of the “Sheltered Workshop” either, since it was authorized and subsidized by the AWIPH, which did not offer a “normal” statute to the workers.

They thus decided to create an appropriate structure themselves, a “social enterprise” that was not authorized by the AWIPH to by-pass labour laws. However, this enterprise was able to benefit from some subsidies by AWIPH for infrastructure costs and compensation benefits for the loss of productivity on the part of disabled workers. These benefits were also granted to traditional enterprises hiring disabled persons. The company was called “social” to reflect its special concerns, but was no different in the way it operated from a traditional company. The objective of the managers was to offer “normal employment” with wages equivalent to those in the private sector, contracts, union representation, etc. The social enterprise was based on the “Euro-Work” aim of creating an adequate work structure and equalising status of disabled employees, assisting in the transition to a “normal” working life through partnerships with private enterprises.

In 1995, several team managers of the Sheltered Workshop (including the current manager of the social enterprise) were hired as support personnel for the launch of the social enterprise.. Community managers took many risks with this launch, notably investing in the equipment necessary for the archival work. The initial idea behind the project was to set up an appropriate structure, one that was not “protected”, to hire people with a mental deficit. In this case to provide decent jobs for some workers of the “Sheltered workshop” capable of small warehousing work. Several workers were trained then hired as employees in the social enterprise. However, there was a difference of opinion between the current general coordinator, who was also the coordinator of the project at the time, and those in charge of the implementation of the project on site. The general coordinator felt that the project was designed for disabled persons from outside the Community and not for the workers of the Sheltered Workshop, or at least not exclusively. The managers of the social enterprise and the psychosocial service believed that the objective of the project should be to allow the transfer of mentally disabled workers from the Workshop to the social enterprise. Moreover,

the coordinator and other top-managers turned to a more commercial objective to legitimate the employment of “external” disabled people.

The enterprise reinvested 10% of the proceeds in state-of-the-art equipment (mostly scanning) to maintain its market position. In fact, the archival unit required significant and regular investment and this meant it had to be profitable. Moreover, some clients required that the work be performed in their premises, which necessitated relatively autonomous personnel. The managers of the enterprise soon realized that it was necessary to recruit persons from outside the Community, with a physical disability but a certain degree of skill and autonomy. Furthermore, the Workshop did not have enough workers capable of performing archival work. Workers often had physical or psychological problems in addition to their mental handicap and their difficulties with insertion. As the activities became more complex with, for example, electronic forms, scanning, forwarding of outgoing calls in Flemish etc., the enterprise increasingly had to resort to external recruitment of people who only had a physical and or sensory disability. Thus, the insertion aim of integrating mentally disabled workers into the new enterprise became a commercial aim that led to the recruitment of an external workforce with a higher level of skills and autonomy.

Other parts of the initial project received very little attention from the Community coordinator and managers. The objective of ensuring the transition of disabled workers from “protected” work places to private enterprises was rapidly translated into the development of commercial partnerships through subcontracting. In addition, expectations of an ageing workforce in the Community were not realised.

The transnational element of the project involved seminars and travelling by the coordinator of the Community. The idea was to exchange information about the “Euro-Work” network. However, those in charge of the project on the field were never invited to these meetings and seemed to have received no feedback on them. In parallel, they had since 1994 thought of new activities that could be developed as a function of the various pathologies of the workers. But contacts between the various departments and the Community’s general coordinator were rather limited. The coordinator was not very present and his activities were not transparent. He admitted that he worked better alone, without showing documents to his collaborators because he thought that he would face criticism. He also felt that it would not be productive to mobilize them during the design phase since *“not many collaborators had the mentality required to design projects at European scale”* (General coordinator of the Community, own translation). This fracture between director

level and field actors was reflected in divergent points of view and objectives pursued, notably the objectives of the social enterprise.

After a year and a half of worker training, Community managers realized that the equipment acquired was already outdated and needed to be renewed, and that the activity had to be diversified. This evolved towards microfilming and scanning intended for clients like local hospitals or multinational companies established in Belgium, as well as towards call-centre services. The “Euro-Work” project also received ESF funds to ensure the training of disabled workers would equip them to work as operators within call-centres. But, the funding ended with the European programme “Horizon” and the enterprise had to continue operating without financing, apart from the subsidies of the AWIPH, calculated on the hourly rate according to the level of disability of the workers. This meant management had to ensure the social enterprise made a profit and objectives evolved further to include commercial aims. Managers had to find new clients, the workforce had to be more productive and new kinds of activities had to be developed. This diversification also required greater autonomy and a higher level of skills. Thus, this translation led to a greater divergence between the initial project and the current structure. However, on another level, it resulted in a new convergence with operational managers who understood the necessity of the social enterprise following survival and commercial aims. This provided the context for the creation of the call-centre through commercial negotiations with a potential client, Telecom.

4.2.4. Translation of the project through the call-centre development

In 1995, the Community president contacted the CEO of a Belgian Telecom company, called “Telecom” here, and tried to persuade him to become a client of the social enterprise and to support the electronic archival activity. The Telecom CEO refused but suggested he create a call-centre that would take care of the national telephone information and be financed by a subcontracting contract between Telecom and the Community. The call-centre activity represented an opportunity for a more stable and profitable long-term future for the social enterprise.

Thus, the current coordinator of the Community negotiated a competitive price for the subcontract with Telecom and this was signed in June 1996. The call-centre had to be based on the same model as Telecom’s call-centre and had twelve operators had to be at their posts and connected to the call system each morning. The call-centre became the telephone department of the social enterprise. Once, the sub-contracting contract with yearly tacit

renewal was concluded, the manager of the social enterprise and the head of the psychosocial department were then put in charge of the implementation of this sub-project and ten people were hired.

Given the mental handicap of the workers of the Sheltered Workshop, it was necessary, to recruit people for the telephone unit who only had a physical or sensory disability and who were not part of the Community. This meant different connections had to be used. The head of the psychosocial department established privileged relationships with a computer-training centre, “Info-centre”, authorized by the AWIPH, and targeted exclusively at people with a physical or sensorial disability. To work in the call-centre, the candidates had to have at least a high school diploma and a basic knowledge of computers, that is, be able to use a keyboard and a mouse. The candidates also had to have a basic general knowledge, like the spelling of cities and names, a disability recognized by the AWIPH and this had to be compatible with the work required. Some of the candidates from the Info-centre did not have a high school diploma and had to undergo additional training, notably in grammar. Since the service was rather stressful, the managers had to hire sixteen persons so as to be able to ensure that twelve persons were at their posts at any time.

The recruitment procedure included a psychological test, a test in Word and in Excel organized by the Community psychologist, and one test organized by Telecom. The psychological test was not systematic. Sometimes, it took the form of a simple conversation between the psychologist and the candidate. Usually, she would ask him/her to relate his/her experiences or to comment on his/her CV during an interview. The Telecom test was however the most decisive. This consisted of a spelling test taken through dictation and a professional situation test that required the applicant to search the information system. This test was the final one for the candidates and took place at the company’s premises.

Once Telecom agreed to hire a candidate they had to undertake a five-day theoretical course at Telecom’s premises. On the third day, in the presence of an instructor, they were connected. Telecom then issued an evaluation report in the second week of employment on whether or not the operator would be connected. When the first operators were hired, Telecom also organized follow-ups for the first six to eight weeks of connection of these operators. This time-scale was seen as the minimum before an employee starts to generate a profit. Most of those hired in the first wave of recruitment did not have a high school diploma and required special follow-up. Instructors from the Community and from Telecom assisted them at all times and their progress was evaluated week by week.

The recruitment of physically disabled people evolved over time. The co-ordinator and manager decided to raise the recruitment level in order to find people more efficient in their work. To fill short-term gaps, managers had also to recruit interim workers who did not have a physical disability. The raising of recruitment standards had implications for other activities of the social enterprise. Because some workers had a high degree of autonomy, they were able to accomplish some scanning or electronic archiving work on the clients' premises. They were also able to do more complex work for instance with web-based documents, to handle the sales of more sophisticated products like scripts for archival, encoding complex data, etc. and so to develop the commercial side of the enterprise.

These workers required less supervision from the manager.

The management team also changed with the development of activities. One of the operators (see Appendix 1, Sylvio) became assistant manager in 1999 to help assist the social enterprise manager with co-ordination and organization.

Other operators were dissatisfied with this promotion and denounced his methods of management. For instance, he did not ask in advance for extra-hours of work, he sometimes refused holidays, he made remarks that operators thought he should not have made, etc.

Interviews with different key actors in the Community highlight the social implications of the evolution from the initial project to take account of the need to make a profit, the interest of the client in low rates of pay and high levels of productivity and the need of the disabled to work. Managerial objectives diverged from the aims of inclusion but converged with commercial objectives. This resulted in the creation of jobs exclusively for physically disabled people, in the development of a commercial rather than a "social" partnership, and in a greater control of human resources and levels of productivity. The management began to focus more strongly on collective results, to fight against "absenteeism", and to negotiate new partnerships with an interim agency to ensure adequate recruitment.

4.2.5. The social enterprise and the call-centre today: social implications

The social enterprise currently employs around thirty persons, eighteen of whom combine part-time call centre operators and part-time in the documentary logistics department, and three are part-time operators only. The thirty include IT specialist, an operations manager and a management assistant. The employees are usually hired on an open-ended contract with fixed-term contracts rare. All those employed by the social enterprise, with the exception of the operations manager, have an AWIPH-recognised disability. Their disabilities vary, some resulting from an accident that left them partially paralyzed, others have diseases that prevent them from taking a physically demanding job. The documentary

logistics department also employs some people with a more severe disability like deafness or even a slight mental deficit.

In drawing up a workers' profile, it is worth noting the diversity of their educational backgrounds, personal histories and experience of disability. For many this was their first employment experience as disabled people. Thus, it gave them the opportunity to work again after repeated rejections from "normal" employers and so this work represented a "last chance" for them. However, the social impacts of their call-centre experiences are mitigated and are strongly related to the working conditions.

The social enterprise operates on a set schedule with some flexibility built into it. Employees work 38 hours a week and start at 8:30am every day. The exception is some scanning machines, which must operate for a longer if they are to make a profit. Here, work shifts run from from 6am to 8pm. The call-centre operates every morning and a detailed description of its organisation is presented in Appendix 3.

Individual interviews and observations revealed that disabled workers find the call-centre work conditions stressful. The client, Telecom, determines the working hours and procedures, controls everyday production statistics and insists on productivity reports for the social enterprise managers. Breaks are also pre-determined and scheduled on the same basis as the client's other call-centres, without allowances for the disabled operators. Management try to minimise the stress by splitting the operators between the call-centre and the documentary logistics department, and by alternating the activities of operators depending on their physical problems. But these options are not always possible because of the high level of absenteeism. In such a structure, the operators believe they cannot develop new ICT skills, and that the work in both departments is uninteresting and repetitive..

Similarly, some workers feel management do not give due consideration to their physical problems and regard them as "normal" workers when in fact they have been hired because they are disabled. On the one hand, they do work in structure adapted for them, which gives them the opportunity to work again and to treats them with care. On the other hand, they are poorly paid, subjected to high productivity standards and the technical infrastructure provided by Telecom is not adapted to physical impairments, that is, it is the same as other call-centres within Telecom. Calls are often difficult for them to manage for them and some operators suffer from depression. Even if the call-centre is organized and managed in co-ordinated with other call-centres within the client company, operators have a different status, may be asked to work longer hours or during holidays, and do not have the

protection of labour unions. Moreover, their workplace is different from a "normal" or a traditional enterprise but disability is a condition of recruitment. Overall, the workers are unsure they will be able to work again in the "common" labour market and have few have faith in their own potential.

In this case, being an "innovator" or "early adopter" contributes little to the appropriation of ICTs into an inclusion experience. The only way for them to express their identity and individual interests is either to develop deviant uses or to construct another trajectory out of this enterprise. Observation revealed a diversity in attitudes and modes of appropriation.. Here are some examples from observations of several operators at work, within the Call Centre⁸:

Richard is paralyzed and moves around in a wheelchair. He types rather slowly and fills up this time by asking questions on the spelling of the name, by having it spelled, by repeating the number that has been given to him, etc. He explains to his correspondent what he is doing and repeats the information while encoding it. He remains very calm and does not get nervous, he sometimes makes little jokes. He tries to do a good job and reassures the person while trying to go as fast as possible to give the information. He sometimes has memory lapses, and then says: "I'm doing the search". When he has problems finding the right information and takes too much time finding it, he prefers to give the number orally instead of through the pre-recorded voice.

Christelle is several months pregnant and has been working since the morning. She lacks energy and reads a magazine between calls. Every time the call warning appears on the screen, she waits a few seconds before answering. Once she has answered, she encodes the information very fast, but does not talk much during the conversation and switches very rapidly to the pre-recorded voice system. She looks bored; she sighs, raises her eyes, fidgets with her foot, and has a nonchalant tone when she answers.

Gregory is small and seems to be unsure of himself. He seems quite introverted. When he answers the calls, one can hardly understand his name. He sometimes has to repeat, since clients are not aware of the fact that someone has answered their call. Once he has presented himself, he no longer talks, except when he has to ask for additional information, then directly transmits the information.

Individual interviews with several operators reveal how some have left the call-centre to work elsewhere (Appendix 1, Christian 2) and how others had to stop working for medical

reasons (Appendix 1, Vincent). Individual trajectories are further analysed later in this report.

While the organisational context of this initiative suggests some exclusionary factors, at the same time, some inclusion was experienced in terms of the relationship between the operators and the client company. Some workers identified the high degree of responsibility afforded them, the acknowledgement of their performance as the first call-centre in Walloon and the respect from the client, feedback which they got through contacts with Telecom trainers or evaluators and also through the extension of the commercial contract. Total turnover of the social enterprise is about 35 million, of which 10 million is generated by call-centre activity alone. Furthermore, the managers of the enterprise regularly top-up the deficit in the documentary logistics unit from profits made by the call-centre.

Those positive remarks about the commercial client contrast with individual feelings about the lack of consideration by local management team of disabled workers. This may be explained in terms of the intervention of Telecom in certain Human Resources Management procedures, such as recruitment, evaluation and training. This extent of the involvement contributed to expressions like “*working for Telecom*” used by some operators. Others had thought during the recruitment procedure that they would be hired by Telecom itself.

To conclude, the inclusion potentials of the project were strongly linked to the management of the project over time and the choices exercised by the management team. Here also, the content and the context of the proposed job were not necessarily in line with insertion objectives. For example, the work process does not reflect different kinds of physical disabilities. All the workers are subjected to the same productivity demands and levels of stress. Working conditions do not necessarily provide opportunities to develop individual strategies, especially for people who have experienced more or less long period of loneliness and unemployment.

As in the first case study, questions can be raised as to whether this kind of initiative has real implications for inclusion in the long run. Disabled people may be more vulnerable in the labour market than other categories of unemployed or unskilled people. Furthermore, this case highlights how ICT potentials for inclusion depend on different translation processes operating through interactions between individuals, contextual elements and the actions of different stakeholders. The analysis of individual interviews will highlight how ICT use and appropriation strongly depend on the individual abilities of disabled people to

deal with social constraints and to construct their own inclusion trajectory. Disabled workers seem to encounter many obstacles to the construction of inclusion experiences, obstacles related to their own physical limits and constraints in their everyday lives. The next section suggests that the likelihood of their development socially or professionally is strongly related to their strategic and reflexive potential to negotiate with everyday social constraints.

5. Individual Experiences and Inclusion Trajectories among Less Abled People

Existing studies link socio-demographic profiles to the frequency or types of ICT use (Flash Eurobarometer 125, 2002), but do not assess the social impacts of ICTs on insertion trajectories among different social categories. This report has presented some pessimistic results about social impacts of ICT-based initiatives in the spheres of work and training. However, the two case studies focused on organisational factors and translation processes influencing specific experiences of ICT use in two groups of less abled people. Arguably, it is reductive to relate inclusion trajectories to specific experiences in the working or training spheres and both cases highlighted the significance of individual processes in social consequences of the projects. Thus, a comprehensive and comparative analysis of individual discourses is needed to understand the dynamics of appropriating ICT for the construction of inclusion trajectories in everyday experiences. This analysis of individual experiences was conducted through three sets of interviews with unemployed, disabled and older people.

5.1. Unemployed and unskilled people

In-depth interviews with trainees who had undertaken different TeC programmes illustrates various constructions of inclusion trajectories and various appropriation processes of ICTs. The trainees attach different meanings to ICTs and to the training experience depending on their everyday experiences of inclusion or exclusion. The appropriation of ICTs in inclusion experiences seems to be particularly significant when they transfer their experience of ICT use from the training context to other fields or activities in everyday life. Various representations of inclusion, training experience and ICT were identified in individual discourses and are analysed below.

5.1.1. Constructing a multidimensional inclusion

Participants perceive work and training as prior domains for participation in society and for social inclusion or integration. Here, there was a convergence between the social or political assumption that inclusion presupposes participation in working life and their individual conception of inclusion based on their social identity:

“When I arrived in Belgium, I couldn’t stay inactive, I had to follow a training in order to find a job...” (Guido, own translation).

This convergence between a “hetero” and a “self-designated” definition may be related, in their case, to the social constraints characterising their problems with the labour or training market. Discourses around them insist on the necessity of being active and leave little space for individual choices within the social structures and contexts within which they live. That is, because they have few qualifications they have problems finding a job, and because they are inactive they lose the few skills they may have. However, in many cases, work is seen as an economic necessity rather than a way to participate within society. Trainees also give priority to other aspects of their everyday life such as family care, particularly with political refugees, and the development of skills and cultural or political interests:

“Until I found my family back, I never tried to find a job; it was not my priority. I wanted first to find my family, then asking for papers, and thinking of doing something.” (Juvenal, own translation)

“I don’t have real professional projects. I would like to participate in political or cultural groups with people who share the same interests as me. I don’t want to have most of my relationships with colleagues” (Luc, own translation).

Here, the multi-ethnicity of participants added a specific dimension to the construction of inclusion in everyday life. But foreigners participating in the training were present for the same reasons as native participants and were as keen to construct a new insertion trajectory as other participants. So, in various ethnic groups, developing skills in order to have an adequate profile on the labour market constitutes a common concern:

“I still don’t feel skilled enough to have a job. If I had the choice, I would prefer to follow another training first. On another hand, I can’t follow trainings for ever” (Marie-Christine, own translation).

“I couldn’t start searching for a job because I lost my family and had to find them first... I haven’t been at school and I haven’t been working for ten years now. I have to review my knowledge in management. I have to learn more and I still have to improve my skills... If I had a job opportunity now, I’m not sure I would accept it because I don’t know what I can offer to an employer now.” (Cassilde, own translation).

Individual experiences also highlight the significance of the temporal dimension in the construction of an inclusion experience. Different interviewees had all experienced relatively long period of inactivity or series of failures in their school or professional lives, and had problems with work. While work was seen as an economic necessity, they were unable to find suitable work conditions. Thus, following a training programme is perceived as a new opportunity to change their professional trajectory:

“I would like to change my personal course because I want a more stable job, a better quality of life, but also higher wages. Therefore, I am ready to follow evening courses for several years and to work during the day, even under bad conditions” (Claude, own translation).

“I regret having stopped my graduate. It would be easier now with a graduate... Now I think it will be difficult to find a stable job” (Laetitia, own translation).

But they are not necessarily able to complete their projects in a long run in their everyday lives and are apt to lose “self-confidence”:

“Now, I feel a bit lost. I developed skills during the training but I don’t know where to go... I want to further develop my skills but there are no specializing courses for specific PC use” (Nathalie, own translation).

“I’m still interested in computer science programme for becoming PC technician or web-designer... But I’m not searching for a job in that field and I’m losing confidence in myself because, over time, I think I forget things and technology evolved a lot... My current job is difficult but I don’t know what else I would be able to do” (Victor, own translation).

Those examples illustrate how “self-designation” processes or reflexivity influences on personal trajectories are strongly related to social constraints and everyday structures. Some have very few opportunities to develop a multidimensional inclusion and their “human agency” is limited to the negotiation of insertion in socio-economic processes. However, ICT use may contribute to the construction of multidimensional experiences on multiple ways because it may be appropriated in various spheres and activities of everyday life and because the experience of use may be transferred from one sphere to another.

5.1.3. ICT appropriation and transfer into everyday experiences

Trainees have differing perceptions of ICTs and use them in different ways: searching for a job on the Internet, using emails to communicate with friends and family, using Excel for personal accountancy, playing games, chatting, etc. They also attach different kinds of meaning to ICTs: a tool for finding or practising a job, a means to practise a new kind of job

or *e-job*, to construct new relationships, to keep social contacts and to learn new types of use or new skills.

For some of the trainees, their first experience of ICT use takes place in the specific context of the training programme; others were already using ICTs before the training. But, once the training was completed, ICTs were appropriated in very different ways and in different contexts of their everyday lives depending on the meanings attached to ICTs, their individual trajectories and their experiences of inclusion or exclusion. Different appropriation modes contribute to the construction of specific use in one or several spheres of participants' everyday life. Furthermore, different usages may be located on different stages of a continuum from a rational model of use to social or communitarian use, as defined by Bakardjieva (2003). Usually, individual experiences of ICTs combine different kinds of usages, for example, one may use a computer in a rational way and the Internet in a different way to communicate or support social relationships. The incorporation of those various meanings within ICTs also reflects reflexive constructions of inclusion or exclusion in negotiation with various social factors and everyday contexts.

Some trainees used discourses that reflect the inclusion potential of ICTs particularly when constructing professional projects based on ICT activities and incorporating rational values in the development of ICT-related skills:

"I would like to follow another training programme to become a 'web-designer'. I have had this project for two years now and I already have some ideas about the kind of website I would like to develop. But for doing that, I have to buy a new PC and that's expensive, but I'm already sparing for that." (Claude, own translation)

"My project is to study computer science at the university. But I need my bachelor's certification from my country and I'm still waiting for this document. If I can't go to the university, then I will try to be selected in 'qualifying' training programmes and to find a job on that way." (Patrick, own translation)

"I wished to discover computer science to be able to create CD-roms." (Luc, own translation)

However, none of them had been able to concretise their projects after the training. Claude was not selected to participate in "qualifying" training programmes; Patrick did not receive the necessary documents to study at the university and is waiting for results of selection tests; and Luc realized that CD-rom technology would disappear over time and would not be a strategic activity anymore. He had not developed an alternative project related to ICTs.

These individual perceptions of the social constraints of everyday life contribute to some

pessimistic results about ICTs and their inclusion potentials. Even if individual reflexivity were to convergewith “hetero-designated” processes of inclusion in the working sphere, ICTs do not necessarily have a social impact here and may even create new forms of exclusion. Trainees believe in the potential of ICTs to develop a “new career” and improve their quality of life, but are unable to realise their projects. Moreover, they do not have a “realistic” view on what constitutes advanced ICT-skills and related jobs, and this leads to unrealistic expectations. In addition, personal problems often intervene. There is a need for individual support during and after the training, which the educational team cannot provide. Trainees with no specific professional goal often met serious obstacles in constructing a professional future at the end of training. Individual hopes and expectations about the potential of ICTs was insufficient to answer or to overcome social requirements of the information society. Appropriation processes in inclusion experiences were also influenced by translation processes in various everyday spheres, by social constraints of the working and training sector and by the limitations of human agency in their specific context.

However, ICTs may also reflect inclusion potentials in other spheres of everyday life thus highlighting the diversity of everyday dimensions that provide particular relevance for less abled people in their individual experiences. Thus, trainees appropriating ICTs for activities other than the TeC programme and for purposes other than a new career in ICT-type work. This meant some trainees underwent the TeC programme so that they could take up another training programme and to serve their inclusion trajectory in the working sphere. But, their professional projects were not necessarily restricted to ICTs but were also also appropriated in other ways in other spheres of everyday life.

“For me, the training was a mean to be active and to know more about the Belgian system... I think computer skills may be helpful in my profession (painter) and I also would like to have a PC at home to use more the Internet and communicate with friends and family...” (Guido, own translation).

“Since the end of the training, I received a PC as gift from English friends... I use it regularly to write letters, play with children, and make accountancy. I also have a connection and an e-mail address. So, I can communicate with friends in Belgium and abroad, and I also visit news websites about the political situation of my country... My objective was not to find a job in the field of computer science, but rather to open myself to computer science and to raise a ‘myth’. But I think it may be useful for finding a job in accountancy” (Juvenal, own translation).

Therefore, ICTs may be appropriated in the construction of inclusion trajectories in various contexts of their multidimensional experiences when they are used either as a social tool for

communicating or developing social relationships (social values on the continuum) or as a tool for searching for a job or for supporting different types of job (rational values on the continuum). Gregory adopted an intermediary position in which he used ICTs for playing games but did not consider it a tool for practising a new kind of job and did not develop real social networks through communication. Similarly, Victor developed ICTs skills through use of the Internet. Now, he spends most of his leisure time surfing on the net, communicating with friends, using PC-banking, searching and listening to MP3, etc.

The various individual experiences illustrate how ICT skills learned or improved through the training programme may be appropriated and transferred to different dimensions of everyday experiences. Those appropriation processes do not necessarily lead to inclusion in the working sphere. But they reflect incorporation of values in ICT use that are related to relevant everyday activities in individual experiences. The development of new practices through the appropriation of ICT reflects various positions from rational to social values that may contribute to their “self-designated” inclusion trajectories. None of the interviewees found a job in ICT-related activities. Though, the training programme did have an impact on their inclusion trajectory in the sense that some were helped in the concretisation of their professional project and others were able to re-construct new social networks.

Appropriation or processes of transference from the training context to everyday life experiences should also be analysed over time. Some of the trainees were interviewed several months after the training programme and had only recently found a job. Some were appropriating ICT in their domestic space, others not. Most of those interviewed during the last TeC programme and two months after its end had not find a job and some had not begun another training programme. Transfer processes through domestic appropriation were also less relevant in their case.

An analysis of individual appropriation processes at various moments after the training was particularly useful for making a comparison of different trajectories and understanding how different temporalities may influence the possibility to construct inclusion through the appropriation of ICT. It appeared that the construction of “self-designated” trajectories followed different temporalities from one person to another and ICT appropriation intervened at various degrees, depending on the way that ICT use is located in the temporal dimension of inclusion trajectories. For instance, Christophe and Laetitia from the third TeC programme did not experience a long period of inactivity before the TeC training and rapidly left the programme to follow another qualification once they gained basic ICT skills.

Others had experienced a longer period of inactivity before the course and needed more time to reconstruct their own project and trajectory after the training. For them, the TeC programme was too short and did not give them the opportunity to appropriate ICTs as an element of their everyday lives. This was the case with Cassilde who stopped the appropriation process at the end of the training.

5.2. Disabled workers

A longitudinal analysis of disabled trajectories would have been useful here in understanding the long term social impacts of being hired in the call-centre but only interviews at a certain moment in their trajectory were possible. A comprehensive analysis of individual discourses is presented below in an attempt to understand the dynamics of appropriating ICTs in the working sphere, as well as in everyday experiences. The analysis of in-depth interviews with disabled people, working in the call-centre and the social enterprise, highlights various constructions of inclusion trajectories and various appropriation processes of ICT in relation to their disability and everyday experiences. However, if the disabled attach different meanings to ICTs and their working experience, their appropriation of them and their construction of a “self-designated” trajectory is quite unusual in the sense that few workers are using ICT outside work, mainly for economic reasons, and few of them relate ICT potentials to the reconstruction of a new professional aim. Nevertheless, the analysis of their individual discourses highlights many constructions of ICTs in relation to their everyday experiences.

5.2.1. Constructing a multidimensional inclusion

Disabled workers perceive work as a prior domain for participation in society. While economic necessity is particularly relevant to them, work also facilitates human contact and social relationships. Here, it is important to stress the role of their disability in the construction of their professional and social identity. Work is a priority even under discriminatory conditions and even if they also give importance to other spheres of everyday life:

“At 40 year old, I absolutely wanted to work, whatever the job is, at my age and with my disability... After my surgery, I stayed two years without working and I depressed” (Christian, own translation).

“I was ready to accept any job for not being at home any more. I immediately accepted the job” (Frédéric, own translation).

“When I was at home, I always went here and there because I missed human contacts. I could live again through my work. And, there is nothing better than deserve my wages...” (Christian 2, own translation).

“I’m happy to work, I would be sad if I wouldn’t work. I don’t know what else I could do, I had very few possibilities” (Maurice, own translation).

“At my age, I thought that it was already a good thing to find a job near my place. According to my education, I think that someone who stays at home is useless, lazy and not ambitious” (Christiane, own translation).

“Sometimes, I ask to myself if I’m at the right place in a social enterprise. But I think that I wouldn’t have been able to work in a ‘normal’ enterprise” (Jacques, own translation).

All interviewees experienced a rupture in their school or professional lives, a relatively long period of inactivity and series of rejections in their job searches. Thus, they also had a problematic relationship with the working sphere, strongly linked to their disability or physical limitations. Administrative processes needed for them to be recognized and compensated by the authorities (see AWIPH, p. 36) were long and slow. Furthermore, disabled people who wanted to be active and reconstruct a “normal” life had to wait a long time before realizing their projects. However, once they are recognised as disabled people, they can get benefits from the authority in the event of finding a job. Their potential employer could also be compensated for any loss of productivity on the part of the disabled worker.

In this group of interviewees, only one of them was able to find a “normal” job under such conditions, others failed even with official information given to potential employers. Consequently, the disabled workers had suffered from their own physical limits in their job search, but also from obstacles created by employers’ representations of disabled people.

“As soon as I was allowed to work again, I postulated in the ‘normal network’ and I explained to potential employers all benefits and helps that they could receive from AWIPH. But, every time, as soon as I talked about my disability, they just refused to further discuss... Then, my town council suggested to search in the field of social structures. I found it very depreciatory” (Frédéric, own translation).

“I heard by chance that I could get compensation benefits from AWIPH... The public service for employment did not talk about it” (Christiane, own translation).

The lack of self-confidence and failures experienced may constitute a bias in their own perception of inclusion and individual potential. Thus, they view work as an economic necessity; but are unable to find a job through the usual processes even with adequate qualifications. In this context of rupture from professional activities and of individual reconstructions, any job may be viewed as an opportunity to be autonomous again and to

have a “normal” life. The failures experienced constitute obstacles for them in the development of new professional projects outside the call-centre.

Furthermore, the various kinds of “self-designation” processes or reflexivity in terms of their own trajectories illustrate the fact that very few interviewees thought about further development of their professional career, even if they were not satisfied with their job within the social enterprise and call-centre. Thus, they tried to qualify the importance of working and to give more sense to their private life through taking care of their children, developing personal projects or social contacts. Here, ICT experience needs to be seen as taking multidimensional operating through different kinds of appropriation and transfer processes from limited use in the social enterprise to more developed skills in other kinds of ICT-based activities, at home or in other spaces.

5.2.2. ICT appropriation and transfer into everyday experiences

Interviewees had different perceptions of ICTs and, in parallel with the discourses of unemployed people, various meanings were attached to ICT use and inclusion or exclusion experience, from rational to social values. Sometimes, ICTs were seen only as a tool for practising their job within the social enterprise and priority was given to other kinds of activities in their everyday life. Those who used ICTs in their domestic spaces attached different meanings to their use: communicating with friends, finding information, learning new skills, etc. These interviewees had all had a first experience of basic ICT use before working in the call-centre and they had undergone a training programme organised in a specific training centre for disabled people, the “Info-centre”. The recruitment team of the social enterprise contacted this centre when the call-centre was created. This one had been working for almost six years when interviews were conducted and different kinds of appropriation processes may be highlighted from different individual experiences.

At first, some operators viewed ICT-related jobs as a social and professional aim and the technology to be used and appropriated in other spheres of everyday life to serve this professional purpose. Some felt dissatisfied with their ICT use at work. One of the former operators (Appendix 1, Christian 2) underwent training through evening courses in order to develop new skills and construct another professional trajectory:

“I have followed evening courses two days a week at the same time as my full-time in the call-centre... I followed a graduate for two years and I achieved it in 2000, when I was working in the call-centre. Then, I began a training programme in network and PC maintenance... I could have had occasions to develop my skills within the social enterprise but my suggestions have been rejected and I realized I

couldn't evolve there anymore... Here I couldn't be only a reception agent, that is why I asked to maintain the website as well" (Christian 2, own translation).

Others developed and appropriated their ICT skills in the domestic space.

"I learn a lot by myself, especially at home because I've bought a new PC on which I can install bigger programmes and I have an Internet connection... I'm using 'hacked' CD to learn using Access... At work, when I'm using a new scanning programme, I try to understand further and see how it is working. And when I have the programme, I try to re-use it at home (he cites the example of web pages)" (Maurice, own translation).

The case of the former operator is a significant illustration of appropriation and transfer of experience for the construction of a new "self-designated" trajectory of inclusion. Christian (Appendix 1, Christian 2) wanted to develop his potential and to create new activities within the social enterprise. The management, despite Christian's specialist knowledge, rejected his suggestions. Thus, during his employment at the call-centre, he undertook graduate evening courses and decided to search a job elsewhere. He gathered all necessary documents on compensation for disabled people employed in the "normal" working sphere and applied to his town administration. He was hired to ensure reception and to maintain the local website. He is still following ICT courses during the evening, has a computer at home and an Internet connection and is ready to further develop his career possibly in the political sphere.

Christian's reflexive potential played a crucial role in his individual trajectory or "self-designation" as someone who "*revived thanks to computer technology*" (Christian 2, own translation), and in the appropriation of ICT towards this end. His ICT skills and social profile are not that different from the others and his disability was more serious than some. If his case reflects the role of human agency, self-reflexivity or individual strategy in the construction of ICT as an enabling technology, it also represents an exception among the interviewed disabled workers. Other operators who were still working in the call-centre and the logistics department were not constructing professional projects outside the social enterprise around their ICT skills or activities, even in the case of Maurice illustrated above.

In most cases, individual projects were not possible because of the social or family situation and workers chose to accept their professional situation. The working conditions within the call-centre and the absence of personal development make the formulation of some pessimistic about ICT potentials for inclusion. . Some operators were or said they were satisfied with their job and did not want to develop further their ICT skills in order to find

another job possibly in “normal” organizations but not necessarily in ICT-based activities.

Nevertheless, for some operators, ICT potentials may be appropriated into other dimensions of their everyday experience and transferred from work to everyday activities. Here, some operators were using ICTs in the domestic sphere to construct new relationships, to keep contacts with friends, to search useful information for their children’s school work, etc. The reasons for doing so were related to mediation processes. Domestic users acquired a PC or an Internet connection in a context of social interaction with friends using e-mail, children using a computer at school, people sharing same leisure activities. Few had appropriated ICT in an individual way only for personal interest, and in this sense, ICT appropriation may play a role in social inclusion experiences.

“I never used a computer before following the training and working here. Now, I use the PC to write letters and to help my son in his scholar works. But I’m not a fan of computer science” (Sylvio, own translation).

“I have a PC but no connection yet. But I plan to take a connection soon. My children have already tested Internet at friends’ place and are asking for having a connection at home. I think it’s a good thing to have Internet at home to have social contacts, to find information and to access different kinds of facilities. I already know people to communicate with” (Richard, own translation).

“I use my PC as a working tool for writing letters and Homebanking. I’m also visiting websites to find information about holiday promotions. But children are more often using Internet to surf, send e-mail, chats, etc.” (Christiane, own translation).

Several operators were non-domestic users. In their case, the appropriation process stopped from the moment they were hired in the call-centre. Values were not incorporated in ICT as a professional project or as an element of their everyday life. Some related this absence of project to their more advanced age, personal or economic situation or the prevalence of other everyday experiences. But, people who were not using ICTs as an inclusion tool had good reasons directly related to their own perception of everyday life and their “self-designated” experience. Many of them did not want to spend hours on a PC or Internet, they preferred to spend time in other kinds of activities more relevant for them in their everyday experience:

“Outside work, I have a friend, I’m rather for family... I love painting but I have less time for leisure... Sometimes, I ask myself if working here is not waste... In the beginning, I thought computer science could give me new skills, now I’m a bit deceived. But for the moment, I have not professional project... I have quite a ‘normal’ life and could have a nice end of career here” (Chantal, own translation).

“Internet... I find it impersonal and prefer face-to-face communication... Computer science is not everything. I like cycling when the weather is nice, walking with family, working in my home, etc. I’m not interested in technology in general” (Christian, own translation).

“I would like to have a PC at home. But I’ve just bought a house and a car. I think I will buy one when my children will grow up... Concerning Internet, for me, it’s ‘Chinese’... To surf on the Internet, you need much leisure time, many hours. I don’t have time, I have enough to do with the house and the children... My friends say I should connect. But I want to take care of my children and I give them all my leisure time” (Frédéric, own translation).

Given the social constraints of social inclusion and everyday life, these reflexive aspects of individual perceptions differed from those in the first group. If unemployed people were less keen to accept their current situation and place greater expectation on ICT-based or related jobs, disabled workers were more willing to accept their professional situation, even under discriminatory conditions, and sometimes to confer less potential to ICT as enabling technology. While, work was important for all of them, some were satisfied with their qualification and their disability, and were not so keen to use a computer otherwise. Social, economic and physical constraints may have posed obstacles to their reflexive construction of ICTs as an enabling technology at work. However, in multidimensional terms, ICTs may be appropriated otherwise in the construction of inclusion trajectories in various contexts of their everyday life. Therefore, if their perception of ICT potentials diverges from common beliefs in ICTs as enabling technology for people with disabilities, their everyday appropriation of ICTs – when it is appropriated - also reflects the construction of “self-designated” trajectories where social and inclusion values are privileged in domestic spaces of everyday life. Their appropriation and transfer processes from the working context to everyday life experiences should also be analysed over time. A non-user now may become an “innovator” or “early adopter” tomorrow and vice versa.

5.3. ICT users aged over 50

People aged over 50 were interviewed independently of any specific initiative. Though three interviewees were participating in a same training activity within an association for retired people, all the interviews took place in the context of their everyday life. The research focus was on ICT users aged over 50 because this age group is often seen as being at risk of digital exclusion. Studies have used quantitative methods to show the low penetration rate among people aged over 50 or 60 and conclude that older people are generally excluded from the Information Society. For instance, in 2001, 11.5% of Europeans aged over 55 used Internet compared to an overall mean of 34.3% (Commission

des communautés européennes, 2001). The *Flash Eurobarometer 125* (2002, p. 8) highlights that people aged “55 and above are clearly more remote in terms of Internet access from their homes than younger age categories”. Another political concern is also the demographic change in Europe. The ageing issue highlights potential problems with the participation of older workers in the labour market, particularly in the context of the new economy. These main concerns about the access to the Information Society and the ageing population explain a growing interest in ICT use among older people.

Nevertheless, little is known about the technological needs of the elderly because there has been little research on their ICT use (Östlund, 2001). Existing research has taken two main approaches. The first highlights the barriers preventing older people from accessing and using ICTs. Those obstacles are mostly represented in political and academic discourses and linked to the age or the generation (for example, fear, technophobia, lack of knowledge) (Östlund, 2001). The second approach, looks at the representations and meanings that older people may attach to technological use (see Caradec, 1999, 2001; Caradec and Eve, 2002; Specht, Sperandio, De La Garza, 1999). Here attempts are made to try and understand why and how older people are using ICTs (Caradec, 2001, Caradec and Eve, 2002).

This project investigated ICT use among people who are almost or recently retired and who are aged over 50. The focus was on actual ICT use by older people in a heterogeneous group intended to show use at different stages of ageing. An analysis of individual discourses, highlights the limitations of common hypotheses within the diffusion perspective. Advanced users do not necessarily have a higher status, nor do they necessarily accumulate different kinds of technological use, and the level of appropriation is not necessarily linked to age. Some people over 80 are experiencing more advanced and intensive use compared to others under 60. The research identified various meanings and representations attached to ICTs in an attempt to understand the dynamics of appropriating ICTs in their everyday experiences, mainly characterised by the end of their professional lives. Therefore, their inclusion trajectories are not addressed from specific spheres, as in the two other groups, but are emerging from their discourses about their use of ICT.

5.3.1. ICT use and the re-construction of everyday activities

Nine out of 11 interviewees no longer viewed work as a prior domain for participation in society as they were inactive, pre-retired or retired. Economic necessity did also not appear to be a specific concern since they all had a regular source of income and those on the lowest incomes were not necessarily using ICTs less frequently. However, these people

were facing a new social life, which they were trying to fill in with new kinds of activities and they were at different stages of re-constructing their everyday experiences. Some had already re-constructed new occupations in order to keep human contacts or social relationships. Others were only at the beginning of the process.

The various kinds of “self-designated” trajectories illustrate attempts to qualify the importance of working and to give more sense to other dimensions of their everyday life through communicating with their children, developing new personal projects, spending time in new leisure activities, etc. Here, ICT use sometimes took place in multidimensional experiences in multiple ways through different kinds of appropriation and transfer processes from limited use to more developed skills in contrasted kinds of ICT-based activities, at home or in other spaces.

Interviewees had different perceptions of ICTs and, in parallel with the discourses of unemployed and disabled people, attached various meanings to ICT use. Those values may be related to various positions on a continuum from rational to communitarian use, and were evoked in various ways to explain use or non-use of ICTs. This means that the same meaning may influence ICT appropriation among some users and constitute an obstacle for others, but also users may refer to various kinds of values to explain their use.

The first meaning attached to ICTs refers to the rational notions of usefulness. On the one hand, some users explained their use of ICTs in terms of the overall usefulness of such technologies in everyday life: for instance, accessing to information, saving money and time, etc. On the other hand, others related rational notions to specific needs particularly relevant in their context. For instance, they express specific needs to communicate with relatives or friends, to use a computer for specific leisure or professional activities.

“I have now acquired my fourth PC and my second laptop. I use my computer to manage my bank accounts, to send e-mails to my family, to search for information or to play games... I also have an Internet connection in my apartment at the Northern Sea... My computer and the Internet are now essential in my life. The first thing I do when I wake up in the morning is to switch on my computer” (Jacqueline, own translation).

“My computer is very useful because I’m the managing agent here and I use it to write letters, for the accountancy, etc” (Gérard, own translation).

But, usefulness, and more specifically the absence of usefulness, was also an argument for them to explain non-usage. For instance, some were very reluctant to use the Internet

because they were still able to walk or drive to the Bank and thought it useless to make operations electronically. Also when family was not living abroad, some users prefer face-to-face communications and did not attach any value to using e-mails.

“I do not have relatives living far from me, so I don’t perceive the need to communicate via the Internet” (Albert, own translation).

In addition to rational and social values, some users referred to a specific identity attached to their new position as retired people. They explained their acquisition of a computer in terms of “*being up to date*”, keeping an active mind or maintaining technical skills. This need for continuity may be related both to leisure and professional activities. On the one hand, some users tended to construct a continuity in their everyday experiences. Then, they decided to use specific technologies to support leisure activities, which they enjoyed before. For instance, Albert acquired AUTO CAD because he likes industrial design. Serge loves videos and acquired the software to make little movies. Some users referred to their former professional activity and transferred skills from that to everyday “retired” experiences. Here, François said he was familiar with different kinds of technology and Jean was still developing little software:

“I learnt my profession through the manipulation of electronic devices. This is probably why I use computers so easily today. I was also used to write letters with a typewriter” (François, own translation).

“Homework or gardening, it was not ‘my thing’. I loved my profession as computer scientist” (Jean, own translation).

Users also constructed future projects in continuity with this positive view of technology. For example, using a computer or the Internet was seen as a challenge for their future as they wish to be informed, up to date, to keep an active mind and not to be “*outmoded*”.

As in the case of rational values, identity was also used to justify non-usages or reluctance to use some forms of ICTs. The research indicated two main mechanisms. Some users wanted to use technology in continuity with former usages, for example, related to traditional computer science, and so expressed reluctance about using the Internet. Others, adopted ICTs for very specific uses and did not feel any the attraction of other uses. For instance, those who used the Internet to communicate with relatives were not necessarily keen to search for MP3, to treat images, etc. But this influence of identity could also be related to ageing. The oldest user was not making any major plans for his , was very happy with his usage and did not want to develop new usages of ICTs.

“I will not last very long. Here, it’s a desert of memory (he lived in an institution). I don’t see other residents and don’t participate in events. I don’t wish to be

involved in new things. I just want to continue my writing as far as I can” (Jérôme, own translation).

On the social side of the continuum, interviewees also developed domestic use of ICTs to construct new relationships, to keep contact with family and friends or to search useful information for their children or relatives. Their discourses suggested that the incorporation of social values in ICT use is conducted through a mediation process that is active or passive. Active mediation refers to the direct intervention of someone who helped the person to learn about a technology, convinced and taught him/her to use it.

“One of my former colleagues helped me to use my computer” (Michel, own translation).

“My best friend is a former computer scientist. So, he helped me to install the Internet connection, he taught me how to use e-mails and the Internet” (Serge, own translation).

But users’ representations also highlighted a passive mediation with the intervention of a third actor as a justification for using some aspects of ICTs. For instance, some users related their need to use ICTs with their need to communicate with children living abroad. Others transferred technological skills towards social networks and leisure activities. Thus, social or communitarian values were attached to ICT use in order to support or to create social relationships.

“I hesitated for a long time before deciding to acquire a computer. The main reason was the departure of my daughter who left Belgium to live in Mexico. Then I decided to take a connection to the Internet to communicate with her and my grandchildren” (Isabelle, own translation).

“I spend many hours in the association... I suggested introducing Computers and Internet in various activities, for the accountancy but also for activities with retired members. For five years, I’ve been organizing an introduction course on the use of computers and the Internet. I teach retired people to surf on the Internet, to send e-mails, to use office, etc” (Jean, own translation).

All users do not necessarily incorporate social values into technology use. Sometimes they do not want to transfer skills to social activities even if it would be helpful for others people. Mediation also intervenes to dissuade users from using ICTs, for instance from connecting to the Internet. However, their main reasons for appropriating technology are often related to mediation processes. Few have appropriated ICTs on an individual basis only for personal interest. But even if mediation may play a crucial role in appropriating ICTs,

people's representations of technology in everyday life still reflect many fears about the ubiquity of technology. People do not want to be “slaves” of technology and consider that technological use is one activity among others. They are particularly reluctant about forums and chatrooms because they view those activities as contradicting their social values.

Various representations and meanings attached to the appropriation of ICTs do not operate in isolation. They are combined and sometimes create conflicts even about a single use. For instance, Albert had a computer at home and was a former computer scientist. His best friend had an Internet connection and Albert had already conducted some internet research with him. This may be an active mediation on the part of his friend to teach him to use the Internet. However, Albert, even if he has a computer and the required equipment for a connection, was already attached to traditional computer science and feared viruses that may come from the network. This example illustrates how various meanings incorporated into ICT also reflect various constructions of everyday experiences in relation to their new social life.

5.3.2. Appropriating ICT in the re-construction of new trajectories

Older people interviewed for this research were living in very different everyday situations. Some were gradually ending their professional career or had recently retired, but were in good health and able to develop new kinds of activities. In their case, values of usefulness, continuity or mediation were the main motivations to appropriate ICT into everyday life. Others were experiencing the perverse effects of ageing - health problem, change in their family situation, etc. - and developed technological use to overcome these difficulties. For instance, François visits websites about memory where he can practice his own memorisation. In contrast, a family change may have a negative influence on the construction of a “self-designated” trajectory in terms of future projects and potential use.

Reflexive aspects of individual appropriation among people aged over 50 combine aspects of the social constraints of inclusion in everyday life evidenced in the first and second groups. If unemployed people were less willing to accept their current situation and put their hopes in ICT-related jobs, some retired people also put their hopes in the ICT potential for their everyday life in general and some activities in particular, like avoiding travels, communicating with children, etc. If disabled workers were more prepared to accept their professional situation, even under discriminatory conditions, and sometimes to confer less potential to ICT as enabling technology, some retired people also think they are too old to learn how to use ICTs and that it is not worth trying. A more unusual position is

defended by those who refuse to become dependent on technology and want to keep going to the bank, reading books, writing letters, etc.

Their new inclusion trajectories are strongly related to the way that human agency is able to negotiate the reconstruction of a new social life. Interviews highlight that, even under discriminatory conditions like a low level of income, they are able to negotiate new technology-driven activities that may create new inclusion trajectories through social activities, social contacts, information research, etc. But various ICT use among people aged over 50 are also related to different temporalities in appropriating ICT into the construction of “self-designated” inclusion trajectories. Those temporalities do not necessarily refer to different stages of ageing since those interviewed present similar temporalities or follow similar appropriation modes across different ages and socio-demographic profiles.

The first and most advanced temporal stage in appropriating ICT consists of people who appropriate ICT into almost all aspect of their everyday life. This appropriation may be characterised by a multidimensional incorporation of ICTs in everyday life and the adoption of contrasted values in using ICT -from rational to social meaning – that may contribute to multidimensional inclusion trajectories through the re-construction of social, cultural or other kinds of activities. This appropriation mode may also create new forms of exclusion through the re-construction of activities that are mainly technologically mediated.

The second temporal stage is related to intermediary appropriation processes where some usages are well developed for everyday activities and others not. This appropriation mode reflects the adoption of specific values in using ICT -for instance, communicative values rather than rational ones - and in relation to some everyday activities rather than others. Here, human agency is limited to specific spaces of negotiation where ICT appropriation may have a potential for inclusion and these tend to be one-dimensional forms of inclusion.

The last temporal stage applies to very basic stages of appropriation where negative representations are more significant than social or rational values incorporated into ICT that reflects few potential for inclusion. Those various temporalities in appropriation processes may also be observed in the two other groups of less abled people. The conclusion of this report will highlight how such processes also favour contrasted constructions of “self-designated” inclusion trajectories in the everyday experiences of less abled people.

6. Conclusion and Policy Implications

This analysis adopted “diffusion-based” approach, which defends the social impacts of ICTs on social inclusion and highlighted the constructivist processes involved in the translation of political aims into specific contextual actions and their potential transfer to everyday experiences through appropriation processes. The comparison of “diffusion-based” initiatives and different individual discourses provided the answers to the two main research questions:

- How do organisational factors and project management influence the translation of various interests (political, local, organizational, individuals) over time to create inclusion or exclusion of less abled people in their everyday life?
- How do values incorporated into ICT use through appropriation by the less abled contribute to the construction of a “self-designated” inclusion or exclusion trajectories in various spheres of their everyday life and so to a multidimensional construction of inclusion?

6.1. From diffusion to inclusion: success and failures

The analysis of two case studies, the training programme and the call-centre, suggested that translation processes operating over time might influence the relative success or failure of diffusion projects. There was some early partial success in giving less abled people their first opportunity to participate in socio-economic processes. However, they partially failed to achieve their original goals of inclusion. Comparative results highlighted many obstacles in the translation of political aims into everyday inclusion experiences.

In the two fields, the management team initially developed a project in response to European political aims. The training programme addressed this through diffusion objectives, namely the insertion of unemployed people into ICT-related careers; the social enterprise was created to encourage the introduction of disabled people into “traditional” jobs. In both cases, the translations of these initial intentions were influenced by the interests of local stakeholders. The training programme was conceived around ICT-oriented courses in line with the technological interests of the trainers and to maintain their position within the association. Thus, the project fulfilled personal and organisational interests. The social enterprise and the call-centre were developed to answer management interests in developing new kinds of mainly commercial activities. The call-centre rapidly became the most significant department to the extent that its profits and productivity became crucial to

the survival of the whole enterprise. This resulted in internal and organisational aims becoming more important than inclusion objectives. Consequently, both cases increasingly diverged from the European political aims in response to internal needs.

However, the two cases can be distinguished in terms of the ways in which the projects were translated and the social consequences of these translation processes. Translation of the training programme was in accordance with the needs of the less able and the educational team reviewed the programme in order to help unskilled people re-integrate a training trajectory. Each programme was assessed in terms of trainees' comments and needs. Thus, any evolution in the programme away from European initial objectives did not only serve personal or organisational interests but those of the trainees. That is, changes were made so that trainees could be better informed about ICT-related jobs and training, trained about different aspects of labour market, etc.

The team also translated European criteria for the development of social inclusion when they thought that they were not adapted to the specific needs and contexts of less able people and that other actions were needed in order to facilitate socio-professional insertion or inclusion. Thus, the case illustrates how a translation process may create interest among actors (Akrich, Callon and Latour, 1988) and produce convergence between various interests, notably of the trainers, European and national authorities and the less able in the construction of inclusion. But it also shows how success is strongly related to the specific context where managers have translated their project at different levels depending on technical, social, economical and organisational factors. The training sector provided some opportunities to meet the needs of the less able in terms of skills and jobs. However, the case study also highlights that the least able tend to remain excluded notably because of weak ties between various organisations in the training network and lack of individual support. The translation potential of eLearn indicates the relative success of this initiative over time is also related to its own organisational context where profit is not necessary and to the context of the training sector where such a structure may work.

In contrast to this attempt for improving inclusion, the call-centre management did not develop new kinds of actions to meet inclusion objectives. Commercial objectives and organisational imperatives were more important for the everyday life of the structure. Even if managers of the call-centre were more tolerant than other employers would be, the "inclusion" project in itself does not exist anymore and the current enterprise works as a traditional commercial structure following economic interests. The translation process was conducted in line with the interests of a few stakeholders, namely the coordinator and

representative of the Community and managers of the call-centre, and did not create interest among disabled workers, as they were not viewed as “actors” in the project. The definition of “actors” in the translation theory implies enrolment and mobilisation in the innovation process (Amblard et al., 1996). The result was that most of the disabled workers remain excluded from “traditional” jobs and from satisfying work conditions. Furthermore, the commercial structure and the work conditions impose constraints on the achievement of workers needs and interests and on their reflexive potential.

Success and failures, which have been observed in both case studies, highlight that translation processes conducted over time may produce inclusion, as well as exclusion. But in the specific contexts of both initiatives, individual processes also play a crucial role for the construction of inclusion experiences in other everyday dimensions. Therefore, some conclusions about individual constructions are developed in the next section.

6.2. Appropriation and inclusion experiences of the less abled

A comparison of the individual appropriation processes evidence through three sets of interviews, suggested commonalities in the processes probably related to the characteristics of being less abled. Appropriating ICTs from specific experiences into other contexts of everyday life is not necessarily related to the translation process of both projects in terms of socio-professional insertion. Rather, the incorporation of ICT use into the domestic space reflects reflexive processes of adopting values associated with ICT use. If those values do influence the way that less abled people appropriate ICT-based initiatives and transfer this specific experience into their everyday experience, interviews with older people highlight that they also intervene in common processes of appropriating ICTs in everyday life contexts.

The comparison of various individual interviews raises the issue of adoption of specific values through the appropriation of ICT use. Values were used to distinguish three transversal categories representing three specific appropriation modes that were observed among the three groups and among people having various socio-demographic profiles. Appropriation modes also reflect different constructions of inclusion trajectories through contrasted temporalities related to the development of ICT use. Thus, “self-designated” trajectories may diverge from usual “hetero-designation” processes that would imply a higher potential for appropriation among more favoured categories of people.

The first category focuses on “utopian” people who develop various ICT usages, from computer use to information or communication tools, and incorporate a wide range of

values associated with ICTs, from rational values of usefulness to social or communitarian meanings (see Appendix 1: Patrick, Claude, Luc, Christian 2, François, Jean, Jacqueline). Their discourses indicate a positive appreciation of ICT use in their everyday life and highlights an individual and social identity strongly related to technological use, notably through the construction of ICT-related professional projects or ICT-based activities in relation to a professional experience or a technician “feeling”. In this direction, Luc, Patrick and Claude wished to find a job in the ICT sector after the TeC programme; Christian left the call-centre to construct another career as a webmaster; Jean is still developing software while François and Jacqueline spend most of their time using a computer. Their appropriation in various spheres and the relationships created between contrasted activities of their everyday life also tends to support the construction of a multidimensional inclusion process. For instance, Christian was able to construct a new inclusion trajectory through the creation of a negotiation space between rational and social values incorporated in ICT.

However, such utopian attitudes may also create new forms of exclusion when the belief in ICT potentials on the part of the less abled diverges from social constraints. Then, it may create a limited space for human agency and produce perverse consequences in terms of exclusion. This was the case with François in the third group for whom ICT use is the main activity as a retired person and is a source of isolation from social and relational activities. Luc, Patrick and Claude also experienced failures in achieving their professional projects in the ICT sector, notably because of a lack of social support.

The second category comprises “rational” people who appropriate ICTs for specific purposes and in relation to specific values (see Appendix 1: Guido, Juvenal, Christophe, Laetitia, Gregory, Victor, Frédéric, Christian, Gregory 2, Sylvio, Richard, Maurice, Vincent, Christiane, Jacques, Michel, Pierre, Serge, Isabelle, Christelle). They associate an activity-based usefulness to usages that is not necessarily related to any professional or personal project, for instance, job research, Homebanking or surfing on the Net. Their social usages reflect indirect mediation processes in which social networks around them influence their motivation to communicate, or more active use aiming at supporting existing social networks or participating in collective debates via ICTs. Their appreciation of ICT focuses on specific usages and they reluctance to appropriate it for the more useless aspects of technology, for instance, chat or games. Usage here reflects the construction of an inclusion experience in relation to specific dimensions of their everyday life rather than others, notably social relationships, leisure activities or job research activities. Appropriation and human agency is limited to specific spaces of their everyday life where

ICT is appropriated, while self-designated inclusion trajectories are constructed in divergence from utopian beliefs in the overall social potential of ICT as THE enabling technology. Here, self-designated trajectories are partly constructed in relation to ICT use and partly in relation to other dimensions and experiences of their everyday life.

The last category represents the most “dystopian” attitudes towards ICTs (see Appendix 1: Cassilde, Nathalie, Luc, Chantal, Frédéric 2, Eric, Jean-Pierre, Gérard, Jérôme, Albert). Here, less abled people are developing very limited use of ICT. Unemployed and disabled people of this category did not appropriate ICT outside the specific training and working initiatives or developed a very low level of use. The three groups adopted few rational or social values associated with ICT use and they usually preferred other everyday and social activities that are not technologically mediated, for instance, social face-to-face communications, leisure activities, visiting family. Their appreciation of technology is quite negative and they reluctant to use it for chatting, sending e-mails, realising transactions, searching for information. In their case, ICTs reflect a very low inclusion potential and their own representations incorporated into ICT strongly diverge from utopian beliefs in ICT inclusion impacts. Their “negative” values may be related to structural or socio-demographic constraints since those interviewees have no extended social networks, no friends to communicate with via Internet, no family or friends using ICT, and sometimes no economic resources to access technology. But what is more significant is the absence of interest on their part in using technology, and the non-incorporation of values in using ICT for constructing their inclusion trajectory. Their “self-designated” trajectory is constructed without any reference to ICT and limited potential for inclusion. The inclusion trajectory is not constructed through the appropriation of ICTs and those less abled define themselves through the usual categories and relevant dimensions of social inclusion in “hetero-designated” terms. They do not attribute social or inclusion values into ICTs and construct their own trajectories outside such a perspective, in relation to other experiences such as family, leisure, home, etc.

6.3. Policy implications

This constructivist approach to collective and individual experiences based on a comparison of two specific cases and three different groups highlights multiple constraints and opportunities, which provide the conditions where less abled may/may not construct a “self-designated” inclusion trajectory. Experiences such as the realisation of professional projects, communitarian use of ICTs or the non-use of ICTs, provide multiple ways to construct ICT potentials for inclusion. Social factors and norms defining social inclusion as an “hetero-designation” process, contextual and organisational conditions may be translated

in ways that made possible spaces for “human agency” and “self-designation” processes; they may also constitute constraints where limited space is available for innovation and reflexivity. This constructivist approach of inclusion and exclusion within the information society raises crucial questions for the development of European eInclusion strategies and suggests innovative views on potential actions to better address everyday experiences in the specific contexts of less able people. Here, the main political question concerns the realism of ICT-based projects for an inclusion policy in the everyday life of less able people.

First, the question is whether it is realistic to advise less able people to turn to ICT-related jobs or would it be better to encourage other kinds of jobs more specifically related to their own projects and labour market opportunities? Indeed, the non-appropriation of ICT in some cases highlights the difficulties of diffusing ICTs in the context of less able people, but also the irrelevance of diffusion actions vis-à-vis some individual experiences where structural sources of exclusion are not solved and where individual support is needed.

Another suggestion is to go beyond ICT use as a tool for accessing the working and training spheres and to favour ICT use as a “support” tool for personal projects and evolution in different spheres of everyday life (professional, educational, cultural, etc.). Possibly, such projects would expand diffusion actions to other dimensions of personal trajectories and inclusion processes

Similarly, reinforcing ties within local networks, for instance, between various organisations in the training sector and between “adapted” and “traditional” corporations, and enlarging partnerships with other fields, like social assistance and job research, funding authorities and potential employers, etc., offers another potential orientation. Overcoming the limits of local initiatives through the development of larger partnerships would also require a higher degree of coordination between social, political and local objectives.

Finally, such an analysis should be reproduced on different groups and initiatives over time in order to help policymakers developing political strategies and action programmes on the basis of potential success and failures of such initiatives in everyday life. Such policies would help developing ICT positive experiences for less able in various spheres of their everyday life and in coordination with social inclusion policies.

Notes

¹ The conception of exclusion developed in this section is inspired from a reflection conducted by three EMTEL research fellows during the process of their research (see Cammaerts, Georgiou and Durieux, 2003).

² For a cultural approach to exclusion see Georgiou (2003): Mapping Diasporic Media across the EU: Addressing Cultural Exclusion. EMTEL Key Deliverable – unpublished report. London: LSE. For an approach to political participation and exclusion, see Cammaerts (2003): ICT-Usage's of Transnational Social Movements in the Networked Society, Four differentiated cases of transnationalised social movement organisations. EMTEL Key Deliverable – unpublished report. Amsterdam: ASCoR.

³ Four trainees agreed to participate in the second interview in April, one (Cassilde) refused the second invitation and only answered a few questions at the phone, the last one (Marie-Christine) was not reachable.

⁴ However, some of the were participating in evening courses organized by a non-profit association for retired people. But this initiative was not launched under the heading of European or National action programmes, but at a local level.

⁵ DOCUP Objectif 3 Wallonie-Bruxelles (2000), en partenariat avec le Gouvernement Wallon, le Gouvernement de la Communauté Française, le Collège de la Commission Communautaire française de Bruxelles-Capitale, Commission Européenne, DG Emploi et Affaires Sociales, Cellule Fond Social Européen.

⁶ These jobs were distributed between the various associations that were all taking part in the activities of eLearn.

⁷ The Walloon Agency for the Integration of the Disabled (AWIPH) is the public interest organization that constitutes the executive body and the major dynamic tool for the policy of social and professional integration of the disabled conducted by the Walloon Government in the context of the legislation adopted by the Walloon Parliament. Therefore it is entrusted with a general mission covering various domains of action:

- to promote a global and coordinated policy in favor of the disabled;
- to manage a range of individual assistance made available for the disabled to facilitate their integration (for example, reimbursement of travel expenses to follow training);
- to authorize and subsidize services designed for the disabled (for example, some services proposed by the Community) ;
- to support information actions, sensitization training.

See also <http://www.awiph.be>

⁸ That day, the Call-Centre operated from 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM and from 1:30 PM to 5:30 PM. The operators who had worked all day long were thus connected for eight hours. The observation took place during the afternoon at a time where workers started to be tired and stressed; they were forgetting their code and had a tendency to prolong the conversations. According to them, the maximum connection time for the Telecom operators was six hours.

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Appendix 1: Tables of interviewees

Table 1: Participants in the TeC program

Name	Age	Origin	Situation before the training	Training program	Situation after the training
Claude	36	Belgium	Unemployed for one month	TeC III From October 01 to February 02	After two months: Failed in two selection tests for 'qualifying' training programs (web- master and cyber-assistant) Unemployed and one interim job
Guido	36	Rwanda	Independent worker Arrived in Belgium in October 2001	TeC III From October 01 to February 02	After two months: Waiting for the beginning of a 'qualifying' training program (painting)
Juvenal	40	Rwanda	Accountant Arrived in Belgium in June 1998	TeC III From October 01 to February 02	After two months: Waiting for results of selection tests for 'qualifying' training programs (construction work and logistic)
Marie-Christine	41	Belgium	Unemployed for four years	TeC III From October 01 to February 02	?
Cassilde	37	Rwanda	Arrived in Belgium in 1995 Unemployed for seven years	TeC III From October 01 to February 02	After two months: Waiting for the beginning of a 'qualifying' training program (management and computer literacy)
Patrick	22	Rwanda	Arrived in Belgium in April 2001 Student	TeC III From October 01 to February 02	After two months: Waiting for results of selection tests for 'qualifying' training programs (web-design)
Christophe	21	Belgium	Student (stopped a graduate)	TeC III From October 01 to February 02 Stopped in January	After two months: Follow a 'qualifying' training program (Computer literacy)

Name	Age	Origin	Situation before the training	Training program	Situation after the training
Laetitia	22	Belgium	Student (stopped a graduate)	TeC III From October 01 to February 02 Stopped in January	After two months: Follow a 'qualifying' training program (Computer literacy)
<i>Luc (only agreed to answer a few questions on the phone)</i>	45	<i>Belgium</i>	<i>Unemployed for several years</i>	<i>TeC II</i> <i>From May to September 01</i>	<i>After 6 months:</i> <i>Unemployed</i>
Nathalie	28	Belgium	Followed a four months pre-qualifying training (computer literacy)	TeC II From May to September 01	After 6 months: Part-time work in a town administration
Gregory	23	Belgium	Failed in different kinds of studies and followed a socialisation program through computer literacy courses	TeC II From May to September 01	After 6 months: Just began a job as an assistant in a primary school (professional transition program)
Victor	36	Rwanda	Arrived in Belgium in 1989 (to study in a secondary school) Alternated interim jobs and unemployment periods from 1994 until 2000	TeC I From November 00 to March 01	After 15 months: Has been working for 6 months as an agent in public transport
Frédéric	39	Burundi	Arrived in Belgium in 1984 (to study biology at the University) After having failed at the University, alternated training programs and unemployment periods	TeC I From November 00 to March 01	After 15 months: Failed in several selection tests for various training programs Has just found a job as a caretaker of a sportive hall

Table 2: Operators of the call-centre

Name	Age	Situation before health problems	Disability	Recruitment in the call centre
Chantal	48	Independent worker	Asthma problems	Hired when followed ICT training program in “Info-centre” (for three months)
Christian	44	Industrial painter	Lungs cancer	Hired when followed ICT training program in “Info-centre” (for six months)
Frédéric	31	Student in secondary school	Back surgery, unable to walk for one year	Hired when followed ICT training program in “Info-centre” (for six months)
Christian 2	43	Industrial baker	Lungs cancer, bones problems, multiple surgeries	Hired when followed ICT training program in “Info-centre” (for eight months) <i>Has left and works in his town administration as webmaster and reception agent</i>
Gregory	24	Student in social work	Arm problems because of a road accident (motorbike)	Informed by public service for employment
Eric	28	Student in secondary school	Physical impairments because of a road accident	Helped by a local politician
Sylvio	42	Worker in the construction sector	Back surgery	Hired when followed ICT training program in “Info-centre” (for three months)
Richard	50	Multiple works (industrial technician, woodcutter, etc.)	Paraplegic because of a road accident	Hired when followed ICT training program in “Info-centre” (for six months)
Maurice	40	Taxi driver	Back problems, temporary deafness	Hired when followed ICT training program in “Info-centre” (for one year)
Vincent	29	Unemployed after secondary school	Blood sickness	Informed by a friend
Christiane	40	Merchandiser	Arm impairments because of an accident at work	Hired when followed ICT training program in the public service for employment (for two months)
Jean-Pierre	30	Military	Nervous breakdown after a mission in Yugoslavia	Hired when followed ICT training program in “Info-centre” (for six months)
Jacques	32	Alternation between interim and unemployment periods	Nervous breakdown, agoraphobia	Hired when followed ICT training program in “Info-centre” (for nine months)

Table 3: People aged over 50

Name	Age	Socio-professional status	ICT use experiences
Michel	60	Ex-pilot of SABENA-airlines, pre-retired for one year	Professional usage of a specific software; use a computer and Internet at home
Gérard	62	Civil Servant in the agriculture ministry	Professional usage of a specific software; use a management software and Internet at home
Isabelle	52	Ex-teacher in a secondary school, stopped working for health reasons	Use a computer and Internet at home (communications with children living abroad)
François	82	Ex-independent worker in the electronic sector, came back from Rwanda in 1994	Use a computer and Internet at home
Jean	59	Ex-computer scientist in the construction sector, pre-retired for three years	Use a computer and Internet at home; organizes initiation courses for retired people
Pierre	77	Ex-paediatrics, retired	Usage of a professional software; use a computer for writing articles and limited use of Internet for communicating with family and friends
Jérôme	88	Ex-worker in the industrial sector, retired <i>Deceased in 2002</i>	Usage of a computer for scanning pictures and writing poems
Jacqueline	74	Air hostess for several years, stopped working	Use a computer and Internet at home for operating transactions, consulting the Stock Exchange, communicating with friends and family
Serge	60	Ex-lawyer, retired for a few months	Professional usage of a specific software; use a computer for video processing and Internet for communicating with family
Albert	70	Ex-computer scientist in the industrial sector, retired	Professional usage of specific hardware and management software; use a computer for accountancy and design at home
Christelle	53	Part-time teacher in a secondary school and PhD student in sociology	Professional usage of a computer for preparing lessons; use a computer for writing her PhD and Internet for academic research, communication and information

Appendix 2: The third TeC program

1. Structure of the program

This program took place over a period of 16 weeks, 5 days a week, and 8 hours a day (including a one-hour lunch break). It was structured in two parts:

- Development of skills
- Computer ICT

The first part was composed of the following courses:

Introduction to computers: network/peripheral	7h
Operation system: Windows 2000	20h
Text editor: Word 2000	32h
Table editor: Excel 2000	32h
Database management: Access 2000	20h
DP: Publisher 2000 (which will be cancelled during the training)	7h
Pre DP: Power Point 2000	13h
Programming logic	17h

The second part aimed at offering the trainees the opportunity to discover and make the most of their potential for the analysis and processing of specific or general themes, through activities like:

The analysis of their skills and their personal development	36h
Job search (CV, motivation letter, simulation of job interviews, etc.)	36h
Interpersonal and team communication	32h
A module on notions of economy and social legislation	4h
Individual follow-up	8h
The company and its mode of operation	6 visits
Basic and technical English	48h
A typing course (which was shortened at the end of the training)	33h

Moreover, each participant was expected to perform a 3-day observation internship in a company. This internship was intended to collect the information necessary to design a website presenting the organization in which he/she performed the internship. 50 hours of work were dedicated to this project. Each participant had to find himself/herself a place to perform the internship, but the trainers had to make the contacts, because of the failure of the previous experiences.

The introduction to the use of Internet (Outlook, Explorer), a two-hour course at the beginning of the training, was also included in this module. With this first approach, the trainers tried to give an overview of the basic use and the utility in terms of job search, administrative formalities, etc. Then the trainees were given access to the machines during off-peak hours, for the whole duration of the training.

Internal and external visits were also part of skills development. In this context, the trainees were able to visit self-training computer centers, public spaces offering access to Internet and organizations for qualifying training.

A teacher from the outside was also involved for English courses. The course was organized in two levels. The first group followed an introductory course and the second a refresher. The unoccupied group worked in the computer room while the other attended classes. The trainer taught them mainly technical English, related to the use of a PC.

All courses and activities were organized in half-days. The objective of the program was to propose a range as wide as possible for subjects related to ICT and computers.

Evaluation of the third program

Modules rates as very positive	Opinion and score given by trainees
Office software (Word, Excel)	Utility, frequency and method rated as very good
'Hiring' module	Logical tests, letter/CV, interview simulation rated as very good
Observation internship	Rated as very good, but perceived as too short
'Practical' module	Course of social legislation and economy rated as very good, but 51% for the typing course (organization problem)
'Training programs' module	Visits to other organizations rated as very good

2. Modules rates as positive	Opinion and score given by trainees
Windows	Course rated as good but perceived as not technical enough (for example, some trainees would have liked more detail on the installation of programs or peripherals)
Other software (Access, publisher, Power Point)	Good rating
Design of the web site	Good rating but judged as not really indispensable by some
'Team development and communication' module	Good rating but some wished the trainers would better present the objectives of the 'communication' module as of the beginning
Tests/revisions	Good rating and judged as very relevant, but not frequent enough
Educational aspects	Good rating

3. Modules with reserved rating	Opinion and score given by trainees
Namoweb (for the design of the website)	Technical problems and mastery of the software by the trainer
Individual follow-up	Judged useless by some
Programming logic	Judged as too difficult
Internet	-Overwhelmed -Judged useful but came too late in the program -They would have preferred more standard searches with the trainer and to focus more on the use of e-mail.

English	Mitigated rating since there were too many different levels in the group
Others	They would have preferred longer periods on basic software and the organization of a specific 'job search' module

Appendix 3: Work organization in the call-centre

The object of the call-centre is to ensure, on the site of the Community and in the conditions exposed in the sub-contracting convention, calls in French from the national telephone information service of Telecom. For the social enterprise to be able to perform this task, Telecom provides all the technical infrastructure necessary to operate the call-centre (computer equipment, telephone lines, wiring, etc.). It also ensures the maintenance of the equipment and the in-house training of the operators.

The social enterprise is required to ensure 12 positions every morning of every office day (from 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM), to allow access to the premises of the Telecom personnel and the recording of phone calls. The managers of the social enterprise are not bound to ensure the provision of services on legal holidays, except in case of special request by Telecom, which they still have the right to refuse. Actually, they never refuse to ensure additional services in order to maintain good relationships with the client. Thus, the operators must sometimes work on legal holidays, as well as some afternoons of office days during strikes or when the personnel of Telecom's call-centres are in training. They are paid twice the hourly rate.

The sub-contracting convention also provides for several corporate policy rules that conform to the organizational mode of Telecom's internal call-centres. The convention notably establishes the number and the duration of the breaks to which each operator is entitled to during the morning, i.e. two 10-minute breaks. Telecom also controls the call-centre's productivity level by establishing daily statistics of the average duration per communication (that must be 34 seconds per transaction), of the average availability of the operators, the error rate and the behavior of the operators. Connection time and sub-contracting costs were the main elements in the negotiation of the contract. If the activity reports sent daily by Telecom are not satisfactory, it may adjust the amount paid to the social enterprise as a function of the hourly rate and the connection time (for example, if the duration of the calls exceeds the national average by more than 10%).

These activity reports mention:

- The number of positions ensured in the morning;
- The duration of the breaks for each operator;
- The number of calls during the morning;

- The average response time (for example: 27.3'' on 21/02/02) ;
- The line occupation rate¹;
- Technical problems that have generated failures;
- The % of calls that have given an automatic answer from the automatic operator².

Between 8:30 AM and 12:30 PM, each operator receives approximately 400 calls, with a resting time of around 2 to 3 seconds between calls. The invoice specifies the exact number of minutes spent in connection. If a report gives bad results, the day of the operators is analyzed more in depth to establish the cause (prolonged breaks, faintness resulting in disconnection, etc.). Whenever necessary, Telecom can also supply a report of the actions of each operator per minute.

Telecom also ensures the evaluation and the control of the service supplied by the operators. Agreements between Telecom and its own unions prohibit the company from monitoring its operators and mentioning them in evaluation reports. To be able to refer to the behavior of an operator, this operator must know he is monitored. This is the case during communication skill evaluations performed every 6 months by Telecom instructors. Based on his/her observations, the assessor can provide a report to the manager of the social enterprise. This report can specify the aspects that each operator has to improve to ensure the quality of the service and can lead to additional training if necessary. However, all communications are monitored by Telecom and can be used in case of litigation with a client or when there is an unfavorable production report. Surveys performed in the form of 'Mystery calls' can also be used to test the behavior of operators in real-life situations. These surveys cannot generate direct sanctions against the operators if there is no explicit complaint from a client against an operator who has been evaluated negatively.

Despite the fact that this monitoring system is subject to certain union regulations, it generates a certain stress among operators who do not benefit from the same union protection as Telecom employees. The social enterprise thus feels that it has to ensure the commercial quality of the operators work. If it loses this client, it would be at risk of not being able to operate like a normal enterprise and should go back to the statute of Adapted Work Enterprise, with different hourly rates and subsidies.

¹ Occupation time must be at least 3h40 per operator, including their break.

² Address searches performed from a telephone number result in an oral response by the operator, while searches with a phone number as answer result in an answer by a pre-recorded voice.

The operators must follow a search pattern defined during their training and the production planning defined by Telecom in its operational regulations. The operators can access the program in three different ways: by encoding the area code, the street, or the name. The area is entered with a three-letter code. They can also use professional codes (for certain companies, certain activity sectors, etc.). The operators always have the possibility to extend the search in case of move.

When the client is looking for a telephone number and the search goes normally, the operator sends the information by activating the pre-recorded voice system. The operator does not hear the voice system, but sees on the screen that the call cuts off automatically. The client has also the possibility to press 1 at the end of message to directly call the number communicated by the pre-recorded voice. If the person is looking for an address, the operator must then give the information orally in person. A flashing light on the screen and a 'beep' notifies that there is a new call.

When operators cannot answer to the client, they have the possibility to make way to an expert, located in a Telecom's call-centre. This expert takes the call; the operator can listen to the conversation (or at least the beginning of it) and receives a report in return in order to know how the expert was able to answer the client's question. In case of technical problems or errors in the database, the operators warn their manager and a note is sent to Telecom. The operators also receive information regarding emergency numbers, new products subject to an advertisement campaign, etc. Over time, the software and the responsibilities of the operators have also evolved. The current system helps them find the information more rapidly, but the information must also be more complete (e.g. restaurants, name of the owner, etc.). The walls of the call-centre are plastered with "Profile of the cool operator" posters by Telecom. Each poster illustrates a specific quality that the operator should have.

Work conditions are such that one or two persons quit the call-centre every year and that absenteeism is an aspect of the social enterprise's daily operation. Rates often vary according to the period, according to each operator's problems, climate changes, conflicts, etc. Work conditions are also stressful, they work at the end of the line, they depend on the services that precede them, and in front line facing complaints from clients, who can sometimes be very offensive.

Appendix 4: EMTEL Deliverables

Final Deliverables

- Brants, K. and Frissen, V. (2003) 'Inclusion and Exclusion in the Information Society', University of Amsterdam (ASCoR) and TNO Strategy, Technology and Policy.
- Pichault, F. and Durieux, D. (2003) 'The Information Society in Europe: Methods and Methodologies', LENTIC, University of Liege and ASCoR, University of Amsterdam.
- Preston, P. (2003) 'ICTs in Everyday Life: Public Policy Implications for Europe's Way to the Information Society'.
- Punie, Y., Bogdanowicz, M., Berg, Anne-Jorunn., Pauwels C. and Burgelman, J-C. 'Living and Working in the Information Society: Quality of Life in a digital world', IPTS-JRC, European Commission, Sevilla; Centre for Technology & Society, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim; SMIT, Free University of Brussels
- Silverstone, R. (2003) 'Media and Technology in the Everyday Life of European Societies', Media@lse, London School of Economics and Political Science.

Key Deliverables

- Berker, T. (2003) 'Boundaries in a space of flows: the case of migrant researchers' use of ICTs', NTNU, University of Trondheim.
- Cammaerts, B. and Van Audenhove, L. (2003) 'ICT usage among transnational social movements in the networked society', ASCoR/TNO, University of Amsterdam.
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