



October 2018

Newsletter n° 5

CARMA Final Conference was a success!

Under the motto "*Collaborative Learning as a Road towards Educational Success*", the CARMA final conference held in Brussels on 4th-5th October reached a great impact among participants.

The two days of practical and hands-on sessions were a perfect opportunity to explain and showcase to teachers, school managers and other policy makers in education, how relevant and how easy is to use non-formal education techniques in traditional school settings. Keynote speaker included Stijn Dhert, National UNESCO ASPnet coördinator for Flanders and co-founder of 'The Mystery of Education' (Mysterie van Onderwijs). The conference allowed participants to know about the CARMA project and its activities and achievements, but above all, to understand how non-formal education can be daily used in formal classrooms and how it impacts in students' motivation and participation, contributing to a more inclusive strategy.



Lessons learned from the project implementation – how more inclusive can schools be?

One of the aims of the CARMA project was to deliver evidence-based recommendations for policy makers to promote more inclusive schools using non-formal learning (NFL) techniques. The [CARMA Inclusion Strategy](#) presents a set of recommendations for teachers, school managers and governments and policymakers, focusing on different aspects, but promoting ways to fight early school leaving and increase students' participation and motivation.

The CARMA project analysed qualitative and quantitative data and information collected from teachers, students, parents as well as school principals and other stakeholders, concerning teaching and learning environments, curricula, support of national policies, teachers training, etc. The NFL techniques, including RMA as a collaborative assessment technique have proved to make an impact on the collaborative work between teachers as well as among students. After testing different NFL techniques in the classroom, both teachers and students have considered these techniques as a gain in their daily experience in their classroom and the wider school environment. These influencers have provided a major input to the CARMA project partners leading to useful recommendations on how to include NFL techniques and RMA as an assessment tool in school education.

For a complete understanding of our proposal for an inclusion strategy, please consult the full document available on our website at: <http://carma-project.eu/download-area/>.



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Concrete recommendations from CARMA Inclusion Strategy

Governments, policymakers and influencers on educational policy should:

- ✓ raise awareness of the benefits of NFL
- ✓ include NFL in teaching curricula
- ✓ encourage schools to consult NFL experts and hold workshops
- ✓ make NFL techniques a (compulsory) subject in teacher education/formation, including textbooks
- ✓ allow a bottom-up policy (i. e. through seeking advice from teachers and students)
- ✓ introduce more flexibility in curricula concerning the teaching and learning content and a change of the learning environment
- ✓ change the classroom organisation, i.e. by lowering the student numbers in one class and by introducing more co-teaching
- ✓ innovate students' assessment by changing the focus, i.e. put less emphasis on homework, exercises and exams but more on understanding and participation in collaborative learning procedures
- ✓ ensure that learning can be an active and creative process rather than the reproduction of knowledge
- ✓ actively involve teachers, students and parents into the discussion of how to innovate education

School principals and leaders of educational institutions should:

- ✓ stay well-informed about NFL techniques and the RMA
- ✓ provide information to parents, students, teachers (educators) and partner organisations
- ✓ motivate their teachers to apply NFL techniques
- ✓ encourage peer learning/peer coaching at their school (i.e. teachers learning from each other)
- ✓ foster interdisciplinary projects
- ✓ provide a platform for community-based problem solving
- ✓ provide teacher trainings on RMA/NFL techniques at school
- ✓ engage school coordinators to help implement NFL techniques
- ✓ provide a more flexible school structure (e. g. concerning decision making and time management)
- ✓ support teaching in small groups and face-to-face
- ✓ allow teachers to change the class room layout to provide an alternative learning environment
- ✓ recruit teaching staff with knowledge in NFL
- ✓ integrate NFL techniques in the school's mission/vision and become an "ambassador of NFL"

Teachers are advised to include NFL methods and RMA as an assessment tool into classroom situations to:

- ✓ involve their students into the learning process and motivate them to participate actively
- ✓ encourage students to express their idea and opinions
- ✓ promote collaboration – between teachers and students as well as among students
- ✓ put a focus on community building processes
- ✓ avoid "top-down" education and teacher-centred teaching ("lecturing")
- ✓ put students' empowerment at the centre of teaching
- ✓ not make "achieving a set" or "following the curricula" the ultimate goal of teaching but rather their students' active involvement in the learning progress