



CARMA

Non-formal learning for student motivation

External Evaluator Final Report

Project no.

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www.carma-project.eu



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1. Introduction	3
2. Project Context	6
3. Evaluation Context	10
<i>3.1 Evaluation Approach</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>3.2 Evaluation Methodology</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>3.3 Evaluation Criteria</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>3.4 Final Partner Questionnaire</i>	<i>12</i>
4. Partner Survey Findings	14
<i>4.1 Perceived main deliverables of the project</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>4.2 Perceived most important outcomes of the CARMA project</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>4.3 Perceived most significant achievements of the CARMA project</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>4.4 Perceived project actions with the most impact</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>4.5 Intellectual outputs, activities and outcomes with mainstream potential</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>4.6 Key messages from the CARMA project</i>	<i>20</i>
5. Review Of The CARMA Project Online	24
<i>5.1 Overview</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>5.2 Site features</i>	<i>24</i>
6. Project Outputs	34
<i>6.1 CARMA Toolkit</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>6.2 CARMA Teacher competence assessment model</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>6.3 CARMA Inclusion Strategy</i>	<i>37</i>
7. Conclusions	40

1. Introduction

This report is the external evaluation review and it is produced at the end of the “**CARMA, RMA and other non-formal learning methods for Student Motivation**”. The report focuses on evaluating the achievements, deliverables and outcomes as determined by the goals and objectives of the CARMA project.

The CARMA project concerns **Priority 3** (Strand 1) – **Promoting innovative collaborative teaching and learning**. The goal was to introduce non-formal learning methods as a collaborative learning strategy in formal education contexts in order to innovate school culture and transform classroom practices.

The project set out to use a range of non-formal learning techniques for increasing the teaching skills of teachers to reduce ESL and the **Reciprocal Maieutic Approach** (RMA) as an inclusive assessment tool for increasing the teaching skills of teachers, specifically in supporting teachers to monitor their student’s learning progress, particularly after participating in collaborative learning / NFL methods in the classroom in order to improve retention of pupils at risk of leaving school early. The results achieved by the partnership were to be applied for the purpose of pushing policies towards the inclusion of disadvantaged learners and reduce the levels of early school leaving.

It is important to clarify that a range of non-formal learning techniques were used for increasing the teaching skills of teachers to reduce ESL, and then I would then add that the use of RMA as an assessment tool in CARMA was more specifically used for supporting teachers in monitoring their student’s learning progress, particularly after participating in collaborative learning / NFL methods in the classroom.

The CARMA project thus piloted an innovative learning approach. The direct target groups in the application were a) teachers of basic skills and b) school pupils aged 11-15, that had been identified as either disadvantaged or marginalised. However, from the start of the project this was widened to include teachers from across all teaching disciplines and school students up to the age of 18 years old who participated in the piloting. The indirect target groups included the wider school community parents, governors and also policy actors.

The main results were:

- A **CARMA toolkit** on how to use collaborative learning with students,
- An **Inclusion Strategy** document with recommendations to EU and national education authorities on how to integrate non-formal learning within schools and form collaborative relationships with the school community and
- **An Assessment Model** for teachers to use.

The project has made these deliverables available online through the project Web site (<http://www.carma-project.eu>) and in hard copy in English and in the seven partner languages.

The CARMA project is based on RMA – the Reciprocal Maieutic Approach - and other non-formal learning methods for Student Motivation. The Reciprocal Maieutic Approach is based on a ‘reciprocal’ process between at least two people. So RMA is a dialectic methodology of research and self-analysis. It promotes a sense of responsibility in collective and individual situations, based on a process of collective exploration, which takes as its starting point the experience and the intuition of the individual. RMA helps the learners bring their own knowledge to the fore. Dialogue is used as an interactive tool so that new knowledge arises from the experience and its communication or sharing of it.

In creating an intense dialogue, a new way of education based on increasing individuals’ and group’s creativity is created. The maieutic process concentrates on the capacity of people’s potential to discover their own interests and freely express their own reflections based on their own experiences and their personal discoveries.

The CARMA project has been a response to the key benchmarks for education from the Education and Training Strategic Framework for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The goal is to boost the quality of education and training in areas, which require urgent attention and actions by Member-States. The Strategic Framework aims to achieve six targets by 2020: (i) reduce the early leavers from education and training below 10%, (ii) reach 40% tertiary educational attainment among 30 to 34-year-olds, (iii) achieve 95% participation in early childhood education and care, (iv) lower underachievement in reading, maths and science to less than 15% and (v) achieve an 82% employment rate of recent graduates. CARMA specifically focuses on reducing the rate of early school leaving in the EU to less than 10% and reducing the share of 15-year-olds under-skilled in reading, mathematics and science to less than 15% by the year 2020.

The main target groups have been secondary school teachers from across all teaching disciplines and in many cases teaching those students, aged 11 to 15, identified as disadvantaged, low achieving and at risk of early school leaving. Indirectly teaching staff and professionals within school education, community of stakeholders in the policy making process i.e. parents, school service providers, civil society organisations and policy makers in school education are also priorities. CARMA offers a process to integrate the participation of all these actors, and transform them into an active part of the knowledge chain.

The Mission of the CARMA Project, as stated in the application, was:

- To **increase student motivation and participation** by offering an alternative form

of teaching and learning using non-formal approaches to education and RMA to support disadvantaged learners and increase achievement levels of students, particularly those at risk of early school leaving;

- To support the **integration of the RMA as an assessment tool** within school curricula to enrich the learning environment and support school communities to become collaborative learning communities;
- To increase and **improve the competences of teachers** through providing a training and assessment framework with the necessary skills, knowledge and resources on how to use inclusive and participatory practices in their own teaching and develop **collaborative relationships in and out of the classroom**, thus decreasing the distance between the teacher and learner.
- To provide **inputs and policy recommendations for intervention strategies** to reduce early school leaving and increase basic skills through a network that will facilitate close collaboration with key actors across different levels of education.

A number of Project Objectives were agreed at the outset of the project.

- To **increase student motivation** and participation by offering new form of teaching-learning using non-formal approaches to support disadvantaged learners and increase their achievements;
- To **integrate RMA as an assessment tool** within school curricula;
- To **expand teachers' skills** through training and assessment framework with knowledge and resources on how to use inclusive and participatory practices and develop collaborative relationships in and out of school;
- To **provide policy recommendations** for strategies to reduce early school leaving and increase basic skills.

This has been achieved through providing deliverables that promote more inclusive teaching practices and specifically those that offer non-formal and collaborative practices at school. These methodologies form the basis to encourage collective exploration among the target groups.

The project brought teachers and experts in non-formal education together from seven European countries in collaborative practice. The results from different school environments in different European countries have been presented and analysed to show the positive impact they can have on young people. This in turn has been used to develop and publish a CARMA Inclusion Strategy to address the development of more effective education policies and actions to support the inclusion of disadvantaged learners and reduce early school leaving. Using this document CARMA has sought to reach out to policy makers and therefore establish a sustainable impact on European education systems.

2. Project Context

This report is produced at the conclusion of 34 months work on the **CARMA Project: non-formal learning for student motivation**.

CARMA has been based on four phases of operation (Figure 1) and is described from the application as follows:

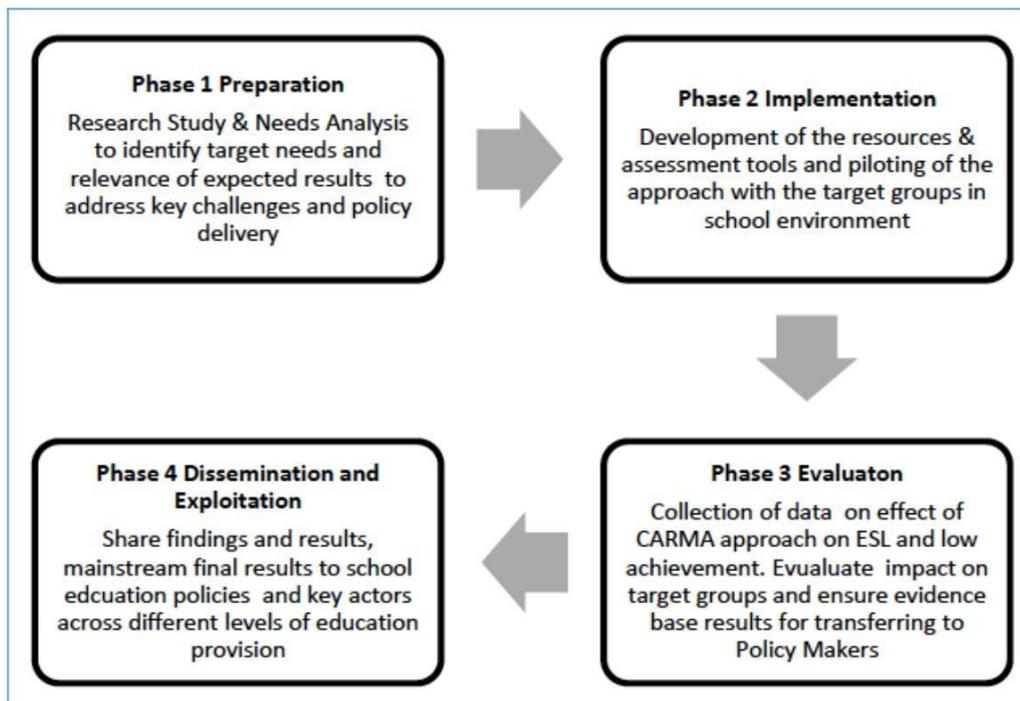


Figure 1: Phases of CARMA Project implementation

Phase 1 Preparation M1 – M7 (January 2016 - July 2016)

.... in-depth research on the situation in each of the partner countries regards Early School Leaving (ESL), best practices in collaborative learning and national frameworks for the assessment of teachers competences.

Milestones and indicators: In depth knowledge among consortium on the target needs and the challenges the project will address, quantitative and qualitative comparative research reports - national and EU level, delivery of 7 Educational Forums events across the partner countries involving 70 organisations/140-210 participants in total, completion of 2nd consortium meeting and report with research & needs analyses review.

Phase 2 – Implementation M2 – M29 (February 2016 – May 2018)

Will involve the development and adaptation of diverse non-formal methods into training materials for school education and RMA as an assessment tool for students to measure impact from collaborative learning, creation of Toolkit and accompanying Teacher Competence Assessment model to measure competences“ development of

teachers in collaborative practices, Development of a “CARMA network for School Communities” to facilitate collaborative practices between teachers, educational staff and wider school community; training for teachers across partner countries led by non-formal learning Experts and RMA experts which will lead into the testing of the CARMA methods into the school learning process by the trained teachers with students at school involving different school stakeholders, continued peer learning support, peer review and collaborative working among teachers and educators across the schools using developed resources supported by non-formal Experts.

Phase 2 Milestones and indicators: *Timely completion of tasks, shared understanding of objectives and activities to be delivered, collaborative working among the non-formal Experts and teachers to support the piloting phase in schools and relevance and transferability of the produced results to policy makers, delivery of 1 European Workshop for 28 Teachers led by the 7 Non-formal Experts from the 7 partner countries, established online group involving the non-formal learning Experts and DTG1 teachers, competence and skills acquisition of 28 teachers and increased motivation, engagement and achievement levels of more than 500 disadvantaged students, creation of 1 Toolkit resource (80 pages) with minimum of 15 resources and 1 Teacher competence assessment model, production of the online network with Forum and Resource bank and developed products available online as an open educational resource, completion of 3rd consortium meeting and report.”*

Phase 3 Evaluation M1 – M30 (January 2016 – June 2018) extended to M34

Monitor and collect data in order to track the projects progress and make improvements, carry out evaluation at both internal and external level, monitor and evaluate the quality and relevance of project deliverables, expected outcomes and results, with the support from an External Evaluator, analyse final results to ensure project effectiveness in answering to the target groups identified needs and school education sector, ensure evidence base for transferring to Policy Makers with different level of school education Timely completion of Internal Evaluation Reports providing effective overall project evaluation

Milestones and indicators: 2 External Evaluation Reports produced (mid and final) and comprehensive Evaluation Reports at internal level assessing throughout the project lifetime shared understanding of project progress, achievements and challenges, usefulness and clarity of developed evaluation measures, procedures and tools, completion of 4th consortium meeting and report, delivery of a 2 day Evaluation Seminar involving coordinators, Non-formal Learning Experts, EU Schools Policy Expert and participants, improved evidence base to service policy delivery and actions

Phase 4 Dissemination and Exploitation M1 – M30 (January 2016 – June 2018) extended to M34

Foresees and measures activities for the dissemination and exploitation of the project results. Firstly to grant a wider visibility for the achievement of a sustainable impact of project, outcomes and final results and to meet the project objectives in a coherent way through identification of the target groups and stakeholders in the education system and with focus on school education at different geographical levels, disseminate information about the project development, different phases and achievements to the widest audience possible through coordinated actions. Mainstreaming activities will tie the developments and evidence base results within the project to concrete policy actions at national level and EU level in order to create a sustainable and systemic impact on the groups targeted by the CARMA project and wider school education sector.

Milestones and indicators: Create tools - website, logo, newsletters, social media, brochure, promotional video, Development of stakeholder contact list; Exploitation Policy Engagement Strategy, delivery of 2nd Educational Forum, development of an Inclusion Strategy for education authorities interested in implementing the CARMA approach within school curricula to address educational challenges, final consortium meeting and report, delivery of 1 final 2 day European Educational Conference to launch final results to target groups and stakeholders.

I was contracted to join the project after 6 months of activity, as a result I was not involved in many of the early exchanges of information.

This external evaluation report only deals with the final phases of the project. It is a summative report, offering an external view and review of the outcomes of the project, concerning the original aims, activities and actions and relating to the quality criteria established and agreed by the partnership.

CARMA had eight Work Packages structured to improve and assess project implementation and to offer milestones and performance indicators to ensure good overall management of the project and each WP from start to finish.

All planned face-to-face partner meetings have been held, attended by members of all partner institutions. Two online progress meetings took place before the interim report as part of deliverable WP1-8. Further meetings were instigated after the Interim reporting phase. Many other bilateral and multilateral meetings have also taken place to ensure completion of the project. Partners were responsive to the needs of the coordinator, external evaluator and work package leaders.

As external evaluator in the second part of the project I attended one full partner meeting in Portugal and participated in the final meeting and conference held in Brussels. I have continued to mainly work with Karine Hindrix, ULL, who leads the Quality Assurance and Evaluation Work Packages and the project coordinator Rosina Ndukwe, from CESIE.

Through Google Drive I have had full access to all documentation and materials from partners, except for financial papers. Via Basecamp I have had access to conversations, draft documents, task management and planned activities.

At the final project partner meeting I presented the basis on which my final evaluation would be conducted and the rationale behind it. This was discussed and confirmed by all partners. As a result this report has focused on: (i) the main project deliverables; (ii) the project outreach and online presence and (iii) partner perceptions in terms of their understanding of the final project achievements and outcomes.

After the final project meeting I prepared a short online survey for partners to complete. At the end of the project, once all deliverables had been completed and translated and the web site had been reviewed and finalised, I undertook a review of the main project outcomes and deliverables. This included working with a small independent focus group of secondary school teachers.

3. Evaluation Context

3.1 Evaluation Approach

The final evaluation is an important component of CARMA project legacy. It shows the response of the project partners to the recommendations made during the interim reporting phase. It is a summative evaluation of the project outputs and outcomes, facilitated by the project coordinator.

This evaluation is undertaken in the context of the Evaluation guidelines grid produced as part of WP6 (Figure 2). It has been carried out at the end of the project after all deliverables and translations had been produced.

Evaluation guidelines grid				
Evaluation type	OECD/DAC & deliverable criteria	Data collection approach	Formative/summative	Timing
Mid-term and Final Evaluation (6.9) By external evaluator	Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability; Deliverable criterias	Quantative and qualitative: performance indicators, Document analysis, Questionnaire and interview	S	5/2018

Figure 2: Evaluation criteria for the external

evaluation 3.2 Evaluation Methodology

The final external evaluation has applied the following methodology. The evaluation consists of four elements. Firstly, a survey of project partners was the initial basis of this report. It was carried out at the end of the project in late November and early December 2018 after all CARMA activities had been completed and deliverables finalised.

Secondly, the partner review was paralleled by an evaluation at the start of December 2018, of the outward-facing aspects of the project. Specifically this involved the Web site, social media and dissemination for impact. Then a review and evaluation of the key deliverables followed shortly afterwards. Fourthly, the review of key outputs was accompanied by an evaluation of the CARMA toolkit by three independent teachers / educators who work in schools with young people at risk of early school leaving. The external evaluator presented the project goals and products to the teachers and invited them to access, review and discuss the three main deliverables in a small focus group. Their discussions were summarised and integrated into the review of key outputs. This final activity took place, as part of a secondary teacher professional development workshop in the UK organised by the evaluator.

3.3 Evaluation Criteria

Based on the Evaluation Guidelines Model (deliverable 6.1) five evaluation criteria are used for the final external evaluation. These are:

- Relevance,
- Effectiveness,
- Efficiency,
- Impact and
- Sustainability.

These criteria had been further developed by the project team and are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Evaluation Criteria

<p>1. RELEVANCE - Are we doing the right thing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent does the intervention comply with education policy and planning of the countries involved? - How important is the intervention for the Direct and Indirect Target Groups? <p>2. EFFECTIVENESS - Are the project objectives being achieved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent are the CARMA objectives achieved? - To what extent were they realistic? - What factors were crucial for the achievement or failure to achieve the CARMA objectives? - What side effects are established regarding the CARMA-deliverables? - To what extent are students more participating and motivated in formal learning settings? - To what extent are policy makers and stakeholders convinced of the importance of non-formal learning techniques? <p>3. EFFICIENCY - Are the objectives achieved economically? Cost-benefit ratio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the cost-benefit ratio? Is the relationship between input of resources and results achieved appropriate and justifiable? - To what extent have partner resources been used economically? - Are there any alternatives for achieving the same results with less input/funds? - Were deliverables provided in time and impacts achieved within an appropriate time? <p>4. IMPACT - Does the project contribute to reaching higher level objectives?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What has happened as a result of the CARMA-project? - What real difference have the non-formal learning techniques made to the students? - What real difference have the desk analysis and needs analysis made to the policy actors and other education stakeholders? - How many people have been affected with the CARMA deliverables? - What are the positive and negative, intended and unintended effects of the CARMA project process and deliverables? - To what extent benefitted different social groups in the same way from the CARMA-project? <p>5. SUSTAINABILITY - Are the positive effects and impacts sustainable?</p>

- To what extent will the online learning platform and toolkit be expected to continue after the project is finished?
- How self-supporting are the local actors to continue to implement the toolkit and use the online learning platform?
- What can impede the sustainable implementation of the CARMA toolkit and online learning platform among the schools and teachers?
- To what extent are national and European policy actors engaged to support the use of RMA and non-formal learning techniques of the CARMA-project?

3.4 Final Partner Questionnaire

Following the final partner meeting and conference in Brussels, a short online questionnaire was developed and made available using Survey Monkey. It was opened to participants after the final full partner face-to-face meeting in Brussels, Belgium.

Each partner was invited to respond to the questionnaire focusing on the outcomes of the project, their perceived value and impact and any key messages for the funding agency and decision makers. The purpose of this survey was to establish a reflection on the whole project and what the implications of the completion of CARMA might be.

At least one completed survey was asked for from a main member of each partner organisation. Individual project members were also invited to add their views. The data was gathered between 12/10/2018 and 10/12/2018.

The survey consisted of nine open-ended, qualitative questions (Table 2) in three sections – i) outputs, ii) achievements and iii) key messages. The survey was administered through the online survey tool Survey Monkey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/>).

Table 2: Final external evaluation questionnaire

1. Personal information (name and contact details)
- Project outputs**
2. In your opinion, what are the MAIN DELIVERABLES of the project?
3. What are the MOST IMPORTANT OUTCOMES of the CARMA project?
4. Say why you think they are most important
- Project achievements**
5. What are the three most SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS of the CARMA project?
6. Which CARMA project ACTIONS have had the most impact?
- Impact
7. Which of the CARMA project intellectual outputs; activities and outcomes have the potential to be mainstreamed?
- Key messages**
8. What are the main CARMA messages to deliver to the European Commission?
9. What are the main CARMA messages for your National Ministry?
10. Add any further comments about the project, its results and future for CARMA

The survey was an opportunity for participants to consider on the achievements of the project and reflect on the project the main outcomes and messages. It was an opportunity for an open and free exchange of their perceptions.

The purpose of this questionnaire was to provide a summative response from each of the partners at the end of the project and to identify what they thought they had achieved. This offered the external evaluator with evidence on progress and achievements and specifically to examine three areas:

- Clarity of participants concerning the outcomes of the project.
- Identification of any positive or negative issues related to the meeting, project and
- Rating a series of factors describing the state of the project.

Based on the above goals, the following aspects are reviewed in next section of the external evaluation report:

- i. Understanding of the CARMA project and its impact
- ii. Main successes and achievements of CARMA and
- iii. The most important messages that should be given to European and national education policy-making bodies as a result of the outcomes.

Fourteen surveys were submitted, three of which did not contain relevant information, or were largely incomplete. Therefore only the results of 11 completed surveys are used in this report. This included at least one response from each partner. Individuals involved had also been invited to respond to the survey.

4.2 Perceived most important outcomes of the CARMA project

Q: What are the most important outcomes of the CARMA project?

Say why you think they are important

The most important outcomes mentioned can be classified into three groups, (i) those that relate to practical and hands-on results, (ii) responses that refer to some more strategic and wider outcomes and (iii) those concerning multiplier processes (Table 4). The creation of the Toolkit was perceived to be most important outcome along with the resources for teachers.

Table 4: Perceived main outcomes from the CARMA Project

<p><u>Hands-on outcomes</u></p> <p>Toolkit for teachers (5 times)</p> <p>Catalogue of materials - techniques - resource bank (4 times)</p> <p>Teacher Competence Assessment Model (2 times)</p> <p>Develop expertise in non-formal learning and use of collaborative approaches</p> <p><u>Strategic outcomes</u></p> <p>Exploitation and policy engagement strategy, policy recommendations (3 times)</p> <p>Provide evidence for the power of non-formal education techniques to improve motivation in students</p> <p>Recognition of non-formal education as a powerful method to support student's learning and motivation inside the school</p> <p>Policy recommendations</p> <p><u>Multiplier processes</u></p> <p>Work with key stakeholders / real multipliers / teachers (2 times)</p> <p>Dissemination plan to promote the power of non-formal techniques in school (2 times)</p> <p>International workshops - evaluation seminars (2 times)</p> <p>Capacity to involve schools and teachers during the whole project and after</p>

The Word Cloud of the comments obtained confirmed that the outcomes were strongly targeted towards teachers in formal learning situations (Figure 4) and related to improving the quality of teaching and therefore pupil motivation.

The responses explained this as the Toolkit for teachers provides step-by-step guidance and tools for introducing collaborative learning activities with pupils to increase their motivation as it “offers the applicability of non-formal techniques and the necessary materials to new teachers”. One respondent commented “It has had a direct impact on the teachers' professional development”.

Several partners thought the approaches significantly improved the competences of teachers in terms of their communication and creativity by bringing in innovative techniques and proposing ways of bringing their use into the classroom. One response specifically confirmed how the motivation of migrant students to learn had been increased.

CARMA was providing a platform of collaboration and the sharing of experiences within the seven partner countries. The establishment of a network of teachers using non-formal techniques was considered significant, and specifically, “... the successful piloting of the CARMA approach i.e. NFL and RMA as a monitoring tool in schools with 27 teachers and 3038 students across all 7 countries, including the training in Palermo and evaluation seminar in Istanbul. This process allowed teachers to be fully supported and fully engaged in the whole process. Most of the teachers stayed throughout the whole cycle of the piloting”.

This networking was intended as a main outcome as the project, as partners showed high levels of commitment to the large-scale involvement of the target groups in the project activities and the quality of the evidence-based deliverables. The result means there was potential for integrating CARMA into existing networks through the creation of local/regional connections that bring teachers and other stakeholders together, rather than creating their own new, stand-alone network.

The toolkit was labelled as a useful, central resource that “talks to the teachers”. In other words “the production of high-quality, user-friendly resources relevant for school teachers that had their own tips and insights integrated within the documents”. One very positive response mentioned how implementation takes place by suggesting, “the recommendations that followed the process and were complimentary to the resources for teachers had given a great impact potential for CARMA to continue and to be inserted in teaching practices and school systems. Almost like the CARMA manifesto! We can use it to inspire change within the classroom.”

Another response suggested the important achievement was the creation of a body of significant expertise, providing evidence-based research in non-formal learning in formal education. Partners had worked to test the techniques with teachers and propose a competence framework. It was suggested as the toolkit was ready to be used by teachers it was possible to generate a much better awareness and understanding of collaborative techniques. This would allow CARMA to be implemented in different non-formal education techniques in formal education contexts, levels and institutional environments.

One response indicated that perhaps involving teachers in the CARMA experience was the most important achievement of the project, as well as including stakeholders in the final conference as relationships have been built that can be very useful for the future impact of the project.

4.4 Perceived project actions with the most impact

Q: Which CARMA project actions have had the most impact?

In terms of impact the local events and piloting activities and European workshops were mentioned as being most helpful (Figure 7). These were occasions on which

A number of outputs were considered to have the potential to be mainstreamed. It was proposed that the adoption of NFL techniques including RMA has real potential to be mainstreamed in schools. Almost all partners (6) identified the use of the CARMA Toolkit and further demonstration workshops as key (Figure 8).

One respondent said. “... on one hand, the printed toolkit and on the other hand, the resources that we have collected in the webpage of the project.” Another suggested “... the toolkit will be mainstreamed as it has been produced in different languages” and one claimed “... the CARMA toolkit and assessment model can be distributed across schools to support the adoption of these methods”. It was proposed “... the teachers and schools who took part in the project are already continuing to use the CARMA resources in their classroom on a daily basis and seeking to apply for projects that can support the insertion of such collaborative methods”.

Another commented, “In this sense, we think that it was very important to have all the resources and the toolkit in all languages of partners. Moreover, from our perspective it has been very important to build a community of teachers practicing these techniques. They are in touch, they share their experiences with their colleagues and they are part of the courses that we have organized to teach these techniques next year”. The possibility of creating a pan-European network between NFE experts and teachers was also proposed. The partners have established the key links and there are teachers on board who can act as multipliers this can be something that can be developed as a follow up action / project for the future.

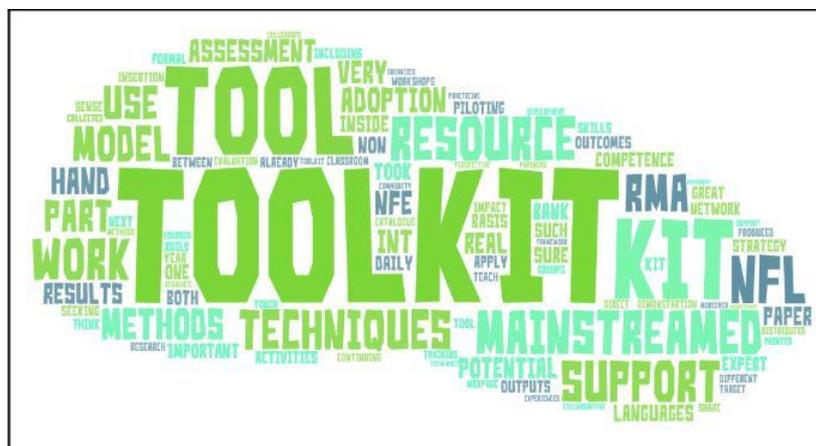


Figure 8: Word cloud of project outcomes with the potential to be mainstreamed

The Strategy Paper was mentioned in one response, as it relates closely to the research relating to the outcomes of the piloting inside the schools. The “... research results of the impact of NFL & RMA on the direct target groups” supports mainstreaming. Closely linked to this was the assessment and competence framework model, which could also be mainstreamed. However, for both tools, the mainstreaming should be supported by training on how to use non-formal methods and how to work on skills development”.

4.6 Key messages from the CARMA project

Q: What are the main CARMA messages to deliver to the European Commission, National Ministry?

In terms of the European Commission the message is that CARMA has demonstrated how non-formal education can be developed inside schools to strongly increase student motivation and their social skills. One respondent commented, "... flexibility in the classroom is needed to accommodate different learning styles and impact on the motivations of today's students".

Partners confirmed CARMA has provided evidence that non-formal methods can be effectively used in schools with RMA as an assessment tool to increase the motivation for learning of disaffected students and make a positive change to student participation.

The evidence based research on the impact of non-formal learning methods on teachers and students shows that teaching non-formal lessons in formal settings does work and can be of an added value to both students and teachers. "The CARMA project cannot measure its long-term impact on the proportion of student retention, but if the outcomes of the project prove to be sustainable, then the impact of non-formal teaching could be measured in the near future with further research."

Non-formal education techniques are very interesting when implemented in traditional formal education institutions in order to improve the possibilities for young people. "The European Commission needs to support more long-term research in this area and establish case studies on the development of institutional strategies".

CARMA shows that working in strong teacher-trainer partnerships can bring high quality results on student motivation. It was suggested that sufficient space should be created in schools for non-formal learning methods to be applied so that teachers can be helped more in learning activities and in motivating students. Education must be innovative concerning the methodologies used, but this is not always easy to do. So, "it is very important to develop projects like CARMA where teachers can find specialized support and where they can find other teachers doing the same or similar activities".

CARMA shows that using NFL methods and RMA as an assessment tool in schools makes a positive change to students' motivation and participation. It is not difficult to implement! However the awareness of the benefits of NFL needs to be raised across school education policy makers and teacher training in European countries needs to be reviewed and updated to incorporate NFL.

Partners believe CARMA results should be utilised by the European Commission as best practice to encourage schools to promote NFL in the classroom and "encourage non-formal learning by making more resources available and encourage more cross-sector projects facilitating links between formal and non-formal education". National ministries and the EC should provide support to spread the results of such innovative projects in order to impact more on national and local educational policies.

In a national context CARMA was said to be an "..... excellent combination of two educational approaches : NFE and formal education". For high quality results CARMA has shown that situations should be encouraged that open schools up so they can work in strong partnerships, for instance between teacher and trainers. One partner thought more resources needed to be made available.

National ministries should ensure that schools include NFL methods and RMA as an assessment tool into classrooms. There is a need for a recognised CPD for teachers for on collaborative learning, which can be supported by the CARMA project using the teacher competence assessment model as a starting point. There should be incentives established and ways promoted for schools to include NFL in teaching curricula and highlight the role of collaboration between different school actors - such as NFL experts. Local and national workshops about the issue should be held to bring different schools together where they can consult and collaborate with one another. Non-formal education should be included as part of initial teacher training and continuous teacher education.

In summary, a partner said, “the CARMA project has been long and short at the same time. Indeed, it was quite a long project in time terms, but CARMA just started to address the big challenge of crossing formal and non-formal education. “It has given us (the partners) the chance to experience many different things with teachers and it has been a great source of learning and development for them but also for the students.

One partner summed it up as, “The main messages for the National Ministry are to: - Support initiatives such as CARMA since it can bring a lot to both students and teachers - Have more transversal approaches in the field of education, associating students, teachers, parents, stakeholders... – Allow a place for non-formal education during the training of future teachers - Be aware that encouraging students to play an active part in their learning during school years can change everything ... or at least a lot”.

In conclusion, CARMA has shown non-formal teaching and learning in formal settings is possible. Partners believe teachers need to be made more aware of such methods and be trained on using them. Other stakeholders need to be introduced to these methods and become familiarized with them. Investing and financing for education should not be limited to only formal teaching situations and more projects with non-formal learning are needed.

The partners said the main complaint of teachers remained the lack of time and the absence of support to implement the CARMA tools. National policy makers must recognise the relevance of CARMA and assume their responsibility to lead the implementation of educational innovations such as this.

All partners were very positive about their project and its achievements. They all clearly learned a lot about working collaboratively and from the project outcomes. Some partners are already working on second phase based on the CARMA project, but as an Erasmus KA2 project.

One of the partners said “.... we did a great job on mainstreaming the results of the project to the key stakeholders, but it needs much more time and it needs the support of strong recognised bodies to settle a deep change in teacher training which should be targeted to bring changes in school, by so-call recognised bodies”.

CARMA showed the importance of really listening and engaging directly with teachers and their students to understand what is needed to make changes in classroom practice. Small changes in approach and method can result in big impacts.



5. Review Of The CARMA Project Online

5.1 Overview

The CARMA Web site provides the user with a very attractive, well-designed introduction to the project and its products. It provides information, graphics, imagery and options to download materials. As a site it is easy to use and quite intuitive to navigate. The main features of the site are a top navigation an attractive image with 6 menu items and a choice of language. The default language is set to English.

5.2 Site features

5.2.1 The CARMA Project Main Page

The Web site main page (Figure 9) can be considered like the cover and title of the whole web site and from here the main features of the project can be reached.

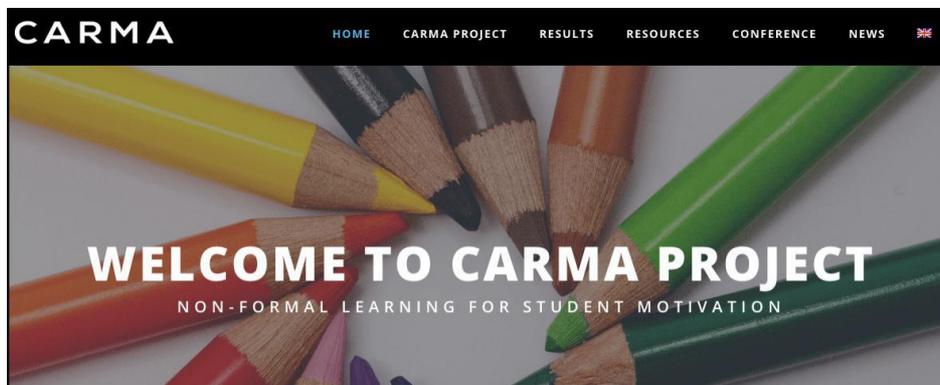


Figure 9: CARMA home page top section

The CARMA project home page consists of three sections a home area at the top, then navigation to the main outputs and finally an opportunity to subscribe to the newsletter and the European Commission logo and disclaimer.

The CARMA project home page makes the right impression from the start as it has an excellent central visual that is very appealing and drives the focus of the visitor. The page offers a clear identity of what the site is about from the start, offering visitors a vision of its purpose and main features. The visitor can clearly see exactly where they can go from the main page.

The top section of the home page has a positive call to action, using ‘non-formal learning for student motivation’ as its message. The site makes a strong impression on the visitor.

5.2.2 Structure & Navigation

Well designed websites are organized in such a way that every visitor gets to their goal as easily and with as few clicks as possible. CARMA achieves this by offering very clear navigation in both text and visual formats (Figure 10) as well as a top navigation bar (Figure 11). This represents a high level of accessibility for its purpose to the user.

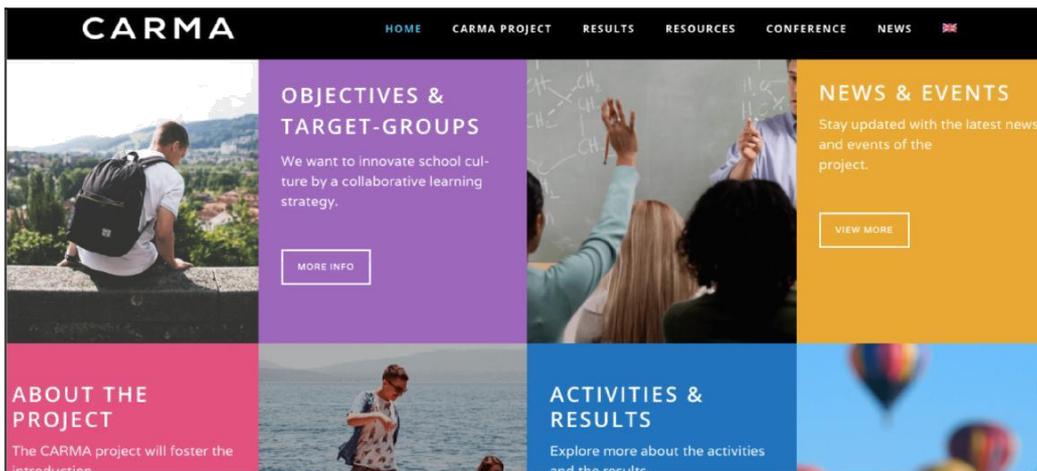


Figure 10: CARMA home page central navigation section

The CARMA Web presence is based on a simple site map. The main menu divides all the content into a few distinctive categories. Well-designed websites like CARMA generally have only 5-6 top-level categories (Figure 11). The navigation also does not extend too deep.



Figure 11: CARMA top navigation

The current position is displayed through the menu, this shows users exactly where they are on the website. The pages are consistent with the header, footer and logo at the same spot on all the pages (Figure 12).

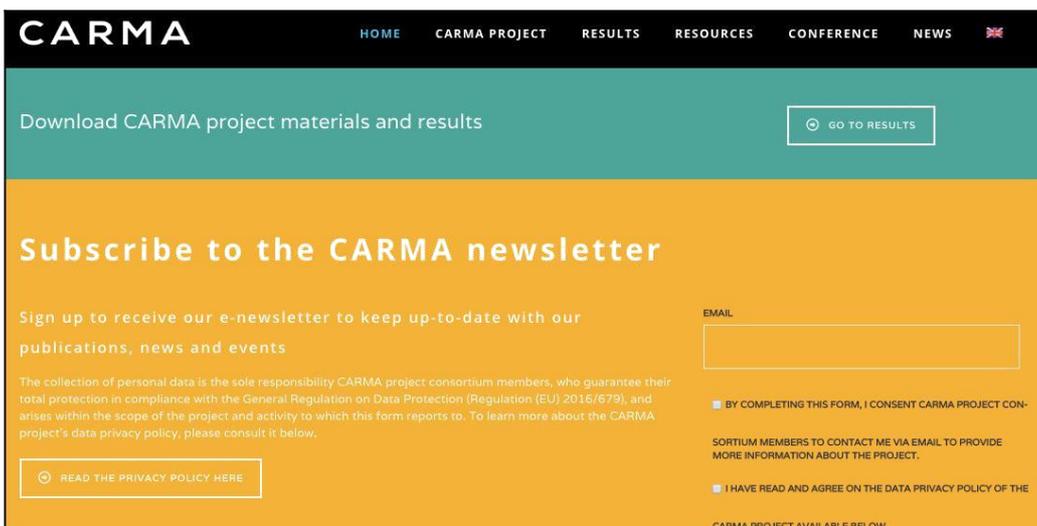


Figure 12: CARMA bottom of web page bottom

5.2.3 The User Experience

There is evidence of good user experience elements in the Web site with buttons and links clearly used and distinguished. The buttons on the CARMA website are related to user actions. The project name is aligned in the top left and the icons are unified in

style. A visual summary of the project results is provided (Figure 13). This uses Issuu to show the main results booklet (Figure 14). The videos and tools are click-to-play.

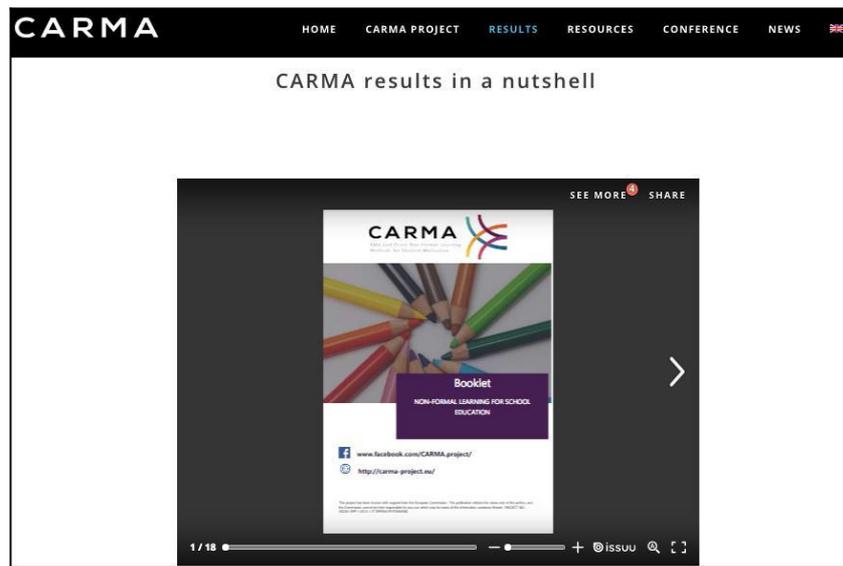


Figure 13: Showing CARMA results

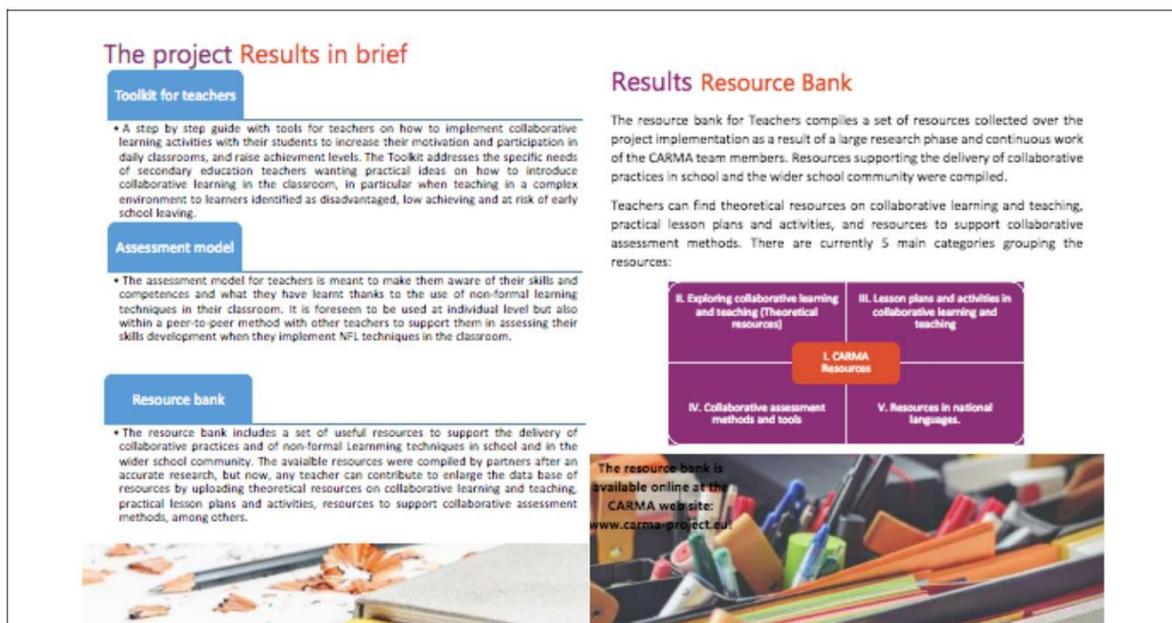


Figure 14: Issu booklet of main results

Good quality visuals grabs the visitor’s attention and makes them want to stay and explore the website further. CARMA has a good selection of images, icons, graphics and video content that enable a vivid experience. The stock images used generate additional value to the material it illustrates. In general most of the images appear have been optimised in terms of size but a few of them slow down the website, details are provided later in this section.

In terms of textual materials, the different levels of headers used help to structure the text and focus the visitor’s attention on what’s important (Figure 15). The font sizes and styles are consistent with Internet use and the in-text links are clearly identified.

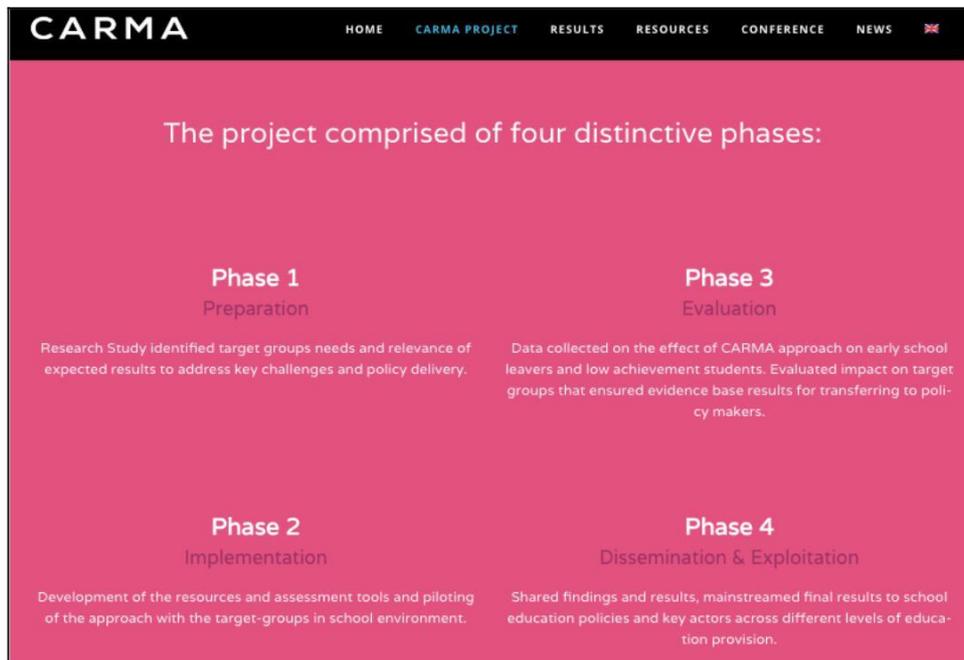


Figure 15: Range of font sizes and styles

The CARMA site is adaptive to three screen resolutions: Mobile, Tablet, and Desktop. On tablets it is a ‘lite’-version (Figure 16), on mobiles it looks like an app (Figure 17) and full version on desktops. Thus the site takes into account different screen resolutions.

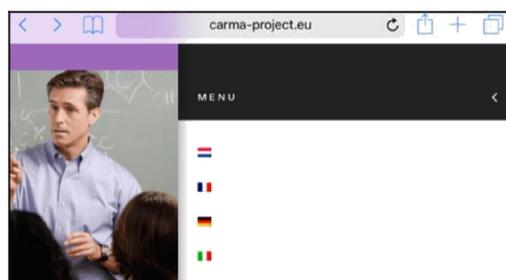


Figure 16: Tablet view



Figure 17: Mobile screen

The site is relatively fast loading on all devices but a fuller analysis follows. There do not seem to be any obstacles to finger scrolling on mobile and tablet.

5.2.4 Usability and accessibility reviews

A usability test was carried out with three teachers/educators using their mobile phones and a desktop computer. The three teachers were invited to explore the content of the site and comment on the journeys they took. Their user journeys did not encounter any problems or difficulties. The information they required was well placed on the pages they visited and they said they found the information available clear and relevant.

The online tool Page Speed Insights (PSI) created by Google for developers (<https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/>) was used by the evaluator to analyse possible accessibility issues in terms of speed and caching as this offers feedback, best practices and the search engine optimisation of a website. It provides some quick tips for improving Web page speed for both desktop and mobile, such as the caching of assets and optimising images.

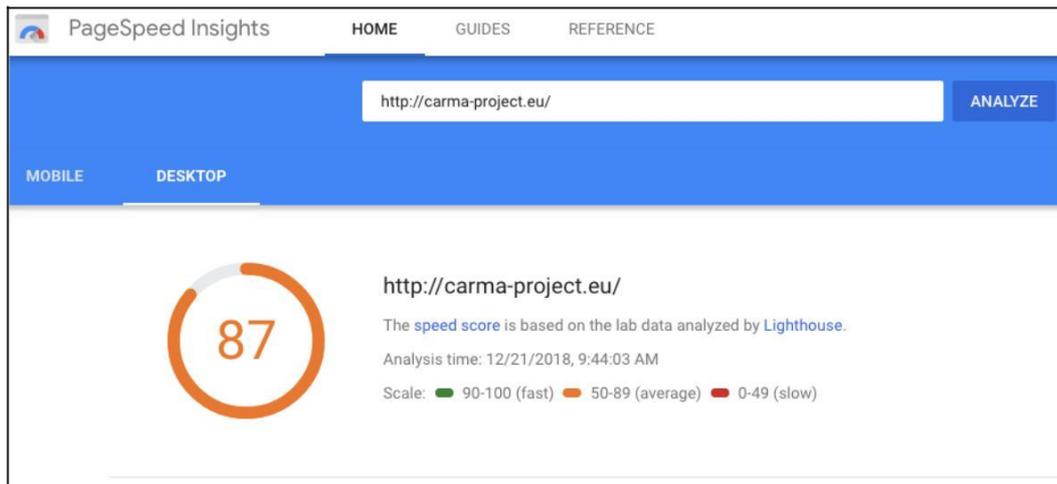


Figure 18: CARMA web page speed for desktop

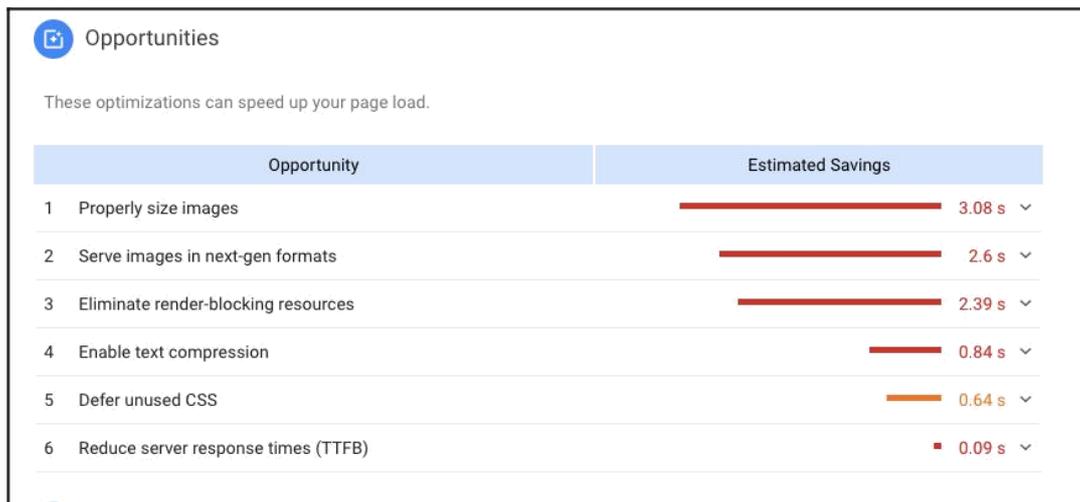


Figure 19: Opportunities to optimise the CARMA web page speed for desktop

The speed results indicate that the desktop version operates reasonably quickly (Figure 18). However, the analysis revealed that the loading time could be improved by editing and optimising the imagery that has been used on the home page (Figure 19).

The page however was not properly tuned for fast loading on mobile or tablet operation (Figure 20). The speed of access was quite slow and much more optimisation would be needed (Figure 21).

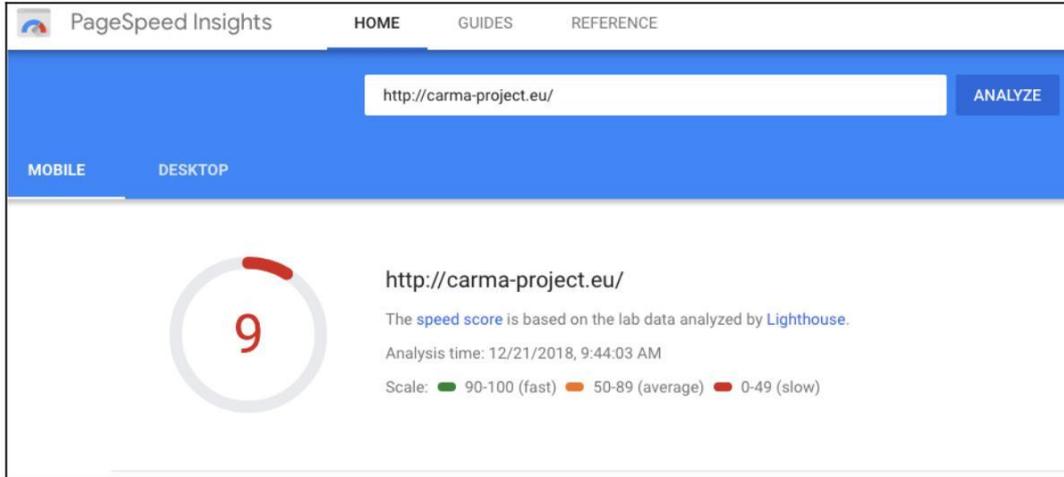


Figure 20: CARMA web page speed for mobile

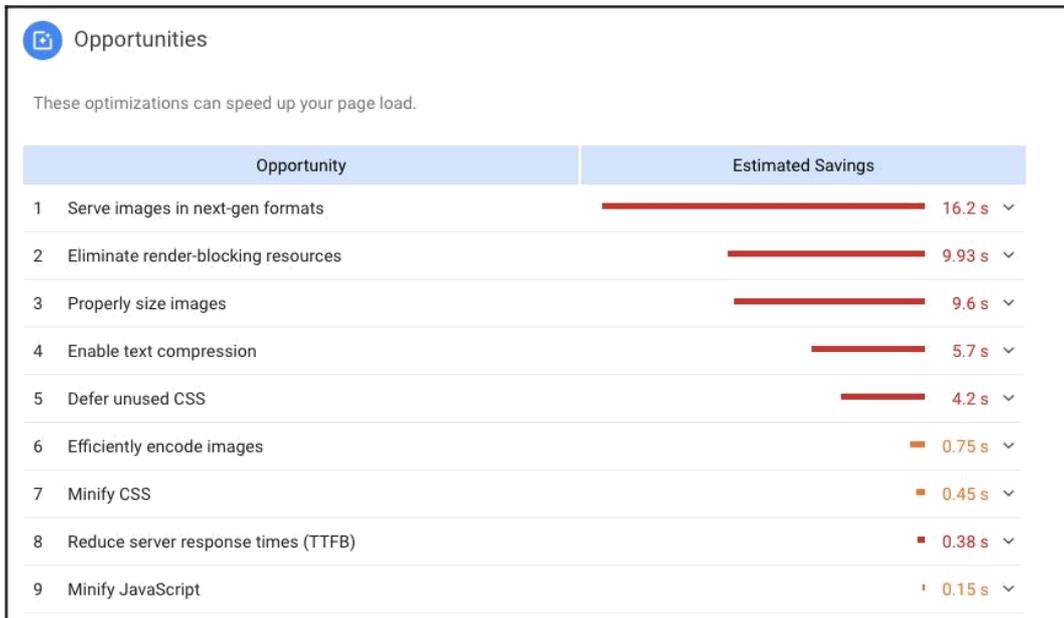


Figure 21: Opportunities to optimise the CARMA web page speed for mobile

Search Engine optimisation deals with the rank of the Web page and also the search engine appearance. To be successful Web pages should have a clear and enticing title and description to bring users into the web site. It is often the case that some search engine optimisation also improves accessibility issues.

5.2.5 Online visibility of the project Web site and related media

The term “CARMA Project” is a title that has been widely used by many initiatives in the past. An Internet search yielded more than 1.4 million pages on Google. This project was available on the first page, appearing as the 6th link on the top page (Figure 22).

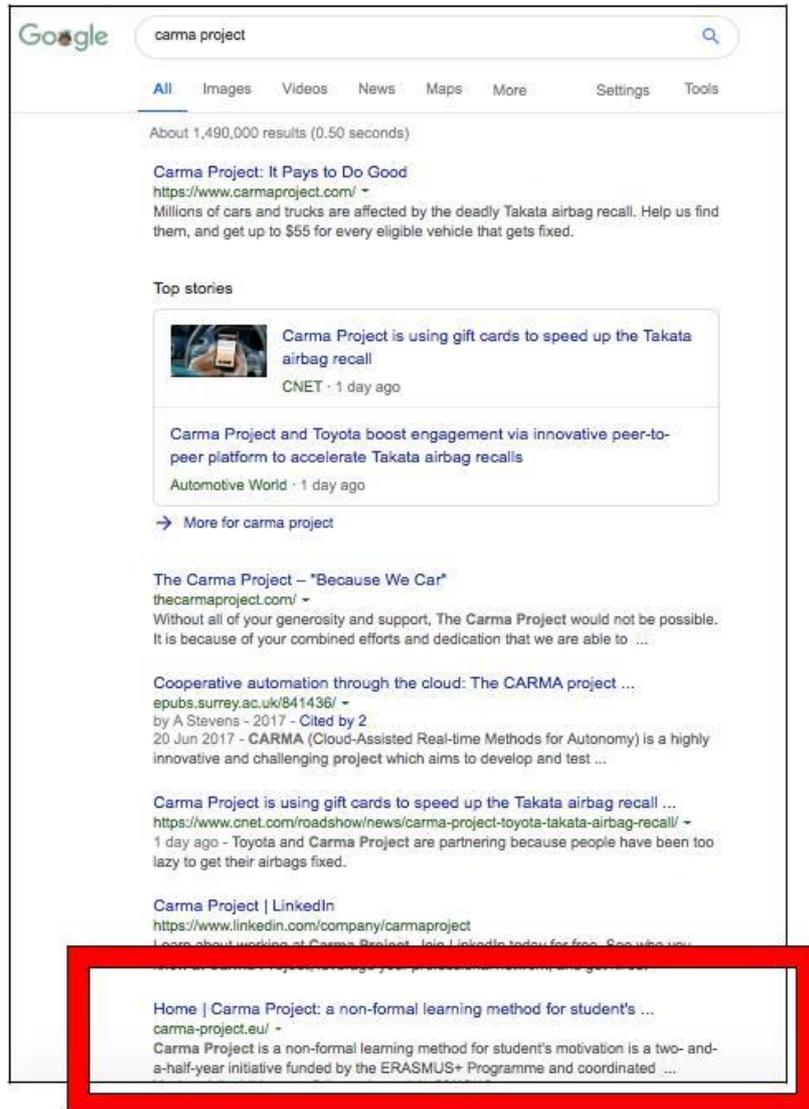


Figure 22: CARMA project home page on Google

CARMA also appears on the first page of the Google search engine when searching for terms like ‘non-formal learning project’. Using more detailed search terms like ‘carma project informal’ (Figure 23) and ‘carma project eu’ increased the likelihood of the link to the project being right at the top of the list.

This analysis confirms the CARMA home Web page has been very highly optimised for accessibility through the Google search engine.

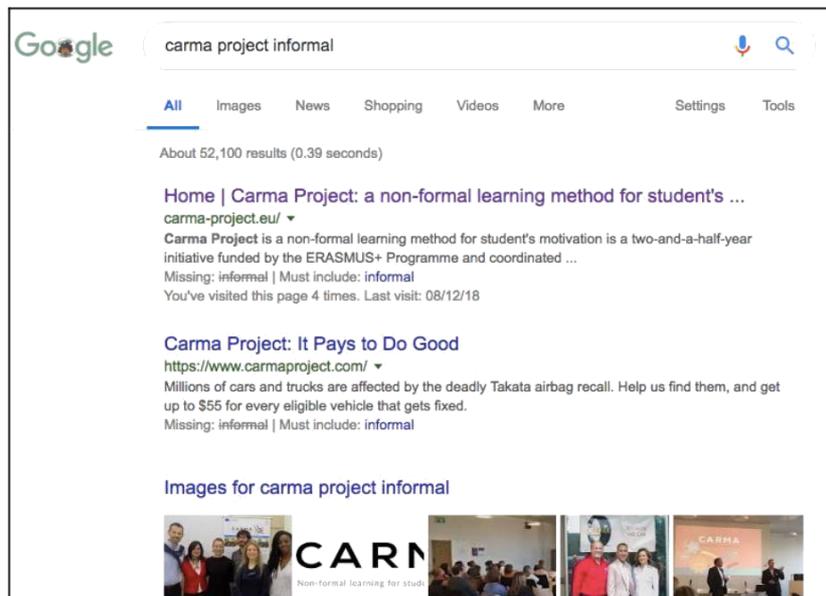


Figure 23 Searching for the CARMA project on Google

Newsletters and press releases (Table 5), hosted by CESIE also appeared in the first page (top 10) of some searches (Figure 24).

Table 5 CARMA project newsletters on Google

<p>CARMA Conference Reinforces Importance of Collaborative ... - CESIE</p> <p>cesie.org/en/school/carma-apprendimento-collaborativo-futuro-istruzione/ 15 Oct 2018 - Rosina Ndukwe, Project Coordinator of the CARMA project from CESIE ... The conference also offered an informal setting to share best ...</p> <p>CARMA: Evaluation Seminar on RMA scholastic practices - CESIE</p> <p>cesie.org/en/school/carma-seminario-valutazione/ 21 Dec 2017 - CARMA Evaluation seminar was held in Istanbul (Turkey) and being hosted by DOGA ... should be replaced by or at least integrated with the informal ones. ... The CARMA project, that was launched in January 2016, is about ...</p>
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Figure 24 CARMA project newsletter on Google

5.2.6 CARMA on other web sites and in social media

CARMA uses Facebook as its social media channel (Figure 25). The Facebook page (WP7-3) was created in January 2016 to support online dissemination. At the time of the interim review, the Facebook page had 110 likes. In December 2018, the page was liked by 302 people and only followed by 304. These would appear to be rather low numbers. The page included a series of relevant posts mostly about project meetings and activities, but also concerning some related projects and actions.



Figure 25 CARMA project Facebook page

CARMA has an excellent, well scripted two minute YouTube video (Figure 26) introducing the project and showcasing the main features and accomplishments of the project partners. The project video has had about 200 views. This is also a relatively low number of views possibly due to low levels of promotion of this in terms of marketing and dissemination.



Figure 26 CARMA project video on YouTube

There is also a lengthy (14 minute) video of the CARMA evaluation seminar in Istanbul, with almost 100 views (Figure 27).

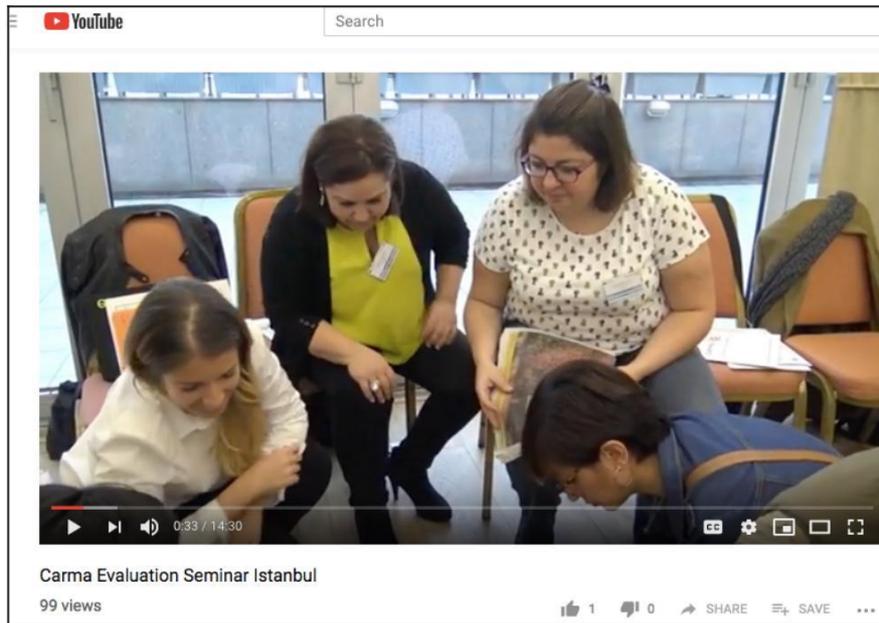


Figure 27 CARMA project evaluation seminar

video 5.2.7 Downloading CARMA project resources

Apart from embedded booklets and videos, the CARMA project resources and promotion materials can be easily located and accessed via the Web site in the download zone (<http://carma-project.eu/results/>) (Figure 28).

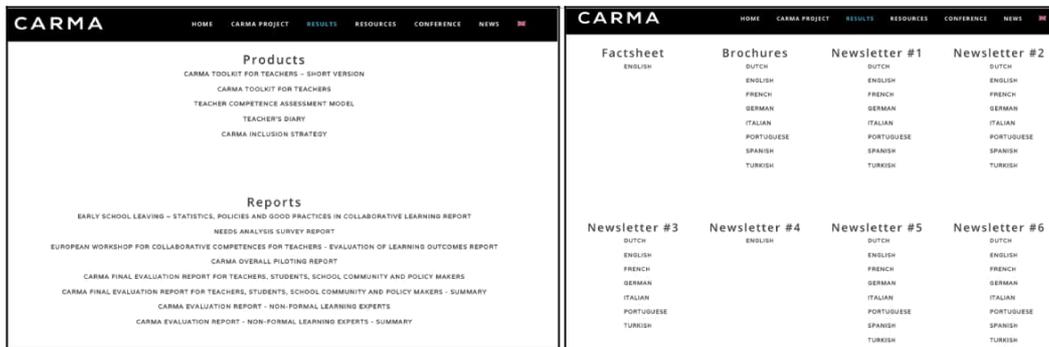


Figure 28 CARMA project resources accessed through the project Web site

5.2.8 Summary of online presence

The CARMA project has a very good presence online through its attractive, well-designed, highly accessible web site. The result is the project has become very well positioned through the Google search engine both in terms of the name of the project and also its focus on non-formal education. Other dissemination sources and tools such as YouTube and Facebook are available but they presence has not been significant. The use of the social media of and news from partner organisation to promote CARMA was not specifically evident in terms of the main project outcomes.

6. Project Outputs

This section reviews and evaluates the final outputs and results of the project. The three main products analysed here are the CARMA Toolkit for teachers, the Teacher competence assessment model and the CARMA Inclusion Strategy.

Overall, these are substantial outputs of a high quality, with targeted audiences. They are very attractive and well presented, whether in pdf or in paper format, meeting the project branding. The documents are well laid out with an attractive eye-catching design.

6.1 CARMA Toolkit

The concept of tools to aid teaching and learning had also come into fashion. Work Package 3 developed non-formal learning and RMA resources & assessment tools for collaborative practices. It created resources and assessment tools for collaborative teaching and learning practices. A catalogue of 21 non-formal learning techniques was produced (WP3-1) where partners shared their approaches using a standard template. These were based on existing practice and give teacher instructions for their completion.

From these the toolkit resource (WP3-2) was envisaged as a CARMA teaching resource aiming at raising school achievement levels and therefore reducing early school leaving. In many ways the Toolkit has been perceived as the most important of the CARMA outputs (Figure 29). Its relevance is very high in formal education. Workshop participants agreed it was very effective and efficient in dealing with students at risk.

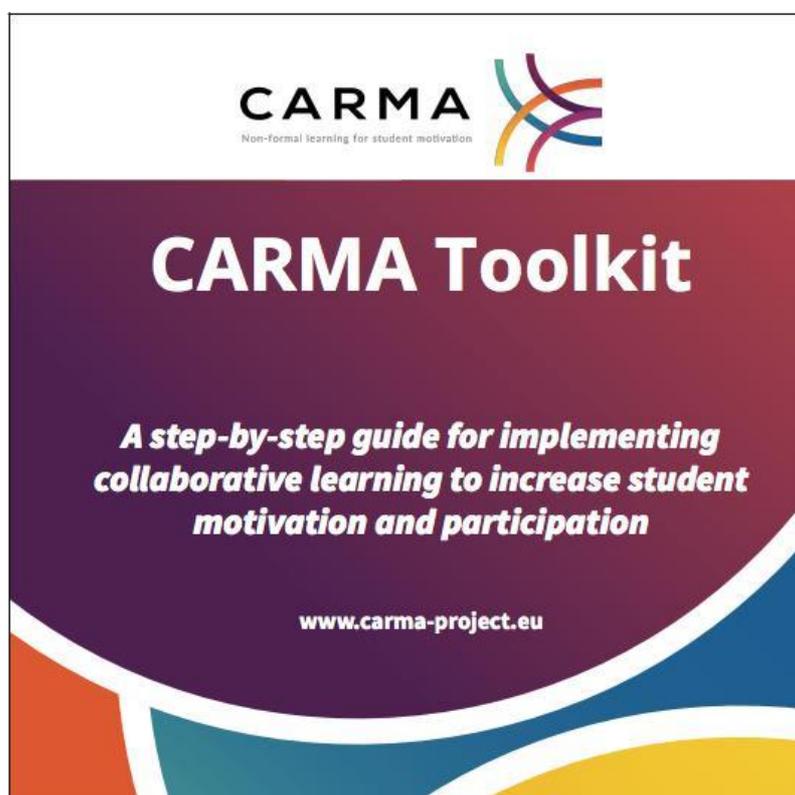


Figure 29 CARMA project toolkit

An online, non-formal learning group (WP3-3) was established to share information, ideas and practices. Partners said a list of about 50 people were involved in this activity. The group shared techniques from the catalogue and discussed and developed uses and approaches. The partner organisations then regularly worked with this group of teachers, in order to support peer learning, peer review and feedback during the piloting phase.

Traditional education processes encourage competition and individual responsibility between students and tends to discourage interaction, the CARMA toolkit seeks to present methodologies that aim to redefine the relationship between the students and also with their teachers.

The CARMA non-formal learning toolkit creates an environment with a number of common characteristics. The toolkit produced is an open, attractive and flexible environment that is not mandatory. Consequently, as participants would engage in the non-formal learning activities it is designed to address their own learning needs and aspirations. The non-formal learning activities are established in their own context and established to take place in formal learning environments. Thus, while the toolkit lacks some of the more common features of the formal learning environment such as curricula, syllabi and validation, it nonetheless seeks to adhere to coherent and constructive learning experiences.

In discussion with teachers the following aspects were discussed and agreed.

- i) the toolkit is founded on collaborative learning and clearly states the purpose, target group and approach to be adopted,
- ii) the techniques employed are based on RMA and other non-formal learning methods to improve student motivation
- iii) the publication is written in a friendly style, attractively produced with relevant amounts of theory and practice
- iv) the toolkit resources were obviously open, transferable, multi-purpose tools and capable of further change and development depending on the needs and context
- v) the activities are highly collaborative and would result in identifiable learning outcomes for the participants
- vi) the resources are adaptive using a variety of learning methods and approaches, for example group work, games, discussions, simulations
- vii) the toolkit combines a techniques, timing, materials, description of activity and tips / guidance for teachers
- viii) the approaches help participants in identifying their own learning needs and capacities
- ix) the methods would appear to engage and stimulate participants (and teachers) in the learning process
- x) both evaluation and monitoring processes are described and the impact of implementation is covered

- xi) the resources all appear to be user-friendly and flexible
- xii) a series of practical, well-developed case studies and testimonies from students add considerable weight to the relevance of the toolkit
- xiii) assessing teacher competence is an important feature of the toolkit
- xiv) the toolkit is stand alone but can also be included as part of, or related to, a broader programme.

The CARMA toolkit is an excellent manual for teachers and educators. It clearly presents what non-formal learning is and its use in formal situations. The toolkit proposes a wide variety of activities to be implemented with students. It also offers approaches for its use when training teachers who are seeking to develop innovative ideas and approaches in the classrooms in order to tackle motivation as a challenge and obstacle to learning in schools. It has been designed as a sustainable product that should not age over time, with the potential to impact on many teachers and classrooms.

6.2 CARMA Teacher competence assessment model

The European Commission acknowledges that the core competences of teachers should include formal, informal and non-formal learning contexts. The CARMA project has gathered and shared knowledge on how to document and assess non-formal approaches to learning within European teacher education via a teacher competence assessment model.

A competency-based education model for teachers responds to the learning needs and patterns of the teachers concerned, providing the time needed for the learner to acquire and repeatedly perform or demonstrate the expected competencies, based on knowledge, skills and professional behaviours, while creating an enabling environment for learning.

The model recognised that non-formal learning provides great opportunities to enhance new pathways towards retention in formal education and ultimately qualifications for students. One way to enhance effectiveness and quality of teaching is through non-formal learning that develops an assessment approach for training teachers through documentation and recognition of their obtained skills and competences.

The teacher competence assessment framework has been created as a tool to support the assessment criteria of the specific competences and skills (Figure 30). The model seeks to deliver new impetuses for the development of professionalism and for the validation of informal and non-formal acquired competences of teachers and trainers. It is based on a holistic framework for non-formal learning and Kolb's learning cycle leading to four main teacher competences:

- I. Facilitation and moderation skills
- II. Competences in collaborative learning
- III. Know-how in collaborative assessment
- IV. Use of non-formal education

Each of these competences is sub-divided into several competence areas.

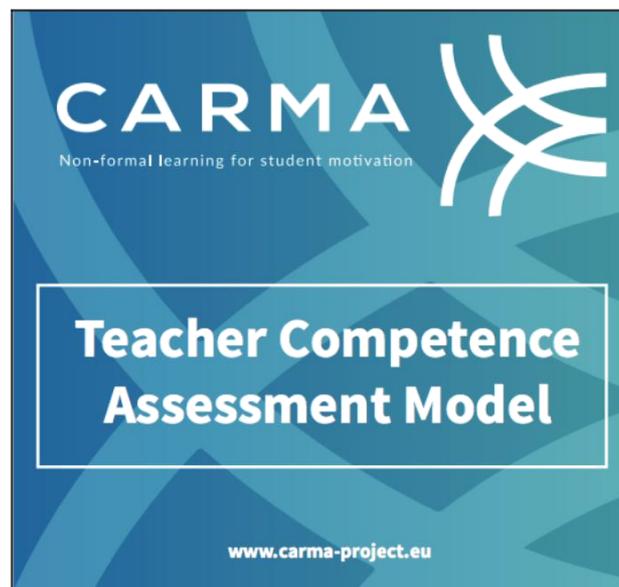


Figure 30 CARMA project Teacher Competence Assessment Model

According to the project, the “ model establishes a framework for measuring the skills and competences of teachers in understanding, identifying and implementing successful collaborative learning environments, whilst reflecting on the principles of non-formal education together with actual classroom practice”.

The CARMA Project foresees the model to be used at an individual level but also within peer-to-peer contexts with other teachers to support them in assessing their own skills development when they implement non-formal learning techniques in the classroom

The model is provided as a highly relevant, workable booklet with spaces for comment and reflection. Clear guidance for teachers is offered related to each of the competences, thus offering an effective and efficient means to gauge their strengths and weaknesses and to develop strategies for improvement.

As a handbook, the competence model does not seek to evaluate the teachers, nor does it offer minimum standards. The assessment of competences or learning outcomes is addressed except in terms of specifying learning expectations. As a result, the teachers interviewed about the outcomes questioned the impact and potential usefulness of the model as an assessment tool to improve educational quality. They suggested that any validation of teacher competences would not be feasible or sustainable without an institutional and organisational framework. The responsiveness of a validation process to assess the teacher competences was not addressed by the CARMA project, so the teachers suggested developing this as part of a future CARMA initiative, one that would offer validation and quality assurance components to be used and adapted within school systems.

6.3 CARMA Inclusion Strategy

The CARMA project aimed at translating their activities into concrete evidence-based policy actions that would contribute to aim of the EU Education and Strategic Framework to reduce the rate of early school leaving to less than 10% and reduce the share of 15-year-old under-skilled in reading, mathematics and science to less than

15% by the year 2020. Through the Strategy CARMA sought to produce a sustainable and systemic impact on the education systems of the 7 project countries Italy, Spain, France, Portugal, Austria, Belgium and Turkey as well as further European countries by providing recommendations to teachers, school principals, education institutions and governments.

The CARMA Inclusion Strategy (Figure 31) is in some ways the most impressive of the final project deliverables. This is because it addresses the most difficult challenge of addressing policy. The Inclusion Strategy is a highly relevant and powerful document addressing all main target groups. It seeks to connect the project activities to concrete policy actions in line with the KA3 Forward Looking Call for proposals. As a result it strives for a better recognition of non-formal education at (i) political levels and in (ii) institutional levels.

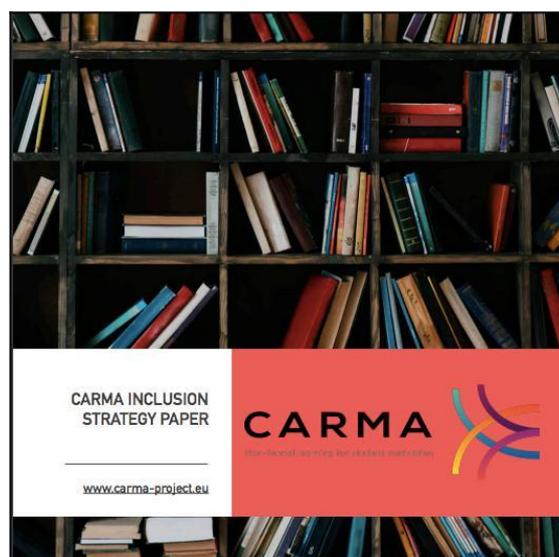


Figure 31 CARMA project Inclusion Strategy

Political recognition refers to advancing the political will to recognize and support non-formal learning through legislation and its inclusion in political strategies for education. This implies the involvement of non-formal education providers in policy development. Political interest in the variety of learner-centred and practice-based educational processes that are subsumed under non-formal learning has increasingly been focused on quality standards, validation and strategies for recognition. For instance, the Conference of Ministers Agenda 2020 highlights that the recognition of non-formal education and learning makes a strong contribution to young people's access to education and training.

Institutional recognition refers to the institutionalisation of non-formal education as one of the learning pathways within formal education contexts. More concretely, institutional recognition aims at the recognition of non-formal approaches specifically those involved with increasing student motivation for learning and ultimately leading to certification of the achievements of individual students.

Embedded in this policy framework, the CARMA Inclusion Strategy was developed to facilitate awareness raising and the recognition of teaching skills and competencies

needed for non-formal learning. It is a very effective and efficient publication which provides both an introduction to the problem and a solution with recommendations for the integration of the CARMA processes in formal education.

The Inclusion Strategy outlines clearly the goals, types of communication and targets for mainstreaming. It is divided into three parts, firstly information about NFL and RMA applied within CARMA, with an explanation about the CARMA project. The second part reviews the evidence base and main research findings that led to the specific recommendations for school education in different school environments across Europe. The third part are recommendations that target teachers, school principals and leaders of educational institutions as well as governments, policymakers and influencers of educational policy.

In terms of impact and sustainability, policy transformation at national and European level takes considerable time, well beyond what can be expected by a three-year project. It is thus difficult to evaluate here what has actually been achieved in different countries and what the eventual outcomes of CARMA might be. This is especially the case when a follow-up project is already in place and others may develop.

The CARMA project did seek to take advantage of its dissemination tools in a strategic way to connect with policy and decision makers, and with the advice of the Policy Expert. Despite this, it seems the outcomes of the links to policy makers in each of the partner countries and at EU level were not explicit, nor was it mentioned by most partners as a major outcome or achievement of the project in the partner survey. The focus on community and grassroots elements dominated the responses, rather than strategic aspects. Additionally the potential impact of and opportunities afforded by different media, including social media, have I believe not been fully exploited, though the Web site is an excellent legacy of the work that has been done.

For many organisations, the community grassroots elements, which featured heavily in the final outcomes, were the main catalyst that has fostered the basis of real sustainable impact with the potential for mainstreaming CARMA. A bottom-up approach to influence policy, targeting decision makers at grassroots level can have an impact, raise awareness and foster dialogue. However to get larger scale action with policy makers in school education at a high strategic level, the policy makers need to become champions of the action. Outcomes from policy were monitored under WP8-1 (action planning and reporting), the 2nd Educational Forum under WP8-2 were key events that sought to link policy to final results. A final sustainability plan was developed on the basis of extensive discussions at the final meeting.

7. Conclusions

In conclusion, the CARMA Project has reaffirmed that, as a complement to formal education, non-formal learning for young people should be promoted and recognised, and better links between formal education and non-formal learning developed.

While European institutions have given non-formal education and learning an increasingly high status and considerable momentum with high-level resolutions, this has by and large addressed the Youth sector (young people aged 18-35). In contrast, the recognition of the value of non-formal learning within the European formal school education (young people aged 11-18) has not been well developed.

All the deliverables evaluated here are meant to support users in identifying, describing and assessing competencies and as such they contribute strongly to the recognition of non-formal education and learning in formal situations.

The CARMA toolkit has illustrated that integrating an effective non-formal education program in formal context keeps the learner in control of his or her own learning. However CARMA also works on the importance of dialogue such that communities of learners must be encouraged to take responsibility for opportunities to learn. Thus, an effective program begins with activities that ensure that the components involving collaboration are of primary importance.

A second feature of CARMA is that teachers and educators must be responsive to the needs of the learners. This project has thus created a non-formal education resources and materials that respond to the specific needs of different groups of learners. The teachers must work with their classes to clearly identify the challenges and the resources needed to address them.

A third aspect is that competence development to integrate non-formal education is needed in teacher education. However validation and certification will be needed to reach out across Europe.

The CARMA Inclusion Strategy manifesto document provides a clear rationale, evidence and process to decision makers. The role of policy and government in encouraging innovation in the education system remains contested. How they respond to the results and outcomes of the CARMA project is interesting. If they adopt a problem-solving goal, development and dissemination of it relies on NGO and other agencies to provide training to embed non-formal education in schools. If decision makers are also involved in strategic thinking, then government should facilitate the use of existing available resources in meeting its goals. This implies ongoing consultation with the experts in using non-formal education in schools and classrooms.

In policy terms, CARMA is closely linked with the lifelong learning strategy of the European Union, where the validation and recognition of non-formal learning plays a significant and strategic role in the future of education and training policy in Europe. Therefore, promoting the results of the CARMA project should not end with the conclusion of the project. I believe the sustainability of the lobbying process initiated in CARMA will be a critical element.

The online presence through the Web site is strong and will remain so after the conclusion of the project, as long as the consortium maintains the web domain.

It is clear that much more work on non-formal education and learning processes is needed in Europe. This especially concerns those initiatives concerning empirical and longitudinal research of the impact on teachers and learners as well as those involved with policy oriented developments, leading to recognition, greater transparency and guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning.

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