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XXIAdults

Adaptation of the adult educational system to the XXI Century

The Good Practices Template

Co-funded by the European Union

Name of the Good Practice
Forma-te: A Collaborative Learning and Resource Sharing Platform for Adult Educators

Summary of the Practice Brief, easy-to-understand summary: What is the practice, for whom, and for what purpose?
Forma-te is an online platform designed to support the continuous professional development of adult educators, trainers, and other education professionals in Portugal. It functions both as a digital repository and an active learning community, where users can share, access, and evaluate educational resources. Its primary purpose is to promote collaborative learning and peer support through a credit-based system that rewards the sharing of original content. Trainers earn credits when uploading resources (such as lesson plans, worksheets, or tools), which can then be used to download materials shared by others. This reciprocal model fosters a sense of community, trust, and professional recognition among adult educators. The platform also provides updated information on adult education policies, training opportunities, professional certification (such as the CCP), and pedagogical trends, making it a valuable hub for anyone involved in the non-formal education sector. Targeted mainly at trainers and education professionals, *Forma-te* enhances the quality of adult education by facilitating access to practical resources, encouraging reflective practice, and supporting professional growth through active participation in a peer-led network.

Description of the Practice – min. 2000 characters
1) Context / Background What was the initial need or problem? Who was the target group? Was it part of a larger programme or project?
In Portugal, adult education professionals often face a fragmented and isolated work environment, especially those operating in non-formal education or vocational training contexts. Many trainers work independently or within small organisations, with limited access to structured peer support, pedagogical resources, or professional development networks. Additionally, despite the increasing emphasis on lifelong learning and digitalisation, there has been a lack of centralised platforms that combine access to quality resources with opportunities for collaborative learning.

The initial need that sparked the creation of *Forma-te* was to provide adult educators with a practical, accessible, and community-driven platform that would respond to several recurring challenges:

- Scarce access to updated, ready-to-use pedagogical materials;
- Low visibility and recognition of trainers' work;
- Limited opportunities for exchanging practices and learning collaboratively;
- Difficulty navigating changes in regulation (e.g., regarding certification such as the CCP – Certificado de Competências Pedagógicas);
- A growing need for digital literacy and pedagogical innovation in adult learning settings.

The target group for this initiative is primarily trainers and adult educators from various backgrounds: those working in vocational training centres, community-based learning programmes, adult education schools (*ensino recorrente*), and training companies. However, it also extends to technical staff, coordinators, and organisations involved in adult education and lifelong learning.

Forma-te was not launched as part of a large-scale EU project, but rather emerged from a grassroots initiative grounded in the needs and experiences of adult educators in the field. Over time, it has become a recognised reference in the Portuguese training ecosystem, connecting thousands of professionals and promoting a culture of sharing, innovation, and peer-driven professional development.

2) **Objectives**

What were the goals of the practice?
What did it aim to improve or change?

The main objectives of *Forma-te* are to promote quality in adult education and to empower trainers through access to resources, peer learning, and professional recognition. More specifically, the practice aims to:

- **Foster a collaborative learning culture** among adult educators by encouraging the sharing of pedagogical materials and experiences;
- **Facilitate access to practical, ready-to-use educational resources** tailored to adult learning contexts (non-formal, vocational, community-based);
- **Promote the professional development** of trainers through reflective practice, exposure to new methodologies, and contact with peer contributions;
- **Encourage digital participation** and literacy by offering a user-friendly online environment and promoting the use of digital tools for training purposes;
- **Support the visibility and value of the trainer's role**, recognising contributions through a credit system that rewards active participation;

- **Bridge the gap between policy and practice**, by sharing updates on regulatory frameworks (such as CCP requirements) and fostering a space for informed debate.

The overarching goal is to create a sustainable, inclusive, and participatory ecosystem for adult education professionals, where continuous learning is not only encouraged but rewarded and facilitated through peer support.

3) Implementation / Methodology

How was the practice carried out step by step?
What activities or methods were used?
How long did it take?

The implementation of *Forma-te* followed a clear, scalable, and user-focused methodology centred on three main pillars: content sharing, peer interaction, and platform usability. The process unfolded in several stages:

1. Platform Development and Design

A small team of educators and developers designed the platform with the specific needs of adult education professionals in mind. The design prioritised:

- Ease of navigation;
- User autonomy;
- A clean and functional interface;
- Integration of a credit system as a motivational mechanism.

The credit system was inspired by peer-to-peer exchange principles: users earn credits by uploading original content and can use those credits to download materials uploaded by others. This model fosters fairness, contribution, and reciprocity.

2. Resource Structure and Curation

The platform allows users to share a wide range of resources, including:

- Training session plans;
- Worksheets and exercises;
- Practical tools and templates;
- Theoretical reflections or technical articles;
- Official documents and guidelines relevant to the training field.

Each resource is tagged, categorised, and described by the contributor. Other users can rate and comment on the materials, supporting a culture of quality control and peer feedback.

3. Community Engagement and Communication

The platform grew organically through:

- Word of mouth and professional networks;
- Collaborations with training centres and adult education organisations;
- Regular publication of informative articles, newsletters, and legal updates;
- Active presence on social media.

Over time, the community began to self-regulate, with experienced users contributing regularly and offering informal mentoring through forum interactions and commentaries.

4. Ongoing Maintenance and Evolution

Continuous feedback is collected from users to improve functionalities. New categories and features are added regularly, such as:

- Thematic calls for resource sharing (e.g., digital inclusion, green skills);
- Highlighted resources and contributors;
- Integration with other initiatives like *Transforma-te*, promoting pedagogical innovation.

Timeframe:
The platform was conceptualised and developed over a period of approximately 6–9 months, with continuous updates and refinements since its launch. It is an ongoing initiative with long-term sustainability ensured through community engagement and minimal operational costs.

4) Results / Outcomes
What were the concrete results?
How did the practice impact the participants?

Since its launch, *Forma-te* has demonstrated clear and measurable outcomes in improving collaboration, professional development, and access to quality resources within the adult education sector in Portugal.

1. Growth of the Community

- Over **10,000 registered users**, primarily adult educators, trainers, and training technicians;
- A dynamic and growing base of **active contributors** who regularly share and evaluate materials;

"For years, I worked alone, creating materials from scratch with little support. *Forma-te* helped me discover a community of professionals who face the same challenges. I no longer feel isolated, and I've improved my training sessions thanks to shared tools and ideas."
— **Ana M., vocational trainer, Lisbon**

"Sharing my resources gave me a sense of recognition I didn't expect. I felt proud when others rated my work positively or left comments. It pushed me to be more rigorous and creative in my planning."
— **Carlos R., freelance adult educator, Porto**

"I found everything I needed to update my CCP and plan my sessions on digital skills. The platform is simple, friendly, and full of practical content."
— **Joana S., community education technician, Braga**

6) Success Factors

What made the practice effective or innovative?
Were there any unique or creative elements?

Several key factors have contributed to the success and sustainability of *Forma-te* as a good practice in adult education:

1. Credit-Based Resource Exchange Model

The innovative system where users gain credits by uploading resources—and use those credits to download materials—creates a strong incentive for contribution. It transforms users from passive consumers into active co-creators of the platform.

2. Peer-Led and Community-Driven

Forma-te empowers trainers by placing them at the centre of the platform's development. The quality and relevance of the content come from within the community, ensuring real-world applicability and responsiveness to trainers' actual needs.

3. Practical and Diverse Resource Library

The platform offers a wide variety of resources, adaptable to different training contexts and learner profiles. This variety is one of the most appreciated features by users and supports differentiated instruction.

4. Low Barrier to Entry

No special qualifications or institutional affiliation are required to join and contribute, making the platform widely accessible. Its user-friendly interface enables quick onboarding, even for less digitally confident educators.

5. Strong Informal Recognition

Trainers receive informal validation and peer feedback via ratings and comments, creating a positive reinforcement loop. This contributes to a sense of professional identity and motivation.

6. Integration with Broader Educational Trends

Forma-te aligns with national strategies on lifelong learning and adult education. Its integration with *Transforma-te*, a project focused on educational innovation, adds a layer of reflection, experimentation, and pedagogical renewal.

7. Financial Sustainability and Independence

The platform operates with minimal funding, relying primarily on voluntary engagement and low maintenance costs. This lean model ensures its resilience and long-term viability.

Together, these factors make *Forma-te* a robust, inclusive, and inspiring model of collaborative professional development in adult learning.

7) Transferability / Recommendations

Can the practice be used elsewhere?

What conditions are needed for successful implementation?

The *Forma-te* model is highly transferable and can be adapted to a wide range of national and local contexts, particularly those where adult education professionals operate in dispersed or under-supported environments.

Why it is transferable

- It does not rely on high funding or complex infrastructure;
- It uses open-source technologies and intuitive design;
- It addresses **universal challenges** in adult education, such as lack of peer connection, limited access to resources, and professional isolation;
- It promotes **bottom-up collaboration**, adaptable to diverse cultural and institutional contexts.

Conditions for successful implementation

1. **A clear and simple credit system**

   The core motivational mechanism should be well explained, transparent, and easy to use. It must reward contribution without creating barriers to access.

2. **Initial community building**

A strong start requires identifying and involving a group of engaged educators or organisations willing to share content and promote the platform among peers.

3. **User-friendly digital environment**

The interface must be intuitive for trainers with different levels of digital literacy, especially those less confident using technology.

4. **Quality control mechanisms**

Peer review, ratings, and comment systems help maintain the quality and relevance of shared materials without requiring a centralised gatekeeper.

5. **Local adaptation**

While the structure is replicable, content categories, languages, and certification references should reflect the national/regional adult education framework.

6. **Strategic communication**

Promotion through professional associations, training entities, and social media can help scale engagement and embed the platform within existing networks.

7. **Openness and trust**

Building a culture of sharing relies on transparency, fairness, and mutual respect—values that must be embedded in the platform's governance and community ethos.

Recommendation:
Organisations interested in adopting this model should pilot the platform with a small community of practice, gather feedback, and scale progressively. It is particularly suitable for training institutions, lifelong learning networks, or adult education consortia looking to strengthen internal collaboration and external impact.

8) Tips / Implementation Advice – optional
Checklists, lessons, or advice for those wishing to implement the practice.

Based on the experience of *Forma-te*, here are some practical tips for those wishing to implement a similar practice in their context:

Before Launch

- **Start with a needs analysis**: Talk to trainers and adult educators to understand their main challenges and resource needs.
- **Keep it simple**: Avoid over-complicating the credit system or the upload/download process. Simplicity is key for engagement.
- **Use open-source tools**: Platforms like WordPress or Moodle (with plugins) can support basic versions of a sharing portal at low cost.

During Implementation

- **Pilot with a small, trusted group**: Invite a few enthusiastic trainers to upload materials and give feedback. Their early contributions will set the tone and quality standard.
- **Set clear content guidelines**: Clarify what types of resources are welcome, how they should be described, and what formats are acceptable.
- **Use storytelling to grow the community**: Share real stories of trainers who have benefited from the platform to build emotional connection and credibility.

After Launch

- **Create regular challenges or sharing campaigns**: For example, thematic weeks (e.g., "Digital Inclusion Tools") can stimulate activity and renew interest.
- **Celebrate top contributors**: Acknowledge frequent sharers or highly rated content through newsletters or social media.
- **Provide micro-support**: Offer brief tutorials, FAQs or even a buddy system for those unsure about how to contribute.

Sustainability Tips

- **Keep operational costs low** by encouraging peer moderation instead of full-time staff;
- **Partner with institutions** (adult education centres, universities, municipalities) to widen reach and legitimacy;

- **Encourage co-ownership**: Let users suggest improvements and feel part of the platform's evolution.

9) Lessons Learned - optional

Biggest surprises, obstacles or key takeaways during implementation.

Implementing *Forma-te* revealed several valuable lessons that shaped its evolution and can serve as guidance for others aiming to develop similar practices:

1. Trainers want to share—but need encouragement

Initially, many educators were hesitant to upload their materials, fearing judgement or underestimating the value of their work. The credit system, combined with positive peer feedback, proved essential to build confidence and participation.

2. Quality emerges from trust, not control

Rather than applying strict editorial control, the platform relies on community moderation through ratings and comments. This helped cultivate a trusting, peer-driven quality assurance culture—less bureaucratic and more empowering.

3. Simplicity wins over sophistication

Attempts to introduce complex filtering systems or detailed tagging frameworks created confusion. Users preferred straightforward upload forms and basic search categories. Prioritising usability ensured wider and more sustained engagement.

4. Peer recognition is powerful

Unexpectedly, many contributors found more value in the visibility and recognition from peers than in the credits themselves. This emotional dimension—feeling useful, appreciated, and part of something—became a silent driver of success.

5. Community takes time to grow

Building a participatory culture is not instant. It required consistent communication, visible appreciation of contributions, and patience. The first months were slower, but once critical mass was reached, growth became organic.

6. Flexibility allows the platform to evolve

Remaining open to suggestions from users helped the platform stay relevant. Features such as themed sharing campaigns, new resource categories, and integration with *Transforma-te* were all born from user input.

10) Photos illustrating the described practice

Please attach at least 3 photos related to the described good practice

PRACTICE PROFILE – CLASSIFICATION CHECKLIST

Please tick all categories that apply to your described practice. You may choose more than one.

	TYPE OF THE PRACTICE
☒	Learning by doing
☐	Intergenerational learning
☒	Community-based learning
☒	Digital / blended learning
☒	Peer learning
☒	Mentoring / coaching
☐	Cultural / creative approaches
☒	Collaborative / partner-based
☐	Other (specify):
	TARGET GROUP
☐	Adults with low qualifications
☐	NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training)
☐	Migrants / Refugees

☐	Older adults
☐	Women
☐	People with disabilities
☐	Other vulnerable groups
☒	General adult population
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT	
☐	Formal
☒	Non-formal
☐	Informal
SKILLS / COMPETENCES DEVELOPED	
☐	Literacy (reading, writing, comprehension)
☐	Numeracy (maths, logical thinking)
☒	Digital skills
☐	STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics)
☒	Personal, social and learning to learn
☒	Civic competences
☒	Entrepreneurship
☐	Cultural awareness and expression
☐	Language skills
☒	Job-related / vocational skills
☐	Green competences
☐	Other (specify):
POTENTIAL USERS	
☒	Teachers / Educators
☐	Administrative staff
☒	School / Centre management
☐	Policy makers / Public administration
☐	NGOs / Community organizations
☐	Other (specify):

Glossary of Categories (Explanation of Checklist Items)

Type of the Practice

- Learning by doing – learning through hands-on activities, practice-based methods such as workshops or real tasks.
- Intergenerational learning – activities involving participants from different age groups learning from each other.

- Community-based learning – learning that takes place within the local community, often through real-life engagement.
- Digital / blended learning – education using digital tools (online), or a mix of online and face-to-face methods.
- Peer learning – learning among participants of similar status or experience, supporting each other.
- Mentoring / coaching – one-to-one support from a more experienced person to help learning and personal growth.
- Cultural / creative approaches – use of arts, music, theatre, storytelling etc. as learning tools.
- Collaborative / partner-based – practices involving cooperation between organisations or groups.
- Other (specify) – any other method not listed above.

Target Group

- Adults with low qualifications – adults who have low levels of formal education or basic skills.
- NEETs – people Not in Education, Employment, or Training (often young adults).
- Migrants / Refugees – individuals who moved from another country, often facing integration challenges.
- Older adults – Adults aged 65+
- Women – practices specifically addressing women's needs.
- People with disabilities – individuals with physical, sensory, intellectual, or mental health disabilities.
- Other vulnerable groups – groups at risk of exclusion (e.g. long-term unemployed, homeless).
- General adult population – average adults not in specific categories.

Learning Environment

- Formal – learning within official education systems, certified courses (e.g. schools, universities).
- Non-formal – organised learning outside the formal system (e.g. workshops, community training).
- Informal – learning through everyday experiences, without a structured course (e.g. volunteering, family).

Skills / Competences Developed

- Literacy – reading, writing, and understanding texts (including functional texts like forms).
- Numeracy – using mathematics and logical reasoning.
- Digital skills – using digital tools e.g. CV creation, online tools, online platforms.

- STEM – science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.
- Personal, social and learning to learn – self-awareness, motivation, teamwork, lifelong learning skills.
- Civic competences – active citizenship, understanding of democracy and social responsibilities.
- Entrepreneurship – creativity, innovation, project management, risk-taking.
- Cultural awareness and expression – appreciation and creation of cultural content (e.g. arts, music).
- Language skills – ability to communicate in one or more foreign languages.
- Job-related / vocational skills – practical skills useful in specific jobs or professions.
- Green competences – knowledge and behaviours supporting sustainability and environmental care.
- Other – any other skills developed (please specify).

Potential users – groups who could benefit from applying, adapting, or being inspired by this practice in their work context.

Note: These categories follow EU frameworks such as the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (2018), the Action Plan on Basic Skills (2025) and the Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2025 – Glossary

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