pace

PACE – Sharing and learning about EU Project Management

Plan
Organise
Manage People
Administer
Disseminate
Monitor
Administer Monitor Manage People Plan Report
Report
Disseminate
Organise

dieBerater
Human Concern

PACE – Sharing and learning about EU Project Management

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INTRODUCTION

This brochure addresses professionals involved in transnational (education) projects funded by the European Commission's ERASMUS+ programme and other funding schemes. The complexity of these projects has increased over the last years, in order to meet the increasingly diverse and changing demands presented by learners, the labour market and society, as well as the expectations and requirements of the funding body; the official requirements of project management and project administration become more and more critical for delivering successful European projects. Another aspect is the change from the Lifelong Learning Programme to ERASMUS+, which has brought with it a number of new regulations for project application and project administration. These new rules influence the whole process of European project planning and management – starting from writing the project application through to the exploitation of project products and results.

Of course transnational cooperation is crucial for improving the quality of EU project management. Intercultural cooperation calls for a certain set of skills in professionals who are involved in EU project management – many of whom are trained and qualified primarily in education, not in strategic project management. EU projects need nonetheless to be managed, led, administrated, evaluated and disseminated in a professional and effective manner in order to achieve their objectives.

In other words, cooperation needs to be learnt, but in their everyday work project managers are frequently isolated, as their colleagues at their own institution cannot support them as they deal with other tasks. Existing support resources such as project management manuals, guidelines on targeted project communication, checklists, forms and model financial reporting documents, etc. have been developed in "meta-projects" revolving around work in EU projects, but are scattered in the depths of the Internet.

With this brochure we want to encourage you to learn about PACE (**P**roject **A**ctors **C**ommunity in **E**urope) which was developed in the framework of a LLP - KA4 project of the same name. PACE aims to help project actors support each other by:

- collecting,
- sharing,
- updating,
- further improving and
- disseminating

existing tools for transnational project management in EU-funded programmes, with a particular focus on ERASMUS+.

The core element of PACE is an interactive communication and learning platform, offering project management support tools and networking functions. On the following pages you will find an overview on the main content and functions of the platform and we will present various possibilities on how you, as a European project actor, can benefit from and contribute to the PACE Community of Practice!

1. WHY WAS PACE DEVELOPED?

The bottom line of PACE is to share and learn from each other

The Lifelong Learning programme (LLP) has funded a number of projects which developed tools to support other LLP project actors in effectively and efficiently implementing their projects. But although (parts of) most products would be relevant for the whole programme, the dissemination and exploitation range of these projects is often limited to the sub-programme/education sector in question.

There is a variety of manuals, toolkits, templates, guidance publications, training courses and materials dealing with different aspects of EU project management. All these publications are scattered in the Internet and often difficult to find. So the main questions for you, as an EU project actor, are: Is there any supporting material existing relevant to my needs? And: Where can I find this material?

The main idea of the project PACE is to preserve the valuable European project management know-how generated by the LLP support projects so that it will not get lost and forgotten but be transferred to the new generation of programmes with the high visibility it deserves.

Results and project outcomes of former LLP projects, as well as new resources on EU project management should be bundled and provided in one source.

The core output of PACE is a **learning and communication platform** – an interactive tool to create a network of sharing and learning about project management in the context of European funded projects.

The PACE platform is based on the outcomes of a variety of European projects which were supported by the European Commission within the last five years. The results of these projects were systematically collected and analysed so that they can be widely disseminated across education sectors. The content of the platform focuses on project management supporting tools, covering five main topic areas:

| Plan & Organise | Administer | Evaluate | Disseminate & Exploit | Manage People |

With this offer, the PACE platform works as a one-stop shop for assessing useful project management tools and finding peer support for addressing project challenges.

2. WHO DOES PACE ADDRESS?

PACE addresses all project actors involved in coordinating, managing or cooperating in EU funded projects

PACE offers basic information on general project management issues for newcomers as well as content and discussion on specific topics from which experienced project managers can benefit.

You should join PACE if
- you are a European project manager or you plan to become a coordinator or a partner in a EU project
- you are looking for new ways to improve your project management performance
- you are interested in getting to know EU project management tools
- you want to share your experiences in EU project management with colleagues from all over Europe
- you like to contribute to discussions on current issues of EU project funding

3. WHO DEVELOPED PACE?

PACE was developed in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme, Key Activity 4: Dissemination and Exploitation of Results. The consortium was a mixed partnership which unites complementary expertise and know-how. The project partners were chosen according to the criteria of their long-standing experience with EU projects, their involvement in LLP project support projects, their expertise in specific EU project management areas, their dissemination potential and additional know-how needed for the project, such as organisation of European conferences, technical know-how with regard to e-learning and e-collaboration, mobile learning, and use of social media. Following these criteria, these project partners from Austria, Italy, Germany, Belgium and Slovakia worked on the development of PACE:

#pace

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EUCEN, Belgium
www.eucen.eu

webducation, Austria
www.webducation.cc

4. WHAT DOES PACE OFFER?

PACE offers
- *an interactive learning and communication platform*
- *networking and sharing events – PACE BarCamps*

The core element of PACE is the cloud-based **learning and communication platform** which offers you project management support tools making full use of multimedia, social media and mobile learning. It works as a one-stop shop for useful project management tools and peer support for addressing project challenges.

PACE members can benefit from:

- networking functions
- authoring tools
- e-learning
- online conferencing tools
- links to other support tools
- regular webinars on EU project management

In addition to the platform PACE developed and implemented self-organised events – **PACE BarCamps** – for practitioners in European educational projects to offer them a structure for the exchange of knowledge and experience.

5. HOW TO USE THE PACE PLATFORM?

To join PACE, a fast and simple registration process is necessary. You can access the platform directly following this link: http://pace.sabacloud.com
If you want to open an account as a new PACE member you have to register first. You will receive an e-mail with an automatically generated password. **Now you are ready to access!**

The PACE platform contains five main topic areas for the delivery of project management supporting tools and learning resources:

Plan & Organise: Good planning is essential to lay the foundation of a successful project. Planning is not only necessary in the application stage, but for all other phases of a project. In this section you find simple and ready to use tools – starting with the effective planning of a kick off meeting; developing an analysis of project stakeholders or get your work planned in detail, etc.

Administer: The administrative tasks required by the EU funding programme are felt to be a heavy burden by some project coordinators – but it should not give you sleepless nights! During the last years a lot of useful tools have been developed by experienced project managers, which support the administrative, contractual and reporting

Fig. 1: PACE welcome screen

management in a European project. They are all collected and put together here.

Evaluate: Evaluation and quality control should be seen as a process linked to all aspects of your project. Evaluation is an opportunity for learning and improving your project performance! Measuring the impact and quality of projects is not easy, but it can be made easier by using the right methods and tools!

Disseminate & Exploit: For the sustainability of project outcomes and results dissemination and exploitation are key elements in a multilateral project. But what is the best and most effective way to reach your target group? PACE offers a variety of

well-established tools and also presents innovative concepts for the promotion and marketing of your project.

Manage People: Managing a team in a multilateral project can be a challenge. You have to build up an effective communication inside and outside your network, create and manage a team out of different persons with different professional and cultural backgrounds. PACE will support you in forming a diverse group of people to an effective project team.

You can be active in the platform in three different ways:
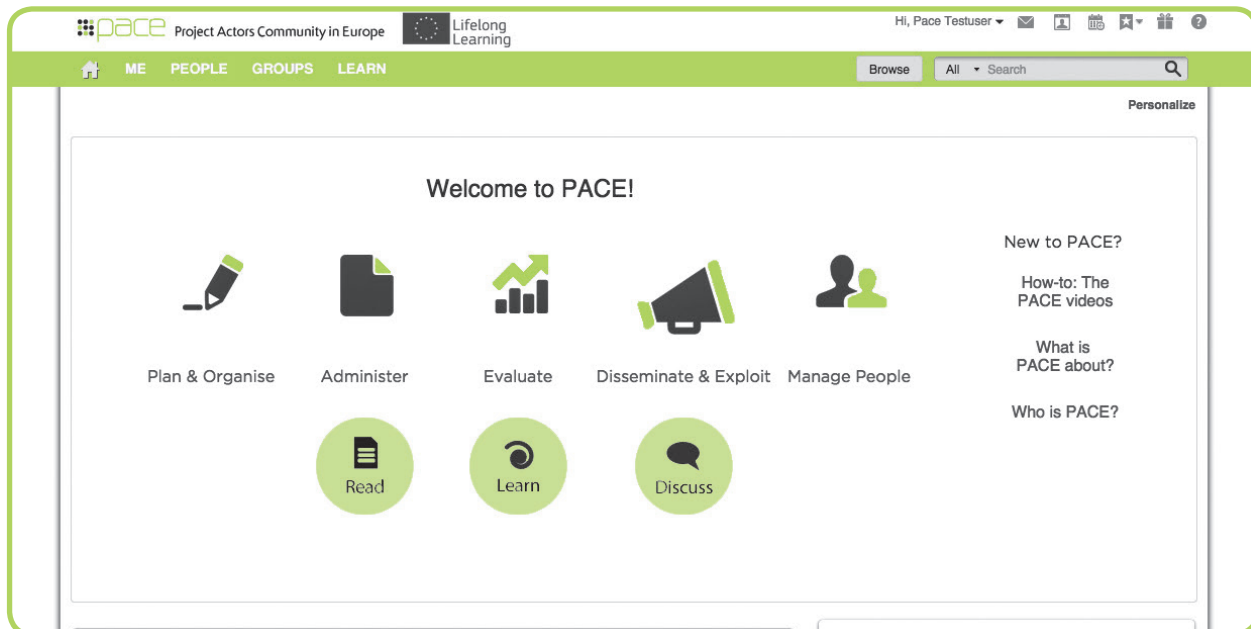
Fig. 2: 5 Topics – 3 Activity Areas

READ – The PACE Library

The icon "READ" takes you to the PACE Library which is also accessible via the group "Library" (learn more about this group in paragraph "Groups", page 11). It includes a collection of resources, publications and other project management products from former LLP projects which were researched and analysed in the stock-taking phase of the PACE project. Apart from this the library is constantly filled with interesting publications and/or links regarding project management – also from sources not directly related to former EU projects

In Fig. 3 you can see that the library also follows the five topic structure. By clicking on the respective icons or folders, you can find relevant supporting material.
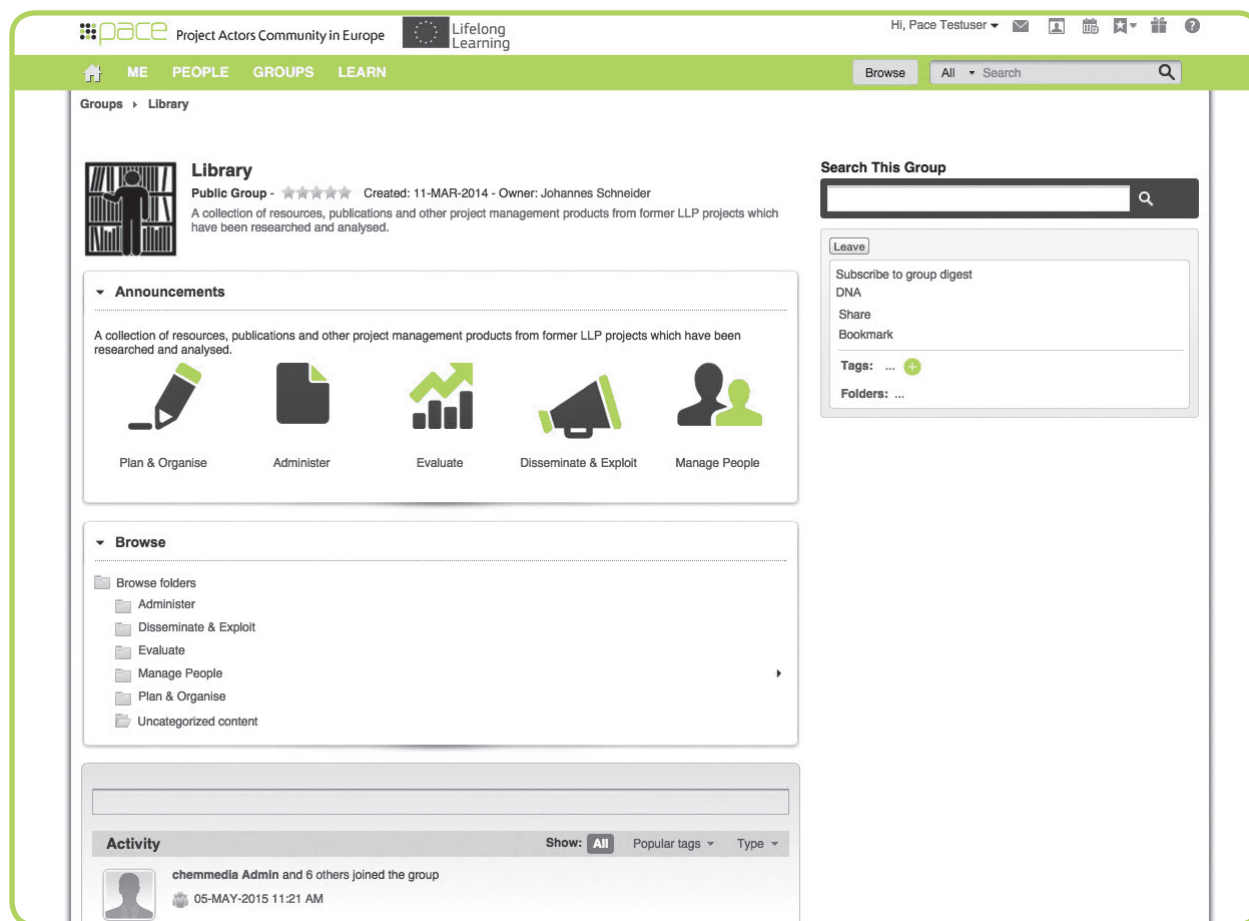
Fig. 3: PACE Library
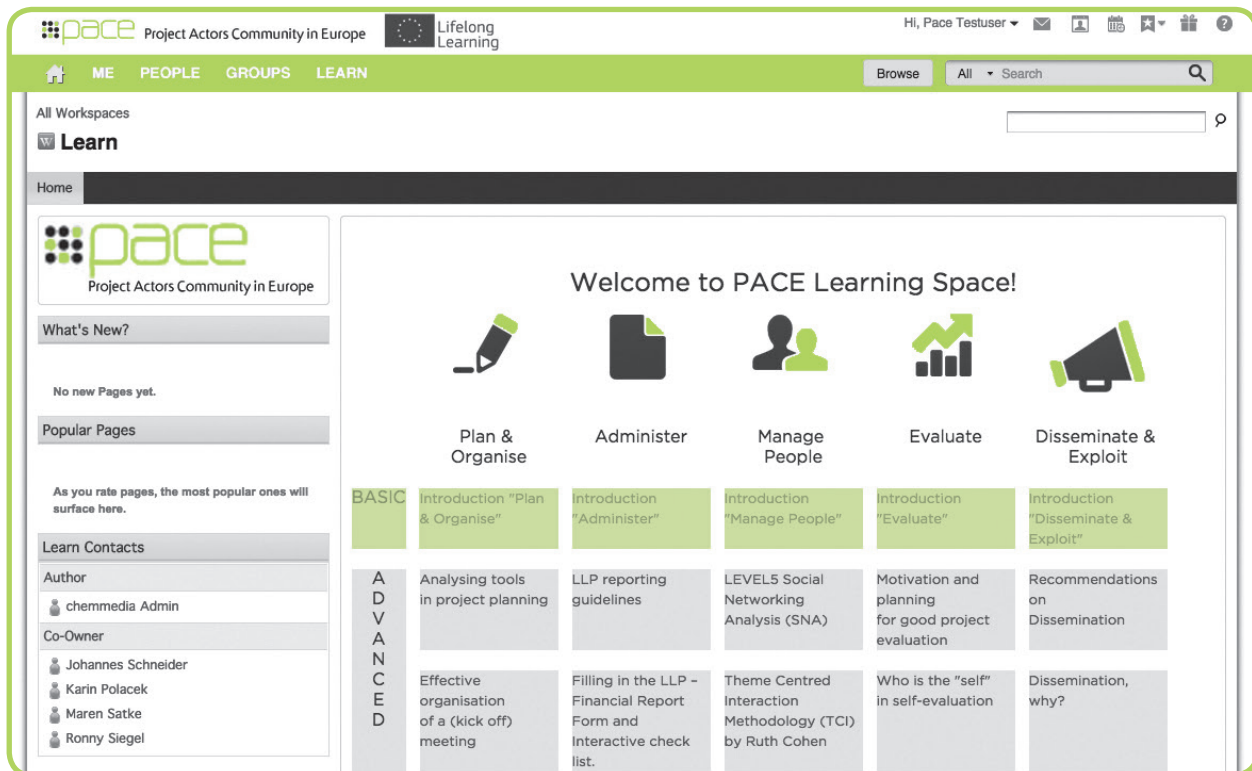
LEARN – PACE Learning Space

Clicking the LEARN icon you enter the **Learning Space** of the PACE platform. Whereas the PACE Library provides certain links or documents on a specific project management topic, the **learning area** consists of learning objects based on pre-existing project management tools which were further developed and updated by the PACE partners. Each learning object deals with a specific project management tool and offers more detailed information and/or working material like videos, presentations, audio-files, quizzes, etc.

Learning objects are organised in "courses" which are bundles of thematic units. Please bear in mind that the learning objects are **an optional offer** for PACE members and there is no certification delivered in connection with these online courses.

Each topic area provides a general e-learning introduction on the topic, followed by additional learning objects. In total the PACE Learning Space consists of 40 learning objects which are constantly improved and further developed.

Fig. 4: PACE Learning Space – The learning catalogue

DISCUSS – Room for EU Project Actors

In addition to the information in the library and learning objects, the PACE platform offers you the opportunity for direct exchange of experiences with other EU project actors. The general discussion group, as you can see in the screenshot, is the group including all registered PACE members. The activity stream works similar to other social media:

- You can ask a **question** to the **PACE community**.
- You can **share interesting links or upload files** on EU-project management.

- You can use the group to **discuss relevant topics with other project actors**.
- You have the possibility to use a **meeting room facility to organise your own online meetings** with people form inside or outside the PACE group!
- You can receive information on current PACE **online events** – webinars and their recordings are announced and stored in this area.

Every contribution is welcome!
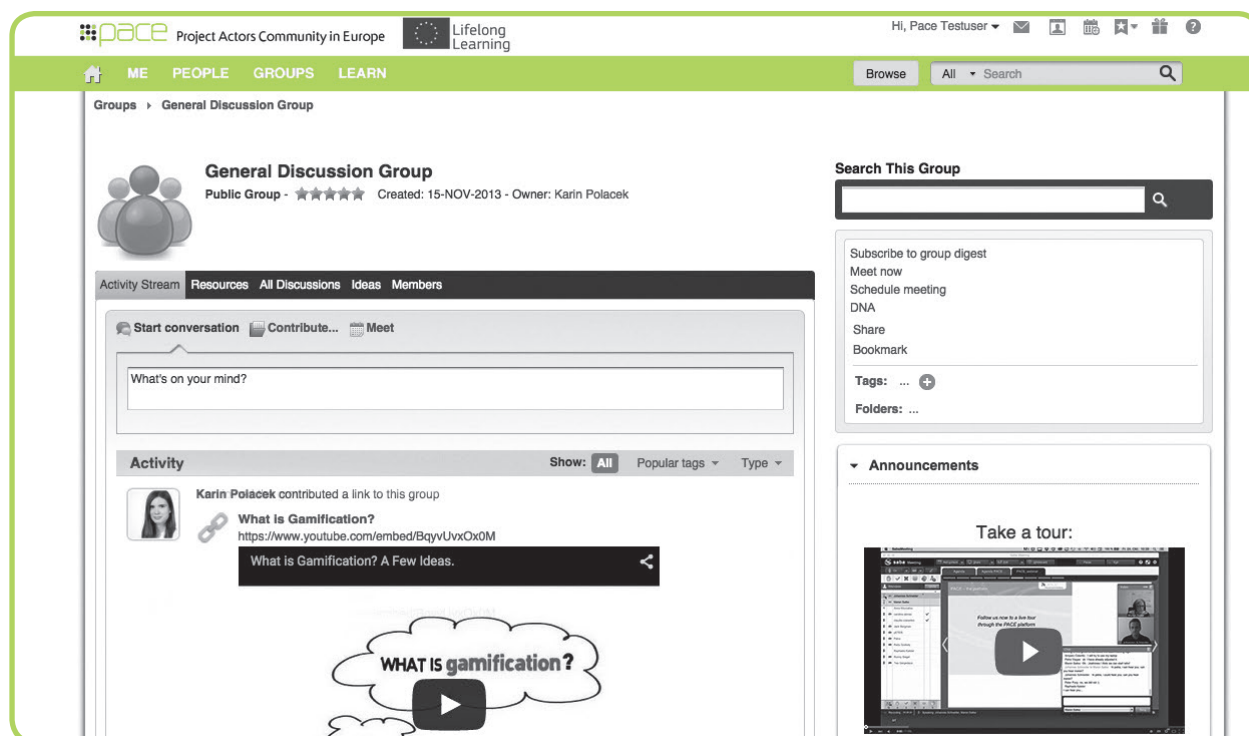
Fig. 5: Activity Stream in the discussion group of all PACE members

6. HOW CAN YOU CONTRIBUTE TO PACE?

Participation and interactivity are the main success factors for any Community of Practice
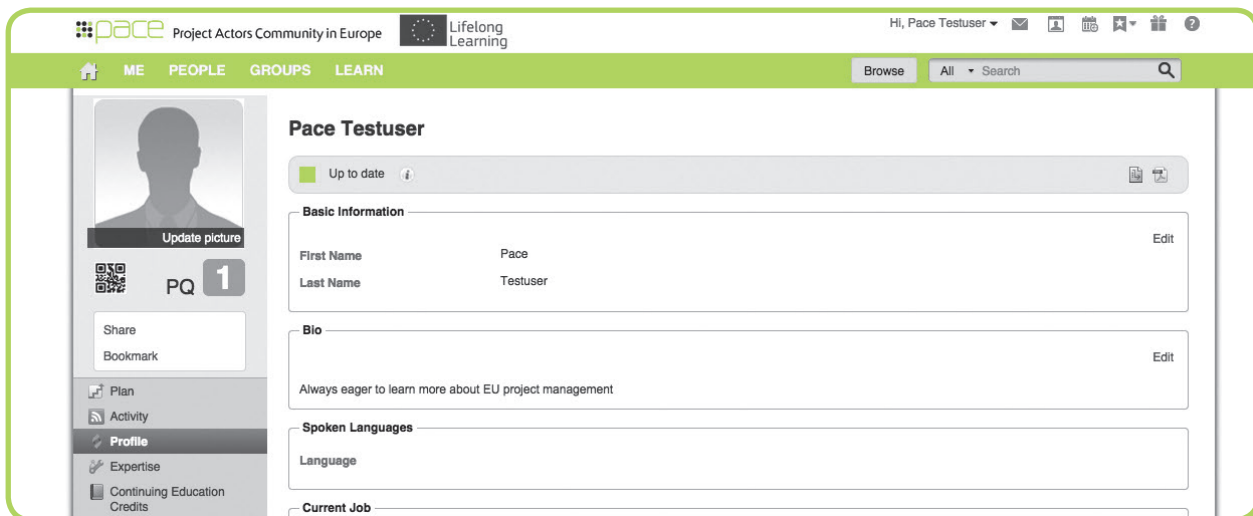
Interactivity between the members and their active participation are crucial factors for the European Project Actors' Community.

The aim of the PACE concept was to create a dynamic tool constantly expanding and further improving. This dynamic character is absolutely necessary, as the Community needs to respond to evolving and sometimes changing requirements and regulations of the European Commission and National Agencies.

Your Profile

Within the Community it can be helpful if members introduce themselves to each other. Providing information on your professional background and your experiences in EU project management does not only give a clearer impression of the participating project actors in PACE but can also support the networking function since the Community can also be used to find and get in contact with new project partners.

If you are interested in being a member of PACE, some minimum information is required to create your profile, so that you can be at least identified as a member of a company, organisation or institution in the context of EU project management.

Fig. 6: PACE profile

The videos "How to use the PACE platform" which can be found on the project website (www.projectactors.eu) present step by step how to complete your personal profile on the PACE platform.

Groups on the PACE platform

It is important to understand the concept of "groups" in order to be active on the PACE platform and to comment on and contribute to topics and content provided in the **Library** and in the **Learning Space.**

Every new registered member of PACE is automatically a member of the "General Discussion Group". Members of PACE have the chance to create new groups e.g. if they want to focus on a specific topic – or they can join existing ones. The **"BarCamp Group"** was created in November 2014 to enable contact between the participants of the first BarCamp – to involve them, collect ideas and to enable the group to "meet" each other in advance. As a result of the first BarCamp, it turned out that ERASMUS+ was a crucial topic for a lot of people, so an **ERASMUS+ group** was created.

Only registered members can access and contribute to discussion groups, as it is explained in the "How to use the platform" videos.

For using the PACE Library and the PACE Learning Space it is important to highlight that these areas are also organised as groups:

- **LIBRARY:** If you want to access the library it is necessary to join the group "Library".
- **LEARNING SPACE:** The Learning Space can be entered directly, but the individual learning objects are organ-
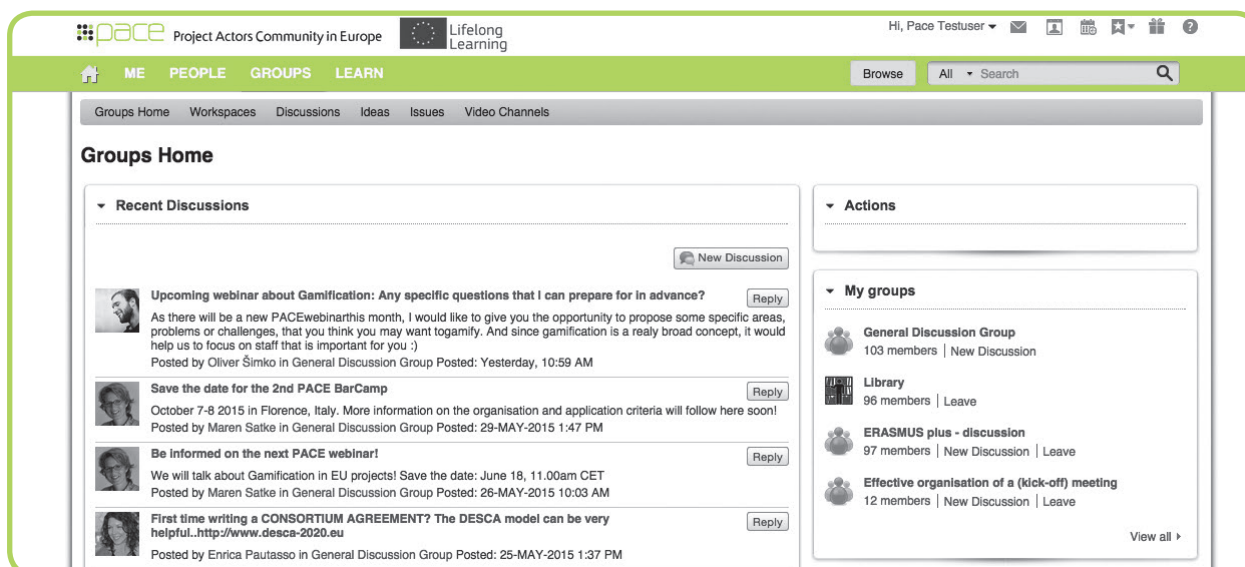

Fig. 7: "My groups" represents the groups you are already a member of. Click "join" if you want to become a member of a new group!

ised in groups. It is important to know this if you wish to leave a detailed comment or an idea for improvement on a learning object. Join the respective group – here you can leave your feedback!
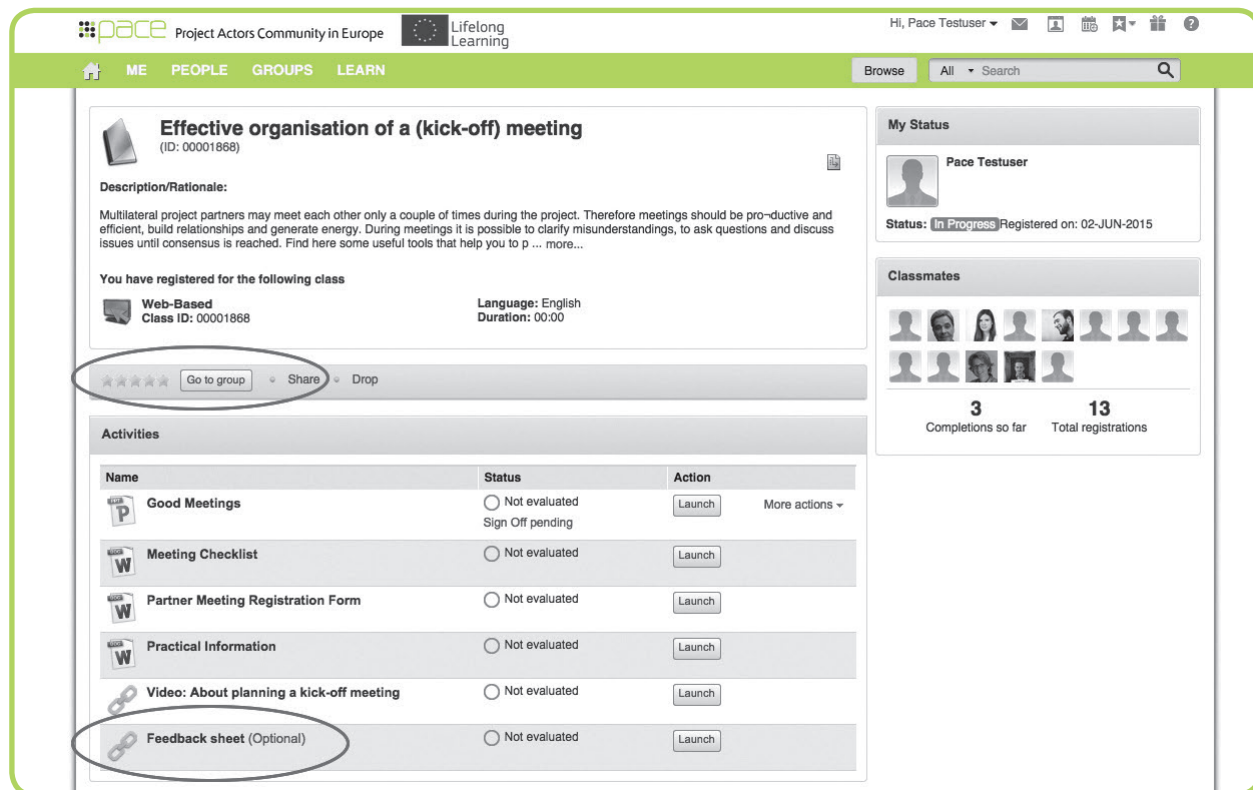
Feedback and Comments

As a PACE member you are invited to comment interactively on the learning content which is offered on the platform! The basic inventory of the learning and communication platform was developed by the PACE project partners. For the future we want to encourage the community of European project actors to contribute to the constant improvement and further development of the learning offer.

In order to collect general feedback on the material provided a feedback function has been integrated in each learning object. You can see it marked in the screenshot below (Feedback sheet).

Users can also rate the learning offer (marked in the screenshot: "Go to group") and write a more detailed comment in the groups. Your rating helps the consortium to review objects with low rates and improve them. In this way, the PACE community guarantees that content is useful and – most important – up-to-date!

Fig. 8: Feedback and rating of learning objects

7. PACE BARCAMPS

PACE organises BarCamps on EU Project Management as exchange markets of knowledge and experiences

A BarCamp is an "un-conference" born from the desire of people to share and learn from each other in an open environment. It is an open and self-organized event with discussions, questions and plenty of interaction among attendees.

Attendees to BarCamps participate actively. All those who come are supposed to present their ideas, experiences, knowledge, doubts and questions on any topic they are interested in, of course related to European Project Planning and Management, with the purpose to open a discussion and a knowledge sharing experience with the others participants.

The PACE consortium organised two BarCamps in November 2014 and October 2015 – both in Florence, Italy. Project managers, coordinators and evaluators involved in different EU funding projects and programmes from all over Europe participated in these events.

At the PACE BarCamps the participants bring along and share best practice tools for EU project management. They decide on the agenda to a large extent and the schedule of sessions is created in cooperation with all attendees. Before and after the events the participants are encouraged to contribute actively to the PACE platform and its materials.

Learn more about the PACE BarCamps:
Visit www.projectactors.eu or join the BarCamp group on the PACE platform!

Session at the 1st PACE BarCamp in Florence Nov 2014

READY TO JOIN PACE?

Register at the PACE platform:
http://pace.sabacloud.com

Contact the PACE Project Coordination:
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