

# LearnWithClay

## European Lifelong Learning In the Earth Construction Sector

### The EU Project LearnWithClay



The exciting EU partnership project Learn with Clay brings together twelve organisations across four European countries with the aim of providing vocational development and mobility opportunities for plasterers, trainers and crafts people in the earth construction sector.

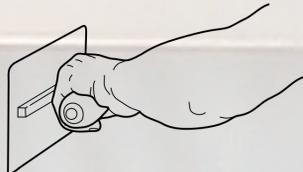
What we want to do:

- Make it possible for young people across Europe to learn earth construction techniques with our European partners.
- Make it possible for building & plastering specialists to learn and gain vocational qualifications through practical training, workshop and construction-site based, at home and abroad.
- Create and improve training opportunities and qualifications for migrant workers across Europe in the earth construction sector.
- Create a standardised European wide certification and training system implemented and recognised by each country.
- Promote a European-wide exchange of skills and networking in clay plasters and earth construction.

This project recognises the value both of the older apprenticeship systems of the UK and the European Tradition of Craft journeymen and women, whilst linking these with the requirements of the modern world.

To achieve this, we aim to standardise certification of the learning outcomes from Level 1 to Level 8 (equivalent to the current NVQ 5) in a system recognised across Europe. The project follows the recommendations of the "European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training" (ECVET) and the "European Qualification Framework" (EQF), creating a full range of learning outcomes in a comparative and transparent manner, and simplifying international mobility and life-long learning opportunities for learners and practitioners across Europe.

The certification will be achievable to experienced crafts people across Europe who can provide evidence of appropriate learning outcomes, skills levels and understanding.



Lifelong Learning Programme

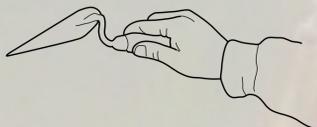
### Earth construction and clay plaster



Earth and clay are natural construction materials and have been central to European building techniques for millennia. Today, two thirds of the world's population live in houses built of earth; and in the UK there are over a quarter of a million earth houses still lived in, several hundred years old.

Clay plasters like earth building, have a long tradition in Europe, the many properties of which include durability and humidity regulation, so creating safe and healthy internal environments.

Clay is readily and often locally available throughout the UK, is low in embodied energy and in carbon footprint, as there is no firing process involved, and provides excellent thermal mass. Clay plasters are therefore becoming the material of choice in zero carbon, healthy, solar passive and energy efficient modern construction design.



Clay is used extensively in Europe in the renovation of historical buildings as well as in new, modern construction within varying sized developments, and is supported by a large body of research and broad knowledge base promoting the many properties and benefits of clay plasters. The Learn with Clay project calls upon this expertise of professional clay plaster practitioners across Europe to make this knowledge base readily available to practitioners within construction in the UK – from the hands-on self-build market through to mainstream contractors where machine application and silo storage is available.

Wall finishing products can usually be sourced locally, ready for testing and mixing to create the optimum construction material or plaster. Additionally, a growing range of ready-to-use products are available on the market where a whole new business sector for the use of low impact earth in building is emerging. However, there is a shortage of trained craftspeople to exploit these opportunities because to date there has been very little professional training and no accreditation within the UK.

The Learn with Clay project aims to change this situation. Contact the UK partners to train up in earth and clay construction.

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### Training in earth construction



Growing interest has given rise to a widespread earth construction learning culture - with courses, seminars and construction site workshops in both the UK and across Europe. Yet in terms of continuing vocational training to recognised levels, no standardised accreditation has existed across Europe.

We have committed individuals, groups, and associations working together in Europe to thank for the first successes in integrating earth construction into continuing vocational training. Already in Germany there are two officially recognised qualifications for crafts people and skilled labourers in the earth building sector: one is a specialisation in clay plaster and one in earth building techniques.



The Clay Plastering & Design qualification has been developed within the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci EU Project "Clay Plaster" and this qualification is now available to European trainers through the European School for Earth Construction of the FAL e.V association, in conjunction with the Schwerin Craft Chamber.

Amazonails, one of the European partners and lead UK partner in this project, offers training courses in clay rendering from entry level through to advanced practice both through bespoke workshops and on-site practical training. They also work with the Centre of Alternative Technology in Wales delivering their in-house clay plastering and rendering courses. All of amazonails' earth and clay courses are RIBA (Skills) accredited, allowing build and design professionals to gain continuing professional development certification. Amazonails are also partnering with the National Specialist Team from Construction Skills, the sector skills council for construction in the UK, to look at delivering accredited earth and clay training throughout the UK as part of built environment courses from entry level through to Level 8.

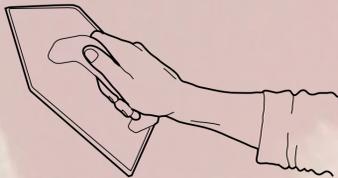
### Working and Networking within Europe: Continuing Vocational Training in Clay Plastering and Design



This hands-on course provides practical and theoretical instruction in clay plastering types, teaches design techniques, and also provides an insight into effective marketing strategies.

The learning methods used are interactive, based on site specific activities, and integrate practical, hands-on exercises with theoretical backup.

The learning outcomes and the course materials were developed jointly by 14 partners from six European countries with each partner country working towards a recognised national qualification. The course is aimed at craftspeople from the construction sector, including plasterers, painters and decorators, interior designers, teachers and technicians. The course materials are available on CD-ROM in English, Bulgarian, German, French, Greek, and Polish. Translation into Czech, Slovak, and Slovene is planned for 2010.



The teaching materials have in the meantime been put to use in a number of European countries in a wide variety of contexts. In Germany and France, teachers of earth construction are able to attend courses on the content and methodology of the course. The Leonardo da Vinci mobility project known as "Mobility in Earth Building" also makes it possible for trainees to undergo a three-week practical residential course with our European partners.

Contact amazonails or construction skills for further information



### The European Partners



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**BAUFACHFRAU Berlin e.V.**  
Association for promoting women in construction  
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[www.baufachfrau-berlin.de](http://www.baufachfrau-berlin.de)

**Berufliches Schulzentrum Leipziger Land**  
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**Knobelsdorff Schule**  
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**Lehmbaukontor Berlin-Brandenburg e.V.**  
Association for the promotion of ecological construction  
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[www.lehmbaukontor.de](http://www.lehmbaukontor.de)

**Handwerkskammer Schwerin**  
Crafts chamber, Vocational training and technology centre  
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[www.hwk-schwerin.de](http://www.hwk-schwerin.de)

### Project as a whole

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**AsTerre**  
Umbrella Association for Earth Construction Specialists in France  
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**AKTERRE**  
Production and marketing of clay construction materials  
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[www.akterre.com](http://www.akterre.com)

**LE GABION**  
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