

Learning Networks: Measuring Impact notes

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Despite wide spread flooding across most of the west country, making travel to Cardiff near enough impossible, it was a delight to see 26 people attend the Measuring impact workshop at Cardiff City Hall on the 22nd November. The participants were a healthy mix those who had been before and those brand new to Erasmus + who were venturing into the idea of what it means to “measure the impact of a project” for the first time.

The balance of sectors was evenly distributed, allowing the sharing of ideas for the Exercise planned and designed by Steve Murray (Ecorys).

Steve introduced us all to an Impact tool that he and his team had been working on at the last Networking event and this year was an opportunity for the different sectors to put in to practise how it might work, with the aid of generic, fictional projects, looking at different intended outcomes.

The hand out guide explained:

The exercise was designed to help beneficiaries to get started exploring their impact, identifying:

Intended impact;

Realistic output and outcome indicators

Realistic data sources.

Key action 1 groups in vocational education and training, focused on a mobility project, exploring catering and hospitality in the UK, Germany, Greece and Spain, bringing together students from Further Educational colleges.

Key Action 2 groups were looking at a School -School Strategic Partnership Project, with Secondary schools from the UK, France, Sweden and Italy looking at Digital skills for the future.

The participants worked in table groups and were given different areas of impact to measure, with the aid of a choice of indicators, the measures that allow the progress towards a goal to be tracked and Data sources, where evidenced information is being gathered from and by what means.

These were written out on strips and the groups were encouraged to match the indicators with Data sources. They were also instructed that if they had other ideas, not found on the guidance packs, they could write these in blank strips provided.

In our ambitious time frame to complete the task, the groups were given additional information to consider when making their choices. These were a series of questions collated from previous networking workshops and were key ideas that had come from the groups in terms of what to consider when measuring the impact of a project:

What is the story you are wanting to tell?

How will you measure the WHOLE experience for both Learners and Partners?

Where do you see the possible risks of this project not achieving success?

What will you do to help mitigate these?

What do you want partners/learners to Feel, Think and Do?

How will you influence this?

In terms of the indicators and data selection you have chosen, are they the most time and cost effective?

How will you measure your own development?

These questions were to be used as a guide and also to remind the group that each workshop is not a “stand alone” one off, but that we are on a journey in discovering the most efficient and successful ways to measure impact and the sharing of ideas that have been tried and tested, which make up the list of questions, should not be ignored.



By the end of the session, the following questions were asked:

1. What have you learned from exercise?

Responses included:

“We all speak a different language”:

Although great efforts were made to ensure people were matched to a project which best resembled reality, it was felt that the terminology was alien to some groups.

"It is important to frame the Erasmus + tool to be sector specific."

"Dissemination of Impact is a must! "

"Clarity of who stakeholders are is needed when developing a project in order to slow systemic impact"

"Having the data to support the impact of soft skills is difficult."

"Qualitative and Quantitative indicators are needed."

"It would be nice to have the mobility surveys from Erasmus + sent back to the project leads to see if satisfaction had been reached and if so this could then be the evidence used as a marketing tool for the future."

"Impact is on an individual basis".

"Improved quality of training is needed so project leads understand what tangible markers are being looked for and also being informed clearly around what's changed."

I believe this last comment was also in response to a pressing need for the participants to receive greater support when it comes to being successful with their project applications. It sounds like changes in the application process coupled with similar formats which don't match all the sector requirements are making the application process difficult.

"To measure impact, you need to have a clear baseline".

"its good to see that WE DO know how to do this!"

And a question that was asked from one delegate:

"who measures impact of Medium and Long term? Does it move into the private domain if further funding is needed?"

2. How would we like to keep in touch between now and the next Learning networks event, and ideas for future sessions?

"could we have a learning networks forum please?"

"Sharing best practise from Erasmus + champions?"

"open space surgeries, which are sector specific to gain a greater understanding of what good looks like when apply for funding"

"more focus on successful projects and case studies on the voluntary and youth sectors".

"sector related sessions"

"More time please!!"

You can find out more and download the resources from the Measuring Impact workshop on our Measuring Impact theme webpage: <https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/learning-networks-topics/Measuring-Impact>

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