



# The School Improvement Partnership Project Evaluation Report August 2019

## Introduction

This report summarises evaluation work undertaken since commencement of the project. Full reports are available on each activity.

The aim of the evaluation is to inform how the project has endeavoured to address and contribute to addressing the EU 2020 targets of reducing the rates of early school leaving below 10% by trialling and transferring Grade Predictor a web based tool to enable students to choose the right course across Europe.

## Progress to date

Since commencement of the project external evaluation has taken place to date in the following ways:

- A report on the first transnational meeting in December 2017.
- A report on the C1 training event in March 2018.
- A revised evaluation plan taking into account the withdrawal of Capademy.
- The analysis of pre training questionnaires, post training plans and action plans from delegates attending the March 2018 training (C1) culminating in a report.
- The analysis of pre training questionnaires for the C2 training event in Finland.
- The analysis of quarterly reports completed by partners.
- Desk research in relation to the promotion and dissemination of the project and informal discussions with a sample range of partners in relation to progress.
- Visits to institutions in the Czech Rep and Ireland to touch base on progress and discuss issues.
- Newsletter contributions.
- The circulation of a data collection tool to focus partners on outcomes of activities rather than solely completion of tasks.
- Contribution to the interim report for the National Agency in the UK in 2018.
- Meeting with the lead dissemination partner to prepare an input into the C2 event.
- Creation of case studies from institutional visits which can be used to showcase activity on the website and evidence of the work taking place.
- Attendance at and post analysis paper of C2 training event in Finland.
- Attendance at TPM in the Czech Republic.
- Presentation on impact and the importance of data collection at the TPM in the Czech Republic.



- Analysis of Czech TPM and recommendations made for further developments.
- Visit to a partner school in the Czech Republic.
- Inputs at all partnership meetings through an evaluation report issued prior to the meeting.

## **A summary of Partnership meetings to date.**

### **1st TPM UK December 2017**

The meeting achieved its purpose well and contributed to the forming of potentially a very strong partnership. It established the foundation of a cohesive and purposeful team.

The methodology deployed in terms of organisation and agenda should be continued with. The challenge is for all partners to implement plans locally for the construction of grade predictor tools, the implementation of trials and prepare for the training event in March 2018.

As the external evaluator I felt included in all the activity and had a voice which was listened to similar to all participants. I was very grateful for that and am looking forward to working on a project which will have a major impact on the lives of students.

Next on the agenda is the training week in Maidenhead in March 2018. The groundwork undertaken to date augers well for a successful event.

### **C1 Training March 2018–Conclusions**

The training certainly met all its aims and objectives. It was very well attended as planned by project partners. The Czech partner used an extra place whilst one of the Irish delegates could not travel at the last minute. All received certificates. All delegates were suitable and provided a range of expertise to enhance networking and stretch discussions. The counselling team from Finland, the teachers from Ireland and Spain and the mix of staff from the Czech Republic all combined well to provide a productive and problem solving group who participated with great enthusiasm in a relaxed and respectful environment.

In addition the international delegates delivered an input at the National Data Summit meeting which seemed very well received by over 60 delegates there.

The feedback from delegates through informal discussion, observation by the external evaluator, small workshop activity and questionnaire would support the judgement that the training met all its aims and objectives.

The training of course raised questions and challenges and set the benchmark for the rest of the project. It was very encouraging and significant that whilst all seemed to focus by necessity on the mechanism of the Grade Predictor tool, many mentioned that the end goal was about helping young people and students “students well being and achievement is what really matters”.



In the overall evaluation of the project the external evaluator has set 5 topics and it is useful to address these in relation to this training.

1. - Exchange of practice - are the products genuinely good practice;

**Some superb practice was experienced. Grade Predictor is a unique tool and the transfer of it across European national boundaries is genuinely good practice.**

2. - Transnationality - the success of transnational working and the effectiveness of partners' contributions;

**This was strong. Delegates learned from each other and shared practice**

3. - Partnership - the overall management and administration of partnership working;

**Everything ran like clockwork. The management and administration of the week was outstanding. This was praised by a number of the delegates who mentioned staff by name.**

4. - Dissemination - whether partners have reached a wide audience;

**Plans are in place to do this in every country.**

5. -Valorisation - whether partnerships have achieved multiplier effects through mainstreaming activity.

**It will be interesting to gauge over the length of the project whether for example more GRETB institutions become involved or indeed more schools in Zlinsky kraj. These are just two examples. The embedding of the tool in the practice of individual institutions it could be argued will be a multiplier effect in itself.**

**TPM November 2018 Finland**

**Progress against the Evaluation plan November 2018.**

- Steering group meetings are in place and the agenda is inclusive and comprehensive.
- The website is live including newsletters.
- Branding is in place which gives the project an identity
- Evaluation is ongoing with a plan and reports produced and evaluation is an agenda item at management meetings.
- An Enewsletter is in place.

- A sample of partner websites suggests that partners could be more proactive in promoting the project through their own websites/press releases. Some examples of good practice are in place. Discussion at GRETB Senior leadership meetings is an excellent example of promotion.
- Staff upskilling continues with the Finland training.
- New partnerships have been developed.
- A revision of contracts and tasks has taken place with the withdrawal of the Turkish partner.
- Sampling visits to partners suggests that the implementation of the tool and having the necessary structures in place in some institutions is still a challenge. There is still time to address this. Full implementation is scheduled for April 2019 onwards. It is important to have a robust foundation to build this on. Now is the time to resolve outstanding technical and structural issues.
- There is evidence of supporting materials being developed to accompany delivery of the tool within institutions.

### **The Way Forward**

From the sampling activities undertaken partners overall need to commit to completing trials, overcoming the problems associated with this and provide a foundation for full implementation. This may be by overcoming technical issues or having the right structures in place with lead people across institutions. The foundation, knowledge and skill is there to do this.

Partners overall could pay a little more attention to dissemination of their involvement in the project. The SIPP website should act as a catalyst to this. This was evident at the previous meeting as well. The dissemination input by the lead partner in Finland should help.

Partners need to keep an eye on those outputs which are imminent within the project and lead partners should give a steer on development. There are 3 to bear in mind:

- Intervention Guide
- User Manuals
- Superb Intervention Videos

These of course rely on the tools further development and intervention.



## **C2 Training Finland Analysis**

The second training course of The School Improvement Partnership Project was delivered from the 5th to the 9th November 2018 in Finland led by Sataedu with support from Learning Plus UK Data Ltd.

The course was attended by 3 Spanish delegates, 8 Czech Delegates, 2 United Kingdom delegates, 5 Irish delegates. A number of Sataedu staff attended various aspects of the activities. An additional Irish and UK delegate arrived for The Transnational Partnership meeting. In total there were 20 international delegates who attended every training session.

The external assessor attended the transnational partnership meeting, 2 days of the training and undertook a number of evaluation activities whilst present.

### **Feedback from the training.**

Two group activities were held at the end of the training to gain immediate feedback from delegates. One activity was aimed at getting participants to think beyond the technical practicalities of implementing the tool and looking at how it can be used and what are its benefits for example in addressing equality. The second activity was to gain a feel for the working of the partnership, the depth of collaboration, the atmosphere and purposefulness of the group and partners.

### **Summary**

This is a partnership that works well together. They enjoy each other's company. They are willing to learn from each other. They largely make learning enjoyable. They are very respectful of each partner contribution. This atmosphere is well nurtured by the steady and supportive leadership from the lead partner. It is a supportive environment which nurtures progress. The exceptional attendance supports this judgement and the willingness of all to contribute.

### **Conclusions**

The training certainly seemed to meet all its aims and objectives. It was very well attended as planned by project partners. The Czech partner had 8 delegates whilst both Irish schools were well represented. They hope to involve at least one more school in the further trial. The team from Xabec were in attendance, very focussed and diligent on implementation in their establishment and having given the implementation of the trial great consideration. They readily shared their experiences. They seemed further advanced than many in their thinking and very cohesive in their work. They present a very good model to all. All received certificates. All delegates were suitable and provided a range of expertise to enhance networking and stretch discussions. The counselling team from Finland has had a change in leadership in relation to the project over the last number of months. It was hard for them to get fully involved in discussions whilst arranging and implementing all the practicalities of the training week.



The teachers from Ireland and Spain, The Learning Plus UK Data Ltd staff and the mix of staff from the Czech Republic including senior leaders all combined well to provide a productive and problem solving group who participated with great enthusiasm in a relaxed and respectful environment.

**“The aim of the course is to give professionals working in schools including teachers and other staff such as careers counsellors the skills and knowledge to support students to make the right decisions on their course choice, to avoid early school leaving or indeed under achievement. The course will also acknowledge the need to and provide tools for the identification of students who may not present themselves as needing help or who are in danger of falling through the net”.**

The feedback from delegates through informal discussion, observation by the external evaluator, small workshop activity and questionnaire would largely support the judgement that the training met its aims and objectives. Most obtained a lot from it some others benefitted more from the networking and observations.

The training certainly provided an insight into the Finnish Education system in a vocational setting, it give partners the opportunity to explore further with partners glitches in the tool for their settings, ways of using it and how these can be overcome. All seemed to leave with a plan for further trials and implementation. Some had come further advanced in their thinking and trial than others and perhaps were a little frustrated that there were still some hurdles to overcome before full implementation in April 2019. The course may have benefitted from a more significant input from the Finnish partner on their experiences with the tool and opportunities for partners to examine this in more detail in situ.

The training also did some planning around future tools required to supplement the tool and the other responsibilities of partners. Many found this useful.

Most partner delegates were confident with the topic and the further implementation by the end of the training. This was quite a marked difference to where they began in March 2018.

Whilst there were obvious hurdles and trials had not been as productive as they would have liked to date these were worked through and all partners appeared equipped to move forward.

Partners are now well aware of timescales and the need for a full trial by April 2019 to fine-tune their experience to date before full implementation. They are aware of the need to start the planning around other intellectual objectives.

In the overall evaluation of the project the external evaluator has set 5 topics and it is useful to address these in relation to this training.

- Exchange of practice - are the products genuinely good practice;

**The content and delivery of the training was genuinely good practice. Delegates with a range of experience endorsed this. Some superb practice was experienced. Grade Predictor is a unique tool and the transfer of it across European national boundaries is genuinely good practice. It**

**provides significant challenges because of the education system in every country, practicalities, data availability and timing. Nevertheless partners are addressing these.**

- Transnationality - the success of transnational working and the effectiveness of partners' contributions;

**This was strong. Delegates learned from each other and shared practice. This was actually needed and helped partners move along with their trials. All were impressed by the strength of what was in place in the host country in relation to vocational education.**

-Partnership - the overall management and administration of partnership working;

**Everything ran well. The management and administration of the week was strong. This was praised by many delegates. The host partner was keen to facilitate request from staff such as a university visit.**

- Dissemination - whether partners have reached a wide audience;

**Plans are in place to do this in every country. The inputs on impact and dissemination give partners a clear steer on this.**

Valorisation - whether partnerships have achieved multiplier effects through mainstreaming activity.

**It will be interesting to gauge over the length of the project whether for example more GRETB/ UK institutions become involved or indeed more schools in Zlinsky kraj. These are just 3 examples. The embedding of the tool in the practice of individual institutions it could be argued will be a multiplier effect in itself.**

## Recommendations

1. The further trial of the tool needs to move forward to complete by April 2019.
2. The lead partner should firm up some further actions with the Finnish partner for completion of the trial.
3. Continued communication between partners is important. The lead partner should consider enabling this through perhaps a Skype meeting. The strongest part of the training was undoubtedly close collaboration between partners. This is a strong and experienced partnership which works very well together. They enjoy learning from each other. Efforts should be made to utilize this more if possible.
4. A further school should be identified in Ireland to participate in the project. This would be useful also in the promotion at a GRETB regional level.
5. Dissemination should be further implemented by partners.
6. As planned other intellectual objectives should be on the agenda in the Czech Rep transnational partnership meeting.
7. Circulate materials and presentations to partners and post on shared drive and consider posting on the website.



## TPM Czech Republic April 2019

### Progress against the Evaluation plan.

- Steering group meetings are in place and the agenda is inclusive and comprehensive.
- The website is live including newsletters. More and more information appearing. It could include materials from training and TPM's and an evaluation section
- Branding is in place which gives the project an identity
- Evaluation is ongoing with a plan and reports produced and evaluation is an agenda item at management meetings.
- An Enewsletter is in place.
- A sample of partner websites suggests that partners are aware of the need to promote the project. Newsletters appearing on many.
- Trials have taken place. Partners should compare what they have achieved to what they had planned to achieve.
- Data collection has accompanied the trials for future analysis. This will be discussed further at the TPM in Zlin
- There is evidence of supporting materials being developed and plans put in place to accompany delivery of the tool within institutions. Work is planned on
  1. -Intervention Guide
  2. -User Manuals
  3. -Superb Intervention Videos
  4. -Strategy Paper discussion planned..

## The SIP Project Transnational Meeting Evaluation Czech Rep 2019

### Introduction

The SIP Project Transnational Partnership Meeting in the Czech Rep in April 2019 was evaluated through a post event questionnaire issued to each attendee. This questionnaire aimed to elicit responses from delegates on their progress to date with trials, how comfortable they were now with their tool and how comfortable they were to proceed with full implementation.



It was composed recognising that to date there have been challenges with making the tool pertinent for each partner and with methodologies for implementation. The evaluator wanted to endeavour to make a judgement on whether these issues had been overcome and how partners felt about their progress.

Questionnaires were completed by delegates at the end of the transnational meeting. All partners were present at the meeting. One of the aims of the evaluation throughout the project is to include action research in the methodology in order to make any necessary changes for future practice and activity. This will be addressed through the findings from the meeting.

### **The Transnational Partnership Meeting**

The host partner Zlínský kraj constructed a programme. The programme was sent to all partners. This included: a visit to the employment office in Vestin, a secondary school in Otrokovice and the hosting of the TPM which included:

- Update on Grade Predictor implementation for each partner and next steps -LPUK
- I.O.4 - Update on user manual, final template review and next steps- Zlínský kraj
- I.O.2 -Create common frameworks for videos including quality assurance process - allocate tasks and agree themes amongst partners- XABEC
- I.O.3 – Strategy Paper. Create template for paper to include: structure of paper, advice on communication, organisations to target- GRETB
- I.O.5 - Grade Predictor Intervention. Review template. Draft directory to be available by September 2019- Zlínský kraj
- Evaluation feedback and next steps - Brian Martin
- Review previous minutes and actions & agree date for TM5, November 2019. Project management, admin and reporting. Recap of day and next steps. AOB- LPUK.

### **Summary**

It is fair to say that good progress was made at the TPM in the Czech Rep. The agenda certainly met the requirements of the project. Schedules were adhered to, the pace seemed right. It was a very full and comprehensive programme. Questions and discussions were encouraged. Delegates seemed to appreciate the efforts very much that the organiser made to provide an environment which was accessible and provide a good standard of accommodation and facility to meet. The meeting had a good atmosphere. Partners shared responsibilities very well and there was a warm friendly and supportive approach throughout. Partners seemed willing to express their views openly.

10 international delegates attended the transnational meeting with 2 staff present representing Zlínský kraj and the external evaluator.

Undoubtedly the meeting met the requirements of the project. In addition to progress against the intellectual objectives, the discussion around impact and the activities carried out during the trials were particularly valuable in judging a sense of project progress.



### Feedback from questionnaires

Feedback suggested that delegates felt the meeting was comprehensive and met their needs. By and large delegates appreciated the update on trials. Nearly all agreed that planning was clear and knew what was expected from them. Virtually all delegates knew how they could get further support.

Trials seem to have focussed partner's minds considerably on the value of the tool in their respective institutions. Three of the partners have implemented full trials to date whilst the Finnish partner will complete by September. The tool for Sataedu still needs further development to enable this and to give staff the confidence to fully implement it. This is not the case at present.

Whilst significant numbers have been trialled in Ireland it would be fair to judge there that there is still a little hesitancy at least in one partner school over the validity of the tool and that if this was overcome it would enable fuller ownership by all staff and give it more impact. The trials in Spain and The Czech Rep seem to have created great momentum and confidence in the use of the tool and it is encouraging to see how partners are developing different ways of using it.

### Actions

- 1. Partners have taken ownership of their respective Intellectual objectives and have shown good leadership. This is to be encouraged**
- 2. The tool needs further development quickly in Finland in order to complete trials and embark on full implementation.**
- 3. The lack of time to focus on the project was raised by one delegate. This needs raised both internally within the institution with responsible line management and also by LPUK. There should be sufficient time to complete tasks within the programme for staff delivering outputs.**
- 4. The issue of use of averages should be addressed with the Irish partner to enable full confidence by staff there.**
- 5. The targets in the evaluation plan for trial and implementation need checked against the new contracts following the withdrawal of Capademy.**
- 6. The evaluator will issue new spreadsheets to record data for implementation from September 2019. Partners should continue to populate the spreadsheets as full as possible for the trials.**

### Conclusion

The meeting achieved well its purpose. Plans have been made for further developments. The trials have taken place and good numbers for student involvement have been achieved. There is still work



to do with one partner to bring them up to speed with the rest. Importantly also partners should now begin to think about impact and what is the raison d'être of the tool. This is important for further implementation and succession beyond the end of the project.

### Overall conclusion

The project is now increasing momentum. Partners have undertaken trials, collected data, identified target groups, developed some support materials, briefed staff and disseminated where appropriate. Intellectual objectives are being addressed through the leadership of individual partners.

Full implementation of tools are commencing. The November 2019 TPM will provide an opportunity to assess progress with partners in relation to full implementation and whether challenges with the Finnish tool have been addressed successfully. It will also be an opportunity to assess progress on intellectual objectives.

The partnership seems well on schedule to achieve its plans.

**B Martin**

**External Evaluator**

**06/08/2019**

### **Case Study Example**

#### **The SIPP Project**

	<b><u>Narrative</u></b>
<b><i>1. Name of Institution and Website</i></b>	Střední škola hotelová a služeb Kroměříž Secondary School of Hotel Industry and Services Kroměříž <a href="http://www.hskm.cz/en">www.hskm.cz/en</a>



**2. Background**

School established on the 1/9/2002 by joining two schools – Secondary Vocational School Pavlákova and Agricultural Apprentice Training Centre Na Lindovce.

The school is well-known for high quality tuition and training in departments specializing in catering, gastronomy and in services connected with the hotel and tourism industry. The Agricultural Training Centre has a good reputation too.

The school is well equipped for teaching both academic and vocational subjects. The students are taught and trained by qualified and experienced teachers who are

specialists in their fields.

Part of the school premises is the Hubert Centre with stables and horse training tracks, gardener's workshops including a shop selling students' products. The school has its own bakery and confectioner's workshop. Students get practical training both at home and abroad as the school is involved in a number of Erasmus+ projects.

The school has a student hostel/- dormitory, which is the largest in the Zlín region.

Students take part in various competitions at school, regional, national, and international level and they have often reached very good positions in competitions.

The school organize student activities abroad through EU programmes such as LLP and Erasmus+. Links and exchanges with a French Hotel School in Arcachon and a Polish Hotel School in Wodzislav. Links have also been established to enable students' summer practical training in Portugal, Spain, Germany and Croatia.

The school is a member of many national professional organizations, e.g.:

the National Federation of Hotels and Restaurants in the Czech Rep

the Association of Cooks and Confectioners in the Czech Rep

the Association of Travel Agencies

the Union of confectioners of the Czech Rep

the Entrepreneurial Union of bakers and Confectioners of the Czech Rep

The Business Chamber and others.



**3. Type of course offered and age range**

The school offer a wide range of courses in hotel services, gastronomy and agriculture including equine courses for students aged 15 - 19.

**4-year courses:**

- hotel industry and tourism
- waiter/waitress
- cook

**2- year higher education courses:**

- entrepreneurship in technical jobs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• entrepreneurship in the areas of business and services.</li> </ul> <p><b>3-year apprentice training courses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• bakery</li> <li>• confectionery</li> <li>• waiter/waitress</li> <li>• cook</li> <li>• horse breeding and jockey training</li> <li>• gardening</li> <li>• sales assistant</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Dropout and NEET figures</b></p>	<p>The school work hard to avoid dropout. It is a vocational institution so many of the students will have made decisions on career choices before arrival. They also receive students from other schools in the locality.</p> <p>A high number of students live in school dormitories during the week and this in itself can be a challenge to a young person.</p>
<p><b>5. What personal skills do you need to succeed in your role?</b></p>	<p>Grade predictor is led in the school through a teacher who also acts as a counsellor.</p> <p>This enables students to benefit from a tailored intervention once Grade Predictor flags up any difficulties for them. It also means that they can discuss further support they may have if they are under achieving or perhaps suited to other activities.</p>

<p><b>6. How was SIPP implemented?</b></p>	<p>The trial of the Grade Predictor tool has been implemented through targeting particular courses: waiting/waitressing and catering. 65 students have been involved, 25 on the waiting course and 45 catering students.</p> <p>Students have all had the opportunity to meet with a counsellor once a term or they can be referred to one through a teacher.</p> <p>There have been two impacts on students</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. An awareness of how they were achieving</li><li>2. A motivation to change and improve</li></ol> <p>A number have had counselling on issues they were facing, others were directed for example to study improvement courses.</p> <p>The school through support services works intensely to keep students in the school.</p> <p>The school are very positive about Grade Predictor. All staff have received inputs on the training which was delivered through the Erasmus + programme</p>