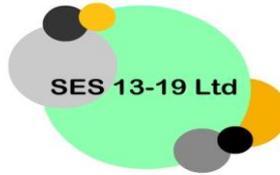# The SIPP Training 5-9th November 2018 – External Evaluation Report

Introduction

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. All delegates and the event co-ordinators facilitated these in the schedule and cooperated fully. Particular thanks must go to the course directors for this including KK and NH from Sataedu and staff at Learning Plus UK Data Ltd including JMcL and SP, who were all involved in aspects of planning the training schedule.

The C2 training event delivered as part of the SIP Project was evaluated through the following methods:

- A pre training questionnaire completed by delegates analysing their expertise and requirements. This was completed by 1 UK, 3 Spanish and 8 Czech delegates.There was no requirement on the host organisation to complete this questionnaire
- An activity gaining feedback from all delegates on their views on the benefits of using the tool in their institution.
- A detailled post training questionnaire aimed at judging the impact of the training for individuals.
- A short activity gaining feedback on how the partners work together.
- An action plan incorporated into the post training questionnaire aimed at recording individual and institution actions to use the training and expertise developed during the 30 hour course.This record of committments should be used by the partners to track activities within their institutional delivery and by the evaluator on a sampling basis to look at the impact of the overall programme. All questionnaires were collected by the external evaluator and will be used to monitor progress.
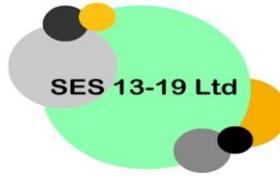
Background

The description of the training as outlined in the project submission is as follows:

A 5 day course in November 2018 delivered by Sataedu supported by LPUK Data Ltd with an input from a small number of skilled teachers from the UK.

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 course will be a 30 hour course including the following topics:

An introduction to the Revised Grade Predictor Tool for each partner country

The experience to date of using the tool.

Changes to be implemented

Best Practice-A sharing of experience from across Europe

The importance of data to address Early School Leaving and Achievement

Case studies and trial sessions.

A one day´ observation across departments within Sataedu, the Satakunta Educational Federation.

Use of the Intervention Directory

Superb Intervention Videos-Case Studies

Two workshops on interventions to accompany the Grade Predictor Tool including visits to institutions.

Participants will visit at least 2 departments where Grade Predictor is used meeting staff and students.

The course will be delivered by a range of staff at Sataedu and led by MK. It will include observation/shadowing/lecture/workshop/discussion and other methods. It will include short

placements in departments and other centres to observe and work shadow practice. It will include pre and post course materials and additional resources will be available on line.

LPUK Data Ltd and Sataedu staff will be available to mentor staff afterwards as they replicate their training in practice and with colleagues. This will be through a helpline established by LPUK Data Ltd and email/skype.

All training will be interactive and afford those attending the opportunity to experience what works well in other countries and gain the background knowledge and experience as to how this happens. It is expected that staff will replicate these techniques in their own educational settings and an action plan will be developed by individuals at the end of the training to support this action.

The Expertise and Experience of delegates

All delegates were asked to complete a pre-training questionnaire for the trainers to gauge the level of expertise of delegates, to endeavour to address specific requirements and to provide a course which delegates would find pertinent and something that they could learn from and replicate.

Delegates were asked to respond to a range of questions.

Here a short summary is provided of the pre training questionnaires received:

UK

To learn about education in Finland.

To fine tune each partner tool through learning from experience to date.

To ensure all understand the tasks ahead in the next 6 months.

Spain

To share experience of the tool in Spain and discuss how students can benefit.

To learn from partners.

To sample education in Finland.

To learn more about the famous and prestigious Finnish educational system.

To find out how personal guidance is delivered in Finland.

To resolve how to use the tool in Spain.

To strengthen the user manual.

To improve the tool and manage special situations such as drop out.

Czech Republic

To learn about the Finnish Education system
To work with the tool.
To exchange experiences.
"Finnish education and its pupils achieve excellent results in international comparisons. The Zlín Region and its pupils are at the forefront of the Czech Republic compared to the Czech Republic, It will be an interesting mutual exchange of experience".
To evaluate the first Czech Republic sample of the grade predictor tool.
"I will compare my knowledge of students and counsellor´s work with knowledge of other teachers".
"I expect to gain a new view of the problems of the students during the training and I am satisfied with your choice of institution".
"I expect to understand better Grade Predictor and its using in different countries, under different condition".

"My key objective is to get oriented in the grade predictor online version because we have been facing some technical issues".

To visit Sataedu premises and learn about their tools and interventions related to early dropouts prevention.

To obtain the most up to date information in the field.
To find out how to protect students from leaving secondary school studies prematurely.

To discover examples of prevention from a similar kind of school.

To find out how to work with grade predictor in my school.

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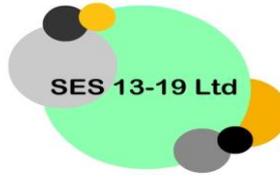
Overall Summary

The questionnaires portray generally a picture of partners wanting to learn from each other, share experiences and also learn from the Finnish Education system.

They have been collecting data and begun to build and implement grade predictor tools for their own country. They want to overcome perceived glitches, to learn from others experiences and to do this whilst also learning about education and practice in Finland and the host institution. There is a real thirst for knowledge and continual improvement.

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.

The First Activity

The evaluator asked delegates to respond to 3 statements stating whether they agreed, were not sure or disagreed.

The purpose of this activity was to generate discussion on the use of the tool beyond implementation to look at the concepts behind its use.

1. I believe that a school will have more young women choosing to do science subjects in their final years of study as a result of using grade predictor.
2. I believe that our institution will have more students progressing into university as a result of grade predictor
3. It will be very easy to persuade my colleagues in my establishment to use the tool. Staff such as careers counsellors will be very keen.

Here is a synopsis of responses from delegates:
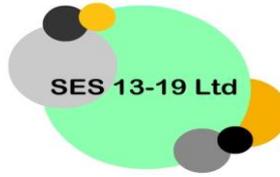
First Statement

A few felt that if this read physics or possibly maths then they could support this statement. There was a consensus that the tool could have an impact on subject choice, that on occasions this may have an equality dimension to it. Delegates felt that it could certainly encourage students to think about subjects they may not have considered and these may be non traditional to their gender.

Second Statement

This generated a great debate. A number of statements were made outlining the inspirational value of the tool, the ability of it to show potential, to encourage students and to be a motivator.

In other countries University is over subscribed and a large number of delegates saw the tool as a catalyst into appropriate vocational training and employment. The tool could help individuals get the right job.

Third Statement

In 2 institutions, one in Ireland and Xabec it was reported that all staff have been met with and are on board.

In other institutions there are potential issues, staff who have been operating well for years, who may be reluctant to change.

The issue of the tool using averages was raised in terms of accuracy and inspirational value for the most able students. Discussion took place on the use of percentiles to address this.

It was recognised that change was not always easy.

The Second Activity

Partnership Working

"You are leaving Pori. You are going home. You look back one last time and think about what you have learned this week or enjoyed".
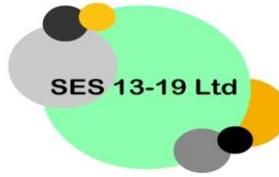
What springs to your mind?

Sataedu visits

Good organisation by hosts

The weather

The efforts of the organisers and all contributors

The sauna

The landscape

The great atmosphere, the fun while learning

The spirit of helpfulness

Sharing ideas

Finnish education and its significant resourcing

The group cohesiveness.

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.

Post Training Evaluation Reports

20 delegates returned an individual detailed post training evaluation report. Within the report a question asking delegates what there next steps were. This acted as an action plan and each delegate was asked to focus an amount of time on this question.

The post training evaluation report aimed to give delegates the chance to state how they felt about the training delivery and content and whether it had impacted on their knowledge and skills to implement developments in the future. The results are as follows:
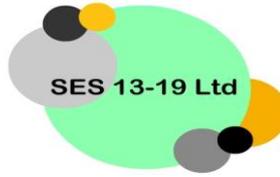
> **The objectives of the training were clearly defined.**
>
> Strongly Agree - Agree - Neutral - Disagree - Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree-6

Agree-11

Neutral-3

Summary

This is a positive endorsement of the training purpose having been communicated well.

The materials distributed were helpful.
Strongly Agree - Agree - Neutral - Disagree - Strongly Disagree

Strongly agree-5

Agree-10

Neutral-3

Disagree-1

1 delegate stated that no materials were distributed.

Summary

Most delegates were happy with this aspect. Not many materials were distributed. A programme was available electronically and there were some presentations which one would expect to be circulated to all delegates. There was much observation and discussion through workshops.

The content was organized and easy to follow.
Strongly Agree - Agree - Neutral - Disagree - Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree-8
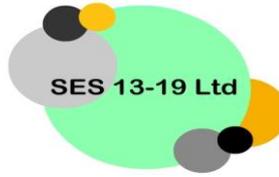
Agree-7

Neutral-4

Disagree-1

Summary

Whilst most delegates were happy with the training content and techniques 25% were either neutral or dissatisfied. This suggests that perhaps there was some different expertise and expectations within the group.

Overall the training was highly effective.
Strongly Agree - Agree - Neutral - Disagree - Strongly Disagree

Strongly agree-5

Agree-10

Neutral-4

Disagree-1

Summary

Again we have a 25%either neutral or dissatisfied. This begins to suggest that whilst the training met the needs of the majority it found it hard to embrace all.

This training experience will be useful in my contribution the implementation of the use of grade predictor in my institution.

Strongly Agree - Agree - Neutral - Disagree - Strongly Disagree

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Strongly Agree- 6

Agree-10

Neutral 3

Disagree- 1

Summary

Again there is a dichotomy of views with a small number feeling the training perhaps was not meeting their expectations.

My expectations were fulfilled.

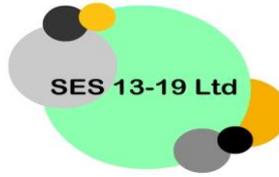Strongly Agree - Agree - Neutral - Disagree - Strongly Disagree

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Strongly Agree-8

Agree-7

Neutral-5

Summary

Expectations were largely fulfilled.

What did you most like about the training?

- Sharing with partners
- Learning about student experiences
- Workshop visits
- Some of the educational discussions about how education is managed in different countries
- Observing vocational schools
- Opportunity to refine the tool for Ireland
- Discussion about early school leaving
- Discussion on the concrete aims and goals of this project
- Learning about changes in the tool that are required
- Visiting Finnish establishments
- Solving difficulties of implementation
- The conversation on our tool (Czech Rep)
- Meeting partners and finding out about their progress
- Discussion the tool, education and counselling
- Clarifications provided on using the tool
- The metalwork workshop

Results

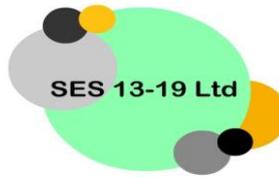| How would you rate your current understanding of the training topic? (1 novice - 5 expert) |
| --- |
| $1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5$ |

5-3

4-14

3-2

2-1

Summary

This was the second training course and therefore one would really hope for most delegates to have a high understanding. This was largely borne out. The 2 was recorded by a delegate who was new to the topic. It is a complex topic to pick up and a 2 is an understandable return. Other delegates from the same country balanced this with a high understanding, one recording a 5.

How were your skills and knowledge enhanced?

- I have new ideas for support at the school and I need to remember to do these.
- A better understanding of Grade Predictor
- Through Grade Predictor discussions.
- I have a better understanding of what is required from the tool by different partners
- I have developed a clearer idea of the issues facing us with the tool, the ways to overcome these and how to proceed with implementation
- Obtained an understanding of partner exam systems
- We have refined our tool and have a clear idea about outputs
- Obtained more knowledge on the tool. We have shared experience and suggested changes for example on the appearance of the tool
- The workshops visited give me ideas on how to enrich and increase creativity in my workshops for both students and teachers
- I obtained increased knowledge on dissemination and use of websites, logo's
- Understood how to use grade predictor in school life
- Witnessed how partners installed their tool
- Improved my knowledge on Finnish education particularly technical education
- Developed a better understanding of the tool
- Developed better knowledge on dissemination and what we need to do on the user guide
- Improved through experiences from other schools
- Improved knowledge on how to use the tool in our school
- Observing the use of Grade Predictor in other schools was beneficial.

Summary

All delegates reported something in this section largely reflecting their ability now to understand how the Grade Predictor tool works and how they might adapt it to their own institution and practice. Some commented on other aspects of the project such as dissemination, impact and the user guide. A few commented on wider learning from the training such as an understanding of the Finnish education system and using ideas from workshop visits to enhance practice in their own school. By and large delegates however focussed on the understanding of the tool and how they can implement it. They were very focussed on this.

It was apparent that the trials that had taken place had not fully resolved issues in terms of full implementation. That technical issues or a lack of local coordination for example had got in the way of full implementation.

The discussions amongst partners seemed to give them the confidence to now complete trials and move towards full implementation in April 2019 onwards.

The most interesting thing you learnt.

- The use of grade predictor in other schools
- Impact and dissemination was very good
- Girls in technical fields
- Independence of students
- The range off facilities in Sataedu
- The Finnish Education system
- How to disseminate locally, regionally, nationally and internationally
- How to compile the user guide
- The tool is a possibility to start dialogue between educationalist and teacher
- The differences between school systems. Some findings are inspiring
- Our school system should be changed in the field of counselling
- The Finnish Vocational Education system
- How Grade Predictor is used in different countries
- How dissemination has to happen
- The perception of the tool from other countries. This has definitely been the best
- Different approaches to education and the similarities between partner countries
- How the tool is used in different situations in different countries
- The detailed insight of the Finnish school system
- Vocational education resources available in Finland and the amount of students who chose this path
- The provision of free lunches for students
- Schools and teachers are doing a great job and we have a lot of commonality.

Summary

Delegates learnt a lot about the use of Grade Predictor and in what circumstances from partners. Much more was gleaned however about vocational education in Finland, about participation in vocational courses by young women, about free lunches for students. Interestingly one delegate was so inspired that they wanted to change counselling systems in their own school.

Actions

Did the training inspire you to do something new in your daily work? What are you going to implement and how?

Czech Rep

- To look at the role of the school counsellor in my school
- We need to collect more data for implementation
- To encourage my students more. To get student and parent feedback. To maintain communication with partners.
- I will support the introduction of the tool
- I will implement Grade Predictor and also I would like to implement other features of the Finnish Education system.
- I hope to use with appropriate students
- The training inspired me. I will implement with students to motivate them to achieve higher exam results.

Ireland

- Still a little bit unsure of the tool's accuracy but can see its possibilities in certain circumstances
- We will use the tool to help students with their subject choices for the senior cycle
- Disseminate to staff how the tool can improve student's subject choice and motivation
- The training inspired me. I am going to implement training and education of staff and conduct trials
- Implement discussions around subject choice and pathways
- Use with correct guidance.

UK

- Implement the updates and requests from partners in order to have an improved and revised tool in each country.
- Implement changes to each partner tool.

Spain

- Including the tool in monitoring activities
- Using the tool at the beginning of the school course
- Include the tool in personal development plan. We are sure the tool will improve this plan.
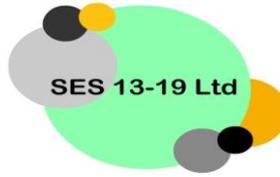
Finland

Only one Finnish representative was present for the evaluation activities. Actions need to be firmed up on next steps for Sataedu.

Summary

Many were inspired or developed ideas from the practice of others. It appears all have plans on a partner basis to be able to move further forward with trials, obtaining the right data and identifying cohorts of students.

The Finnish partner did not have enough representation on the final day due to understandable circumstances. A discussion needs to take place here between the lead organisation and Sataedu in relation to future actions.

What other topics did you learn about that might help you to do your job better?

- Facilities in Finland
- Team working
- Training methodologies
- The value of Grade Predictor
- Class sizes
- Jan Mclucas is inspiring. She is organised, clear , inclusive and supportive
- I learnt a lot. Thank you
- How to look at my work in another way
- Early school leaving
- Other uses of Grade Predictor
- Teaching Practices
- Approaches to learning
- Use of the tool as a motivator
- Finnish Vocational Education and how students select courses.

Summary

Undoubtedly the insights provided by Sataedu into Finnish Vocational Education were popular. Others gained knowledge on the general approach to education in Finland.

Partners learnt from observation including learning around pedagogy, from working together, from the project leadership. Whilst the learning from the week was very much centered on the Grade Predictor tool there was much more learning by colleagues. The Finnish vocational Education system obviously impressed but it was the subtleties that seemed to have an impact, free lunches for students, small class sizes, girls in non traditional work, subject choices by
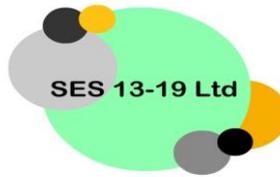
students and so forth. Resourcing was impressive for many. A number of delegates hope to be able to transfer some of this learning to their own place of work.

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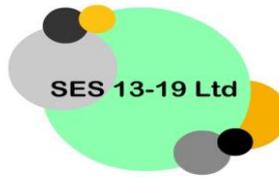
Most partner delegates were confident with the topic and the further implementation by the end of the training. This was quite a marked difference to where they began in March 2018.

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.
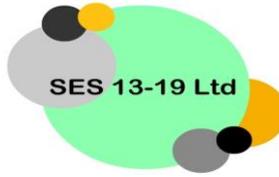
Recommendations

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.

Brian Martin on behalf of SES13-19 Ltd

14/11/2018