The School Improvement Partnership Project Evaluation Report November 2018

Introduction

The evaluation plan aims to evaluate the Erasmus+ project led by Learning Plus UK and involving Zlinsky kraj, GRETB, CENTRO DE FORMACION PROFESIONAL XABEC and Sataedu.

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.

This report provides an update on the evaluation of the project for the Transnational Management Meeting in March 2018.

Progress to date

External evaluation has taken place largely 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.
- Meeting with the lead dissemination partner to prepare an input into the C2 event.
- Creation of 3 case studies from institutional visits which can be used to showcase activity on the website and evidence the work taking place.

The project should now be increasing momentum. Partners shouldd have collected data, identified target groups, commenced trials , developed some support materials, briefed staff and disseminated where appropriate. The November 2018 training and management meeting should be an opportunity to iron out glitches, to renergize participants (it has been a long time from the March training in the UK) and prepare for a full implementation of a national tool from April 2019 onwards. Partners need to share each others experiences and feel part of a team working together and learning from each other. This partnership has the ability to do this.

C1 Training –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.

The analysis of pre training questionnaires for November 2018-

A short summary is provided of questionnaires received and what are the hopes and expectations of delegates:

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 is personal guidance 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 exchang 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 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 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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Progress against the Evaluation plan.

- 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 neccessary 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 structiral issues.

- There is evidence of supporting materials being developed to accompany delivery of the tool within institutions.
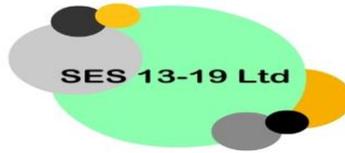
The Way Forward

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.
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B Martin 29/10/2018