



Erasmus+



# The School Improvement Partnership Project External Evaluation 2017- 2020

---

B Martin 03/08/2020



**Erasmus+**



 **SIPP**  
School Improvement  
Partnership Project

- 1. Background**
- 2. Methodology**
- 3. The Evaluation Plan**
- 4. Transnational partnership meetings**
- 5. Transnational partnership purpose**
- 6. TPM 1**
- 7. Summary**
- 8. Feedback from questionnaires**
- 9. TPM 4**
- 10. Summary**
- 11. Feedback from questionnaires**
- 12. TPM 5**
- 13. Summary**
- 14. Feedback from questionnaires**
- 15. TPM 3**
- 16. Recommendations**
- 17. Learning/Teaching/Training/Activities**
- 18. The SIPP Project C1 Training**
- 19. The SIPP Project C2 Training**
- 20. The Grade Predictor trial across Europe including comparisons with placebo groups**
- 21. Full implementation of Grade Predictor Tools**
- 22. SIPP Intervention Manuals**
- 23. SIPP User Manuals**
- 24. SIPP Superb Intervention Video's**
- 25. Strategy Papers**
- 26. Overall findings from the project**



## 1. Background

The lead partner in The School Improvement Partnership Project (SIPP) Learning Plus UK Data Ltd (LPUK) appointed SES13-19 Ltd as the external evaluator for the project. SES 13-19 Ltd had considerable experience of both internal and external evaluation of Erasmus Plus projects involving numerous partnerships. They offered an action research approach to the evaluation and also that of a critical friend. Numerous evaluation methodologies were used during the 3 years of the project and the evaluator aimed to offer a constant and consistent advisory role to the lead partner and all partners. This report is a summary in essence of all the evaluation conducted throughout the duration of the project. Full reports for individual aspects of the project are available on the SIPP Project website <https://schoolimprovementpartnershipproject.com/impact/>

Whilst virtually all aspects of the project have been delivered and evaluated the analysis of the full implementation of the Grade Predictor tool has been impacted on due to the Covid 19 pandemic interrupting this aspect of the project. The project has not been able to proceed with the full implementation of the tool in two of the partner countries and has not been able to analyse fully its impact with young people due to institutional closures. However 3 partners were able to make considerable progress with this and an analysis of their work is included. The pandemic also resulted in the cancellation of 2 transnational partnership meetings and the final multiplier event. To compensate for this the external evaluator implemented separate surveys with partners in order to evaluate the Superb Video's produced, the Grade Predictor manual and the impact of the implementation phase on institutions all aspects of evaluation which would have been covered through Transnational Partnership meetings and the multiplier event.

Therefore this report aims to bring together an evaluation of the full work of the partnership in order to make judgements on 5 topics that the external evaluator aimed to assess the work of the partnership on. These 5 topics are:

- Exchange of practice - are the products genuinely good practice;
- Transnationality - the success of transnational working and the effectiveness of partners' contributions;
- Partnership - the overall management and administration of partnership working;
- Dissemination - whether partners have reached a wide audience;
- Valorisation - whether partnerships have achieved multiplier effects through mainstreaming activity.

Throughout this report the evaluator will return to these topics to judge the project and indeed partner effectiveness and impact. In addition the evaluator will judge whether the Grade Predictor tool and associated activities addresses and contributes to the EU 2020 targets of reducing the rates of early school leaving below 10%.

## 2. Methodology

The external evaluator used a range of evaluation tools in their work. The mainstay of this was the production of an evaluation plan which outlined methodologies, timescales and impacts. The main methods of evaluation used were:

- Attendance and reports at all Transnational Partnership Meetings (TPM's) by the external evaluator,



**Erasmus+**



**SIPP**  
School Improvement  
Partnership Project

- Reporting on TPM's and training events based on pre and post event questionnaires, interactive workshops and activities with delegates,
- Surveys,
- Focus group activity,
- Meetings with senior leaders and visits to institutions separate to project activities,
- Observations at training events,
- Analysis of outputs in relation to other Erasmus plus projects,
- 3 case studies,
- Data collection and analysis,
- Use of RAG( Red/Amber/Green) rating approaches in relation to Intellectual objectives,
- Action research,
- Contributions to E Newsletters.

### **3. The Evaluation Plan**

The evaluation plan provided the mainstay of both the internal and external evaluation. It gave all partners a direction of travel and a constant reminder to continually evaluate, meet timescales and assess impact. It was devised by the external evaluator and was agreed by all partners. It was updated regularly and was reported on at all Transnational Partnership meetings.

This plan aimed to evaluate the Erasmus Plus project led by Learning Plus UK Data Ltd and involving Zlinsky kraj, GRETB, CENTRO DE FORMACION PROFESIONAL XABEC and Sataedu.

The ultimate aim of the evaluation was to inform how the project 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.

#### **The Evaluation Plan objectives were:**

Quality assurance would take place throughout the project, following an action research methodology which would allow for modifications to be made to delivery if quality assurance deemed it to be necessary. LPUK would lead on internal evaluation.

SES13-19 Ltd delivered quality assurance through a plan involving all partners and participants.

The plan included the following:

- A detailed quality assurance plan that identified at the outset the common accreditation and quality standards that each partner worked to.
- A plan including dates, activities, measureable impacts and performance indicators.
- A RAG rating (Red/Amber/Green) to show which tasks are on task and which need improved.
- Nominated Leads.
- Quality Assurance on every Steering Committee agenda.



Erasmus+



 SIPP  
School Improvement  
Partnership Project

- Pre-activity questionnaires/end of event questionnaires.
- Focus groups.
- 2 case studies.
- Analysis of:
  1. The Grade Predictor Tool's impact across partners
  2. The accompanying manual
  3. Video case studies
  4. Resource guides
- Training Activities targeting participants at conferences.
- Planning meetings.
- Participation of all 5 partners.
- Quality reports at Steering Committee meetings.
- Outcomes and recommendations agreed at Steering Committee meetings.
- E Newsletter updates.
- Report on efficiency against the SIPP Project's aims and objectives, measuring the impact and effectiveness of the project.

The evaluation plan required regular monitoring. Interim reports were to be notified to all partners on progress. The formal evaluation would take place at Transnational Partnership meetings including internal and external evaluation.

**The plan aimed to:**

1. Assess Impact. The impacts to be measured included:
  - Staff upskilling,
  - Pupil achievement,
  - Improved attainment in schools,
  - Enriched curriculum,
  - Sharing of good practice,
  - New partnerships,
2. Ensure management is robust,
3. Ensure full partner involvement,



Erasmus+



**SIPP**  
School Improvement  
Partnership Project

4. Contribute to meeting timescales,
5. Evaluate 5 intellectual outputs:
  - The Grade Predictor Tool- A tool developed specifically for use in each country which has been trialed and then adjusted and implemented in the participating schools/organisations.
  - Teacher/ Other Professional Training Activities - one in the UK led and delivered by LPUK and one in Finland led by Sataedu with the support of LPUK.
  - A detailed manual for staff in schools to use the Grade Predictor Tool.
  - The production of a resource directory aimed at sharing best practice in successful interventions and methodologies to realise the full potential of students and impact on dropout and achievement.
  - Superb intervention case studies.
  - A Strategy Paper produced in each partner country.
6. Evaluate 2 training events.
7. Evaluate 1 multiplier event.
8. Evaluate The SIPP Website- A website will be produced to host all materials and methodologies as well as a demonstration tool.

A copy of the plan is available on the project website. An evaluation report accompanying an updated plan was sent to each partner in advance of all TPMs and discussed as part of the meeting. The plan contributed considerably to the project remaining on course in terms of delivery of training and Intellectual objectives and the Lead Partner incorporated a RAG rating approach into their own internal evaluation.

Action research was embedded within the project and examples are evident of Intellectual outputs being revised on the recommendations of the external evaluation.

#### **4. Transnational Partnership Meetings**

#### **5. Transnational Meeting Purpose- Project Proposal**

"There will be 7 transnational meetings of the Partnership steering group. The project manager and project co-ordinator will always be in attendance as will lead co-ordinators from each partner and a school/departmental representative. The Project Manager will sit on the Steering Group overseeing progress in completion of tasks LPUK will liaise with each partner to confirm their representatives for the Partnership Steering Group.

An agenda supported with relevant documentation will be produced for each meeting and sent to partners at least 2 weeks in advance. Partners will be asked to lead discussion at each meeting on their lead areas of responsibility and their progress to date at a national level as appropriate. The



Erasmus+



**SIPP**  
School Improvement  
Partnership Project

agenda for each meeting will always include dissemination, exploitation and sustainability; quality assurance; possibilities of roll out at national level; updates and progress to date on work/tasks, and finance and administration.

Partners will sign attendance sheets at each meeting, for each day of the meeting. Minutes of the meetings with a summary of action points and deadlines for action will be circulated within 2 weeks following the meeting. Partners will be given one week to respond to these with amendments, clarifications / corrections to detail. The final versions of minutes and actions will be sent out within one month of the meeting taking place. The host organisation will be responsible for supporting partners in their travel arrangements, accommodation and with meal arrangements. These will be sent to the project co-coordinator 4 months in advance to ensure the cheapest travel arrangements can be made.”

5 TPMs were held with 2 cancelled due to the pandemic although a virtual meeting using Zoom was held to cover the agenda for the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting scheduled to be hosted at Xabec and the seventh meeting scheduled to coincide with the multiplier event in Galway.

TPMs were evaluated typically through pre and post event questionnaire and through activities led by the external evaluator during the meeting. 2 TPM's coincided with C1 and C2 training events. Significant evaluation took place during these training events and in order to make the evaluation as seamless as possible the external evaluator incorporated recommendations from the TPM and training into the training reports. An example of this is the set of recommendations at the end of the C2 report which are included later in this report.

An evaluation report was circulated at all TPM's before meetings accompanied with an updated evaluation plan. The external evaluator was provided with an agenda slot at each meeting and training event to report on evaluation and run/deliver evaluation activities. Meetings reflected fully the project proposal description and were extremely well organised and run.

**Full reports on individual TPMs are available on the project website. Here are sample summaries and feedback to provide an insight into their effectiveness and impact.**

## 6. TPM 1

### 7. Summary

9 international delegates attended the transnational meeting with 5 staff present from LPUK and the external evaluator.

The host organisation delivered a programme that was purposeful and which was thought provoking there were no criticisms of the programme. The atmosphere was excellent, warm and embracing with all delegates able to make contributions and with all included in the programme. The preparation of all the staff at LPUK was exemplary and augers well for the remainder of the programme. There was a genuine openness and willingness to learn from each other.

Undoubtedly the meeting 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.

## **8. Feedback from questionnaires**

Feedback suggested that delegates felt the meeting was comprehensive and met their needs. It appears that the complexity of the topic meant that most arrived without a clear picture of how the project might work in their institution. Undoubtedly the project brings specialist knowledge and uniqueness which will take partners a little time to feel comfortable with. Nonetheless all left with confidence and a plan for implementation. All knew what they would do next. Institutions were comfortable to point out areas they may need a little more help with in terms of data collection and general support. This is to be expected. Delegates seem to particularly value the one to one sessions with the lead partner as a way of discussing issues peculiar to their own institution.

## **9. TPM 4**

### **10. 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.

### **11. 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



Erasmus+



**SIPP**  
School Improvement  
Partnership Project

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.

## 12. TPM 5

### **13. Summary**

It is fair to say that very good progress was made at the TPM in Ireland. The agenda certainly met the requirements of the project. Schedules were adhered to, the pace seemed right. It was a programme which enabled partners to report on their responsibilities and get buy in from others to meet schedules. Difficulties and challenges were overcome collectively. Questions and discussions were encouraged by the chair and those responsible for Intellectual Objectives and the Multiplier Event. 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 including refreshments, transport arrangements and a visit to Galway Technical Institute. 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.

6 international delegates attended the transnational meeting with 6 staff present representing GRETB and the external evaluator in attendance.

Undoubtedly the meeting met the requirements of the project. In addition to progress against the intellectual objectives, the discussion around impact of trials and schedules for implementation of the tool were particularly valuable in judging a sense of project progress.

## **14. Feedback from questionnaires**

Feedback suggested that delegates felt the meeting was comprehensive and met their needs. Delegates appreciated updates from partners. All agreed that planning was clear and knew what was expected from them. All delegates knew how they could get further support.

Partners seem largely to recognise how the tool can benefit teachers and students addressing underachievement, dropout and issues of equality. A number of partners see great potential in their institution and country whilst in Ireland the tool would benefit from greater availability of data particularly where results can be skewed by relying on data from high achieving schools. This would make the tool more effective there.

Partners are implementing in different ways and this is both to be encouraged and valued. Both Xabec and Sataedu have models which involve a close dialogue with students.

## 15. TPM 3

For those TPM meetings coinciding with training events evaluation was incorporated into the full event reports. Here is an example of the recommendations from TPM3.



Erasmus+



**SIPP**  
School Improvement  
Partnership Project

## **16. Recommendations from TPM 3 which coincided with the C2 training at Sataedu**

- The further trial of the tool needs to move forward to complete by April 2019. The lead partner should firm up some further actions with the Finnish partner for completion of the trial.
- 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.
- 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.
- Dissemination should be further implemented by partners.
- As planned other intellectual objectives should be on the agenda in the Czech Rep transnational partnership meeting.
- Circulate materials and presentations to partners and post on shared drive and consider posting on the website.

## **17. Learning/Teaching/Training Activities**

### **18. The SIPP Project C1 Training**

**This is a copy of sections of the Evaluation report from C1 training;**

The SIP Projects first training course was delivered from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2018 in Maidenhead in the UK by LPUK.

The course was attended by 3 Spanish delegates, 6 Czech Delegates, 5 Finnish delegates and 4 teachers including a head teacher from 2 Irish schools. There were 18 delegates in total.

The external assessor attended 3 days of the training and undertook a number of evaluation activities whilst present. All delegates and the event co-ordinators facilitated these seamlessly in the schedule and cooperated fully. Particular thanks must go to the course director for this Jan McLucas and other staff at LPUK including Donna Roberts, Sue Peck, Jess Webb and Chris Fort who were all involved in aspects of the training.

The LPUK 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. 3 Finnish delegates completed this together, 1 individually, 3 Irish delegates completed returns along with 3 Spanish and 6 Czech.
- An activity gaining immediate feedback from all delegates on the course.
- A detailed post training questionnaire aimed at judging the impact of the training for individuals.
- An action plan aimed at recording individual and institution plans to use the training and expertise developed during the 30 hour course. The action plan will 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. The action plans were gathered by Learning Plus UK Ltd and will be used to monitor progress.

## Background

LPUK were tasked with delivering a 5-day course in March 2018. They developed the Grade Predictor tool in the UK. They have significant experience in the training of teachers and other staff in education settings around the use of data and tools to measure and improve performance. They bring a meticulous and analytical approach to their training and the use of data.

The aim of the course as described in the project submission was to prepare staff to trial the grade predictor tool in their own country and institution/s.

## Aim

The aim of the course was 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 would 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 aimed to provide 30-hours of delivery including the following topics:

- An introduction to the Trial Grade Predictor Tool
- How Grade Predictor works. The methodology. The Validity.
- The importance of data to address Early School Leaving and Achievement
- A day of case studies and trying it yourself.
- A one day' observation in a school where Grade Predictor is used.
- Two workshops on interventions to accompany the Grade Predictor Tool including visits to institutions.
- Participants to visit at least 2 schools where Grade Predictor is used meeting staff and students.

It was recognised that across Europe it is not just teachers who are involved in work with students who are making decisions on courses, who are potentially liable to dropout or who are underachieving and also similarly that not all interventions which are successful happen in the classroom. Therefore a range of staff were involved in the training including senior staff, those involved in staff development and teachers/counsellors in secondary schools/ colleges and the Labour Market office in Vsetin in the Czech Republic. The training was carried out through observation/lecture/workshop/discussion and other methods. The event was certificated by Learning Plus UK Data Ltd.

Delegates had the opportunity to experience what worked well and gain background knowledge and experience as to how this happens in order that they are equipped to replicate these techniques in their own educational settings.

The training aimed to provide examples of excellence but also challenge the practice and approaches of participants. It aimed to provide innovation captured from the UK and showcase excellence.



Erasmus+



**SIPP**  
School Improvement  
Partnership Project

It was expected that training activities would inspire, up skill and provide resources and techniques which participants can use in their own country. This would align with project objectives.

The course was delivered by a range of staff at Learning Plus UK Data Ltd. and led by Jan McLucas. It included: observation/shadowing/lecture/workshop/discussion and other methods including attendance at the LPUK National Summit. It included short placements in schools/counselling centres to observe and work shadow practice.

LPUK staff were available to mentor staff during the course delivery as they aimed to develop a tool to replicate their training and practice with colleagues in their workplace and region/country.

An action plan was developed by individuals and teams at the end of the training to support this action.

### 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 aim of the course was 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 would 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 support the judgement that the training met all its aims and objectives.

What was most remarkable was what an impact the training had on so many of the delegates by increasing their knowledge and expertise on the use of data and grade predictor and providing them with confidence and tools to trial and hopefully implement changes in their individual teaching, their counselling, their induction of students, their careers guidance and in their institutions, all to benefit students. One partner talked about disseminating the outcomes of the trial across their Training Board to get more schools involved.

The training of course raised questions and challenges and has set the benchmark for the rest of the project. The resources to be produced within the project have taken on significance, the testing and then trial of a customised tool in each country is required by November. Testing needs to be carried out by June/July 2018.Each partner appears well equipped to do this. They are all aware of the tasks they need to undertake. Perhaps the biggest challenge is in the Czech Rep where the greatest number of institutions are involved but the delegates have good leadership and a clear steer on



Erasmus+



**SIPP**  
School Improvement  
Partnership Project

what needs to be done. The Spanish team have some very firm ideas on usage and benefits in their vocational setting, whilst the Irish recognise data challenges and the need to engage partner schools. It was fantastic that The Finnish team were able to have a group of staff together on the training that will be responsible for the delivery in their college and they had many strong and imaginative approaches to aligning the tool with practice in Finland. All partners are in a good position to progress.

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 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;

**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.**

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

**This was strong. Delegates learned from each other and shared practice. All however were generally impressed by the strength of what was in place in the host country. The approach of the use of data was genuinely new to most and challenged their practice significantly. Many were inspired to develop ways of planning its transfer and usage to their own setting.**

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. The tracking of action plans by partner leads and sampling of these by the external evaluator will evidence if intention becomes reality.**

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.**

## **19. The SIPP Project C2 Training**

**This is a copy of sections of the evaluation report from C2 training;**

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 LPUK.



Erasmus+



**SIPP**  
School Improvement  
Partnership Project

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 Kaisa Kallio and Neene Honkavaara from Sataedu and staff at LPUK including Jan McLucas and Sue Peck, 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 detailed 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 commitments 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:



Erasmus+



 SIPP  
School Improvement  
Partnership Project

- 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 Marko Kemppinen. 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 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.

## 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.



Erasmus+



**SIPP**  
School Improvement  
Partnership Project

The teachers from Ireland and Spain, The LPUK 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;



Erasmus+



**SIPP**  
School Improvement  
Partnership Project

**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.**

## **20. The Grade Predictor Trial across Europe including Comparisons with Placebo Groups**

### **Background**

The external evaluator carried out a survey with partners to provide a perspective on the trial of The Grade Predictor Tool developed for the 4 partner countries outside of the UK.

The aim of the trial was to implement the Grade Predictor Tool produced with each partner country by firstly training teachers and other associated staff in its usage. Subsequently it would then be implemented with students who were making decisions about their future subject choice or were at risk of drop out and needed help/support in their current study or to be directed elsewhere.

There appears no other tool available across Europe which does this task based on national, regional or local data and which has an interface with teachers and students together. The Grade Predictor methodology is based on the collection of robust student performance data which is interpreted to predict students performance in the future based on their achievement in the past. It is a formula potentially transferable to other education systems although the availability of data in partner countries varies immensely.

The trial was based on the following premises:

- Each partner would have their own tool.
- Each partner would have separate targets.
- Partners would target a range of institutions and a range of courses for involvement depending on their setting and project requirements.
- Partners would collect data on student participation.
- Partners would collect data on student interventions.
- Partners would collect data on destinations of students.



**Erasmus+**



The external evaluator aimed to analyse the participation and destination of students to provide recommendations for future developments. Given the timescale of the project this was likely to be the only feasible analysis of data outcomes from the project during its lifespan.

As part of the trial the partners were also asked to identify a placebo group and to use this as a guide in future years in relation to the impact that the Grade Predictor tool could make in their institutions. The project submission states that

“Each partner will be asked to identify a placebo group of students who do not undertake the trial so that in future year’s comparisons can be made in relation to achievement and dropout or non completion of courses.”

The external evaluation compared the results from the placebo groups to those participating in the trials in order to make some judgements on impact. This is summarised under each partners’ analysis and in the report conclusions.

The Grade Predictor trial set out to inform the fine tuning of an upgraded tool for each partner including the UK by ironing out discrepancies.

### **Methodology**

Partners carried out their trials. They were asked to record participation on spread sheets for students’ at each institution involved in the trial and on each course. Student data was to be broken down on gender, disadvantage and disability where the information was available.

Partners were asked to record the destination of all students who participated and if they had any additional interventions as well as using the Grade Predictor tool.

Partners also identified placebo groups. They were asked to record participation in this group on spread sheets. Student data was broken down on gender, disadvantage and disability where the information was available.

Partners were asked to record the destination of all students who participated and if they had any additional interventions.

The spreadsheets were issued to the partners by the evaluator and returned to him. This report is based on an analysis of all their returns.

### **Overall Summary of the Trial of the Tool**

The implementation of a Grade Predictor tool was a challenge. Each partner needed their own tool for their own country/institution. The provision of data to construct a tool was difficult. Each partner had their own challenges here. The outcomes and potential impact however are quite significant in a number of countries. The following statements can be made with confidence.

- Xabec felt that the use of the tool combined with their other work give significant benefits. Only 1 student did not have a positive outcome.
- The tool in Spain was trialled with students including adults and was equally effective



- In Ireland the outcomes from Colaiste Bhaile Chlair were encouraging in a school with its first cohort of leavers.
- Judgements around an impact at Merlin College or Colaiste Na Coiribe would take a longer term study on subject and course choices. These schools certainly don't experience dropout or course changes.
- The trial at Sataedu showed figures below national averages and interventions having an impact. This institution showed no students participating from an at risk, disadvantaged background or having a disability. It is difficult to say how much impact the tool has here.
- Findings from the Czech Republic like Spain were very significant. The range of schools and courses show that the tool can be used in a number of settings. A range of interventions applied, students going into employment and other courses are particularly encouraging. Teachers spoken to were very enthusiastic.
- All institutions reported dropout and unemployment figures below the national averages usually significantly below.
- The number of at risk students including those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with disabilities was significant within most partner trials.

## Evaluation Recommendations

- Partners should continue to record data and analyse it during full implementation
- Sataedu should consider recording data for each course to highlight any particular issues better that may arise.
- Partners should use the experience of their trials in the full implementation.
- Partners should consider the benefits as highlighted through their placebo group activity.

## Overall Summary of the Trial in comparison to Placebo Groups

- In Xabec evidence pointed towards the Grade Predictor tool having an impact on dropout in the institution.
- In Ireland the tool identified those who would benefit from other courses and other methods of learning.
- In Finland the trial identified those who needed interventions and had a small impact on course changes.
- In Zlinsky kraj the tool had a significant impact on dropout and identified students in need of interventions.

## Conclusions

### The use of the tool aimed to have the following impacts:

- Improved training and quality of teaching
- Impact on dropout and non completion of courses
- Young people embarking on non traditional courses
- Students stretching themselves through the support of good guidance
- A curriculum better suited to the school cohort.
- Better decision making on the choice between general education and vocational courses.

The trial impacted on most of these as evidenced by a number of the outcomes for students and the placebo activity. Teachers were involved in training in relation to implementation. Dropout and non



Erasmus+



**SIPP**  
School Improvement  
Partnership Project

completion of courses was remarkably low in the trial. There is evidence of young people on non traditional courses particularly in the Czech Republic. Students had changed to more appropriate courses with guidance. Students appeared to have made good decisions largely. Whilst the curriculum had not changed at this stage there was evidence of students entering other courses within their institution or provided by another which they were better suited to.

The following are the measures which the partnership judges its progress against and measured against the Grade Predictor trial and Placebo activity:

- Transfer of Innovation - are the products transferred, trialled and produced genuinely good practice.

**These products are genuinely good practice. There are significant benefits to using a grade predictor tool as evidenced through the trials and the placebo work.**

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

**Whilst partners struggled with data and methodologies at times all successfully implemented a trial in a range of settings. All succeeded in identifying placebo groups in order to get a feel for the impact of grade predictor tools in their institutions.**

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

**The partnership is working well towards its intellectual outputs as a whole.**

- Dissemination - whether partners have reached a wide audience;

**There is evidence in a number of countries of a wide audience being reached.**

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

**This is too early to judge at the trial stage of the project in relation to use of the tool. However the evidence particularly in Spain and the Czech Republic is compelling for other education providers. There is good evidence in at least one Irish school of the impact that can be made whilst in Finland the gains seem small but worthwhile.**

- Impact- what difference has use of the tool made to students. Has drop out been affected? Have students achieved well? What are their destinations?

**The trial to date can be positive on this. The evidence particularly in Spain and The Czech Republic is compelling. There is good evidence in at least one Irish school of the impact that can be made whilst in Finland the gains seem small but worthwhile.**

## **21. Full Implementation of Grade Predictor Tools**

**3 partners were able to implement the revised tool before the pandemic took hold across Europe.**

**Partner: LPUK**



Erasmus+



**SIPP**  
School Improvement  
Partnership Project

LPUK built on the experience they developed through the trials with their 4 partners. They were able to fully implement Grade Predictor with schools and colleges in the implementation phase. In 2019/20 they had numerous schools and FE colleges using the tool across England. They were schools and colleges who wanted to determine “target grades” at subject level for their year 12 students. This information would then be used by the teachers and leaders to support the students to enable them to achieve their target grades. The groups where data were collected in relation to The SIPP Project were in the main Level 3 students studying A’ level courses. A few were following a vocational course pathway.

It is worth looking at the LPUK figures in some detail as they were not involved in the trial or placebo group stage in terms of delivery. LPUK reported 329 students taking part in one FE college and three schools. This consisted of 122 males and 207 females. 35 were from a disadvantaged background and 5 had a disability. 14 students dropped out during their studies representing 4.25 %. Of the 14, 8 were girls and 2 had a disadvantage. 3 students changed course and 28 students had other interventions applied. No student with a disability dropped out or changed course. It has not been possible to provide any destination data as students had not completed their studies when institutions closed prematurely. It is worth noting that the dropout rate is significantly below the national figure for A ‘level of 8.7%.

LPUK reported that no school had changed the curriculum (subjects offered) based on the tool. It had however enabled some to explore more suitable options for their students.

As a consequence of the implementation several schools are now considering using the tool with students in year 11 when students are choosing their year 12 course options. Where a school then bases their sixth form offer on student demand for courses this could certainly impact on the sixth form curriculum offer in future years. This is very noteworthy.

Schools in England used the tool similarly to partner countries helping students to change courses.

The provision of targets through the tool has challenged some tutors in institutions to have higher expectations of their students. It has provided students and teachers with a target grade to monitor progress against during the year and quickly identify when there may be an issue and agree appropriate interventions. This has also prevented a number of students from dropping out as it has got them back on track or they have made the decision to move to a more appropriate course at the same school or college. The use of the tool has challenged institutions to ensure their prior attainment and monitoring records are accurate in order to set appropriate targets through use of the tool.

#### **Partner: XABEC**

At Xabec full implementation using the personal tutor model took place. The personal tutor met at least once a month with students and checked how their academic and personal progress was going. From the start of the project Xabec have used their "PPM" Personal Development Plan tool to facilitate use of Grade Predictor and this included a demanding and achievable academic objective for the student. The academic objective is not based on the teacher's intuition or the student's spirits at the time of the meeting but rather has a statistical basis. The usage has included discussions between students and tutors, to decide what percentile to try to reach.

The tool has been used by teachers in charge of mentoring students and has been implemented with those students arriving at Xabec who have a secondary education qualification and who are



Erasmus+



**SIPP**  
School Improvement  
Partnership Project

accessing VET. Whilst implementation of the tool has not influenced the curriculum offer it has strengthened mentoring methodologies including target setting and has been aligned with pastoral work.

The main impact of the tool to date is that those teachers supporting students have a statistical tool that helps to set realistic objectives for the students and, during follow-up meetings they can detect deviations and establish corrections so that the student achieve desired objectives.

The tool has also had an indirect impact which has been more difficult to quantify more difficult to quantify. During promotion activities and presentations about Xabec to potential students and parents, the use of a predictive tool based on the statistical results of previous years has built confidence in parents and potential future students. It has enhanced the reputation of Xabec.

The use of the tool involving the personal development plan will continue in future years.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic it has not been possible to show the tool to potential students and their parents. Implementation work with current students who have had secondary education qualifications has continued and there has been increased work with the students remotely. It has not been possible however to provide destination data although positive outcomes are expected.

#### **Partner: Zlínský kraj**

In the trial phase Zlínský kraj involved 4 vocational schools providing secondary education in three- and four-years' courses. According to the latest research in the Czech Republic, vocational schools show the highest dropout rates, especially from the three-years' courses. In the implementation phase, Zlínský kraj increased the number of participating schools to 7 in response to increased interest in the Grade Predictor tool in the region. Again, the participating schools were VET schools. The schools were chosen for participation not only for their status and interest but also for their location. The schools covered all parts of the region which enabled the project to detect all possible characteristics of students who dropout and their reasons. This methodology has been enabled by a senior manager within the Department of Education who participated in the training events and supported the implementation phase.

The implementation of the tool has influenced the system of counselling and guidance rather than the curriculum although the structure of the timetable has changed and also the availability of courses. Teachers and other school staff stated that the implementation of the tool has improved their competence to work with students on their progression, motivation, commitment and identification of all their talents. This has led to re-organising the timetabling of courses in order to increase their flexibility and availability. The schools have also established a system of interventions using the tool.

Students have benefitted from the improved guidance. Teachers are equipped to help them to enter destinations, which reflect their true ability. The students have got a better sense of achievement and a vast majority of those identified at risk, are on course to complete the academic year successfully.

The school staff have paid more attention to students' progress and attainment. Staff are continually having access to new information resources like the intervention videos and resource directory. Zlínský kraj have encouraged groups of teachers to cooperate, support each other, share practice



**Erasmus+**



**SIPP**  
School Improvement  
Partnership Project

and focus on improving inclusion of all students in schools. Destinations of students have not been possible to report on due to school closures but positive outcomes are predicted.

**Partner: GRETB**

The 3 GRETB schools were not able to fully implement the tool after their pilot and placebo group work. Schools in Ireland closed at the beginning of the pandemic and have not reopened.

In preparatory work for the actual roll out of the implementation and to learn lessons from the pilot, planning took place to implement use of the tool at an earlier stage in the student's schooling in order to have more of an impact in their school and post school career. Students had been informed and prepared on the process and the benefits of using the tool. When the user manual was completed 6 members of staff were trained on how to use the tool.

Students who were involved in the pilot showed more confidence than their peers in making decisions as they are more informed decisions. The tool will continue to be used with students to guide them in their subject choices and career path.

**Partner: Sataedu**

Sataedu were not able to fully implement the tool after the pilot and placebo group work. Schools and colleges in Finland closed at the beginning of the pandemic. Sataedu report that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the tool has not been in use. At this time, student counselling is carried out in other ways. The tool within Sataedu has been used as an additional support tool to estimate how a student's progress in their studies impacts on their future, and also in considering the influence that their choice of course has on the outcome. They report that the tool has introduced a new perspective to student counselling. It has enabled the highlighting of issues that may be meaningful for student progress.

## **22. SIPP Intervention Manuals**

### **Introduction**

An independent evaluation of The SIPP Intervention Manual was conducted by the external evaluator.

The partners had a task to produce an Intervention Manual which staff using Grade Predictor could use to supplement their approaches to supporting learners. Staff in institutions had made initial interventions through using Grade Predictor tools with students but this often could pose some hard challenges for students and staff alike and an accompanying resource was deemed useful.

The aim of using Grade Predictor tools across Europe was to make sure students made well informed choices, that they complete their chosen course of study and do not drop out and that they achieve to their full potential. The aim of the Intervention Manual which would accompany tools was to equip staff to support students well in order to achieve this.

The evaluation of the Manual was undertaken in 3 ways. The external evaluator firstly assessed if the partners completed what they had set out to do in the Intellectual Objective describing the Manual. Secondly the product was assessed against a Best Practice Resource that was produced as part of an



Erasmus+



**SIPP**  
School Improvement  
Partnership Project

Erasmus+ KA2 partnership programme

which was graded outstanding and involved a partnership from a similar range of backgrounds. This project was a UK led project called The Eureka Project. Finally views on the Manual were obtained from teachers in a Higher Education Institution in the Midlands of England who work with students on foundation degree courses, students who have not achieved as well as they might for a range of reasons such as embarking on the wrong courses or underachieving.

The aim of this independent voice was to glean whether they felt the Manual would be of assistance in addressing students' needs from the perspective of those with experience of such students.

### **Conclusion**

The evaluator reported that the Intervention Manual is a useful tool in the context of student's fulfilling their goals and improving their life chances. Importantly it achieves what it sets out to as described in the Intellectual Objective and can make a difference for students. The approach partners have used to develop the Manual has made it portable across national boundaries. It is concise and straightforward to use. It compares well against other well appraised resources and itself has been based on best practice from other KA2 strategic partnerships. A focus group of teachers found it very pertinent and helpful.

### **Evaluation Recommendations**

- Partners should address the dissemination points and make sure that links are established to their own websites.
- The contribution from the Finnish partner could be developed a little further and Strategic documents and Reports should be added for this partner.
- The ideas reported by the group of teachers from a Higher Education Institution in the UK should be considered.

**Following the evaluation report of the 22/04/2020 the Partnership addressed the recommendations and made the following changes to the manual:**

- Strategic documents, studies, reports and scientific articles were added for Sataedu,
- A template for a Personal Development Plan was added for Xabec,
- A front cover has been included with the School Improvement Partnership Project website address.

All these additions have added value to the document.

### **23. SIPP User Manuals**

The external evaluator produced an independent evaluation report on the SIPP User Manual, which had been produced following the same template in 4 partner countries. Each guide has its own identity as each partner had named their own Grade Predictor tool locally.



Erasmus+



**SIPP**  
School Improvement  
Partnership Project

Therefore, the evaluation looked at the

User Manuals developed for each country and feedback obtained on them via a survey. The 4 tools and accompanying manual for each country are:

- [Quo Vadis?](#) – Zlínský kraj, The Czech Republic
- [ELMA Arvosanaennuste–työkalu](#) – Sataedu, Finland
- [Fáistineoir Grád](#) – GRETB, Ireland
- [Plan Personal de Mejora](#) – XABEC, Spain

The evaluation focused on the effectiveness of the tool as viewed by colleagues in institutions who worked on the introduction of the tool. Each partner was given examples of appropriate colleagues to involve in the evaluation. These were:

- Zlínský kraj - a sample of contacts in schools working on the project.
- Xabec - a number of staff who have used the tool with students.
- Sataedu- staff working on the project implementation or those for example who attended the training events.
- GRETB - a representative from the 3 schools.

Partners were asked to send a questionnaire to colleagues for completion and these were to be analysed by the independent evaluator.

The individual or team of people, who devised the guide, was specifically asked not to respond to the survey. The questionnaire was based on project requirements. The independent evaluator collected responses and produced an analysis of them for each partner with recommendations.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The template used by partners for the User Manual worked well. It had a very logical approach, dealing with a difficult and new concept for many well. Staff across the partners with the exception of Sataedu supported this view. That constituted 8 staff in 7 different organisations in the Zlin Region, 4 staff in Xabec and one member of staff in GRETB in the West of Ireland. Whilst all staff may not deem themselves as experts in their Grade Predictor tool, they all said they were in a position to implement its introduction in their institution. The User Manual in Finland currently when the evaluation took place was not at that stage. There were sections missing and those in place were not as thorough as other partners. The revision of the manual, learning from the other partners would address this gap.

### **Recommendations**

- Note the findings in the report.
- Revision of the [ELMA Arvosanaennuste–työkalu](#) tool.
- Ensure the User Manual is appearing on partner websites.
- Internal evaluation by partners similar to the Zlinsky kraj approach would be useful at a later stage.
- Consider a further link to video's produced through Intellectual objective 02.

**The Finnish partner subsequently addressed the evaluation recommendations by revising their original guide through:**



- Adding an Introduction.
- Translating the slide in Section 3 into Finnish and adding text.
- Completing Section 5.
- Completing Section 6.

## 24. SIPP Superb Intervention Video's

### Introduction

Each partner had to produce 3 videos as part of Intellectual Objective 2 which would showcase the use of Grade Predictor and their institutional interventions. 20 videos were eventually produced. Xabec led this task. They had experience in this type of role and were ideally suited to providing inspiration in the task. They led discussions on implementation at Transnational Partnership Meetings (TPMs) and allocated tasks to partners. All videos followed a common framework. A YouTube channel was created for promotion purposes.

### Evaluation Methodology

The external evaluator produced a short evaluation of the Superb Intervention Videos. Originally evaluation was to take place on an internal basis by partners including an activity at the Multiplier event. With the cancellation of the Multiplier Event the external evaluator agreed to sample 15% of the videos and report on whether they had met objectives.

The internal evaluation took place at the virtual TPM replacing TPM 7 with all partners reporting on their activities. This was recorded by the lead partner.

The External Evaluation randomly sample 3 videos representing just over 15% of the target number of 3 per partner. The only selection criteria introduced was that each video was from a different partner. These videos were assessed against a checklist created by the evaluator and this is reported on in this evaluation. Some overall conclusions were drawn.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

All videos were well produced and had a common format. The template for production produced by Xabec worked well.

All videos were short and consequentially put their message across to the audience.

All videos were available through the project website and YouTube.

There was a very good theme of equality in those sampled with special needs and gender stereotyping being addressed.

All sampled included staff and young people to varying degrees.

All videos fitted very well into the Grade Predictor purpose of addressing under achievement.

The videos could be used in a range of settings including parent events, open days, staff meetings and with other Erasmus+ projects.

All partners addressed the aims of the production of the videos well and the task was led with adeptness by Xabec.

### Recommendations

The English subtitles where used could be improved in terms of accuracy.



**Erasmus+**

Partners should continue with the dissemination they have planned.



## **25. Strategy Papers**

Strategy papers were produced in each partner country targeting inspection regimes and government departments to influence change based on the project. Briefing papers had been developed by each partner following a common framework led by GRETB and were presented to strategists and decision makers on an ongoing basis. The Strategy Papers provide a summary of what had been learnt, difficulties that have been faced and recommendations on the way forward. They include some of the early evaluation findings and raise the profile of the importance of data in the guidance process. These papers have been distributed amongst the Employer sector as well to show that Grade Predictor is a tool which can help address skills shortages across Europe. A number of the papers incorporate significant detail whilst some are short and to the point. Each partner was given leeway as it was felt they knew their audience best. A questionnaire has been produced by the evaluator for follow up activities by partners with Strategy Paper recipients. Through this targeted strategy the project has been widely promoted sharing its innovation widely. The papers have been distributed from May 2020. Their distribution includes:

### **LPUK**

Directors of Children Services were communicated with in 121 local authority areas in England.

### **GRETB**

29 educational institutions and associations across Ireland were communicated with.

### **Zlinsky kraj**

A range of National and Regional Organisations across the Czech Rep and in the Zlin Region including Careers Guidance Centres, Chambers of Commerce, Ministries of Education, Youth and Sport, Pedagogical institutions and others were communicated with.

### **Sataedu**

A range of principals, guidance counsellors and executive directors particularly in the Pori region were communicated with.

### **Xabec**

Partners in Spain and across Europe including in Belgium, Italy, Portugal, Austria, Germany and Estonia all with counsellors, teachers and other professionals were communicated with.



Erasmus+



**SIPP**  
School Improvement  
Partnership Project

## 26. Overall Findings from the project

First and foremost it needs to be said that this project meticulously through a partnership approach addressed the expectations of its proposal thoroughly and diligently. With the exception of the implementation of the full tool implementation in Ireland and Finland, the cancellation of the multiplier event and 2 TPM's because of the Covid 19 pandemic, all outputs from the project were addressed.

In concluding the external evaluator wishes to address the 5 topics set out at the beginning of the evaluation plan in relation to the whole project.

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

Judgment- The products are largely very good whilst the tool is excellent.

**The Grade Predictor tools for each country are genuinely good practice. There is nothing comparable across Europe. They have been used in different ways across the partnership and that has been a healthy and natural development. The project has developed a life of its own in terms of implementation which at the outset could not have been predicted. The use of the tool has witnessed great innovation in a number of partner countries. The one thing that all have in common however is that the tools are valued by the vast majority of staff. In the UK, Spain and the Czech Republic there is very strong evidence to suggest they have an impact on dropout and retention. In Ireland they have impacted to an extent in one school on course change whilst in Finland they have provided a different tool for counselling services. Grade Predictor is a unique tool and the transfer of it across European national boundaries is genuinely good practice. All institutions reported dropout and unemployment figures below the national averages usually significantly below. Findings would suggest that such a tool is transferable to many European educational settings and would be of benefit.**

**The content and delivery of the training C1 and C2 was genuinely good practice. Delegates with a range of experience endorsed this. Some superb practice was experienced.**

**The outputs from the project including: The Intervention Guide, User Manual, Superb Videos and Strategy Papers were all good practice. These tools and outputs have been evaluated well throughout the project.**

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

Judgment- This was very well achieved.

**This was strong. Delegates learned from each other and shared practice continually. Many inspired each other and this is recorded well both in the evaluation of the TPMs and the C1 and C2 training events. Partners all had lead roles in the project and each took on their role with diligence. LPUK led the project well and brought great organizational skills as well as hosting TPMs and the C1 training event. Sataedu hosted C2 training and the other partners hosted TPMs with the exception of Xabec and led on various aspects of the Intellectual Outputs. A number of partners had senior leaders involved in meetings and training and this seemed to bring great strategic influence and benefitted the project.**



Erasmus+



**SIPP**  
School Improvement  
Partnership Project

The trials and implementation of the Grade Predictor tool had most impact in Spain and the Czech Republic both of whom had senior leader involvement. In Ireland Senior leader involvement from schools was evident and this certainly had a significant impact in at least one school. Sataedu had a change of staff early in the project and Senior Leader involvement only occurred during the TPM in Finland. This partner seemed to struggle with some aspects of the project more than others perhaps because of these reasons. Nevertheless they contributed to all outputs and the tool seemed to have some impact in their institution.

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

Judgement- This was exemplary.

**This was excellent on the whole. Roles were clear. Everything was well organised and agreed. The leadership was relaxed yet purposeful. All partners had a voice and everything was agreed. Partners contributed in a safe environment at both TPM's and training events.**

**The administration was very good. Planning, contracts, minutes, agenda's, systems for dealing with the project requirements in terms of timesheets and so forth was largely exemplary.**

- ✓ - Dissemination - whether partners have reached a wide audience;

Judgment- This has been achieved.

**Dissemination has been good. Strategy papers have been circulated widely in every country and across various European partners. This has been enabled by all partners having European networks through other projects they are involved in. A website is also in place with full project information on it and videos are on a YouTube channel. E Newsletters were widely circulated and regularly produced.**

**There are a number of noteworthy developments deserving special mention. In the Czech Republic the project co-coordinator has promoted the project both nationally and at a number of regional conferences. The tool is seen in the Czech Rep as having significant value alongside other strategies to reduce dropout. During the C1 training in the UK partners attended and presented at a national data conference resulting in significant interest. In Spain Xabec have been particularly active with their international partners promoting the tool.**

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

Judgment- This has been achieved by most partners

**Zlinsky kraj appear the most successful at this with a groundswell of particularly VET schools in the Zlin region participating in the project and interested in it. Schools in neighbouring regions are also interested in its implementation. In the UK there appears a good number of schools considering how to further use the tool in order to increase its effectiveness. These two partners and Xabec have developed strategies to mainstream the activity. Xabec have incorporated it into their day to day work and have shared this widely. Valorization in Ireland is a harder challenge. The sharing of**



Erasmus+



**SIPP**  
School Improvement  
Partnership Project

data by schools is a thorny issue and whilst GRETB schools continue to use the tool expansion to others is problematic as long as leaders in schools are reluctant to share data and practice. This has been challenged by those senior leaders involved in the project. Sataedu have not appeared to promote their project work outside their institution although they have incorporated it into counselling practice.

In addition it is very useful to address the question of impact.

- ✓ Impact- what difference has use of the tool made to students. Has drop out been affected? Have students achieved well? What are their destinations?

Judgement- the tool and project has had significant impact for students.

**The trial and full implementation where it took place provides evidence to support positive findings on the following:**

- Improved training and quality of teaching
- Impact on dropout and non completion of courses
- Young people embarking on non traditional courses
- Students stretching themselves through the support of good guidance
- A curriculum better suited to the school cohort.
- Better decision making on the choice between general education and vocational courses.

Did the Grade Predictor tool and associated activities address and contribute to the EU 2020 targets of reducing the rates of early school leaving below 10%?

Judgement- The tool contributed to reducing the rates of early school leaving and has the potential to do this in other European settings as well.

**Evidence from the trial and placebo group activity is very positive on this. All institutions reported dropout and unemployment figures below the national averages usually significantly below. The findings were:**

- In Xabec evidence pointed towards the Grade Predictor tool having an impact on dropout in the institution.
- In Ireland the tool identified those who would benefit from other courses and other methods of learning.
- In Finland the trial identified those who needed interventions and had a small impact on course changes.
- In Zlinsky kraj the tool had a significant impact on dropout and identified students in need of interventions.

The feedback from those 3 partners who were able to proceed with the full implementation of the tool was also very encouraging.

B Martin 03/08/2020