

Critical friend-document on Germany's country report made by the Hungarian partners

PARTNERSHIP:

As for PARTNERHIP quality indicators (**Common vision, mission, aims objectives identified and understood;**) in the the constraint –box we find: **„Sometimes visions and missions were not understood when projects have started”**

I find a common feature that often hinders quality in the case of big partnership projects won through bidding when mainly the core organizers initiate the idea and attractive resources are promised to invite partners to join the project **without proper elaboration of common concerns and mutual interests, without the effort to build up coherent understanding.** Keeping the fish on the hook depends on partners signing up to an understanding of their contribution, their benefits, their roles and obligations. This implies a considerable allocation of resources in the form of time at the beginning.

This act of stimulating actors to form a partnership and keeping them motivated on an ongoing basis throughout the cooperation is an issue that stands out from the German experience as one to work on.

(Partners are kept motivated – ensuring network agenda matches partner expectations – is value-added (but not cherry-picking); „what"s in it for us?") criteria – **„No approaches have been made up which kept partners motivated”** (in the constraint-box)

Another element can be viewed as both a strength and weakness of the German LRs : from the onset i.e. writing the application , getting approval by EU and the Federal State, forming the structures, the clear-cut roles, financing engagement, partnership arrangements fixed by contracts , planned milestones, fixed targets, allocated resources: a firm and stable framework and a professional structure is a guarantee of quality. But a slightly negative side –effect can surface as well that needs to be addressed:(**Sometimes too much emphasis was given to the consistency which leads to a lack of creative new ways**) **(Sometimes it turns out that slight changes of the firstly defined roles would have been good) (Changes which came perhaps to the fore couldn't been made up because the projects had to stick on the approval by the federal ministry).**

So, the quality criteria **(Flexibility: partnership arrangements are not too rigid as to impede responsiveness)** is a very crucial one. The ability to flex, adapt and re-shape as unforeseen circumstances emerge is both important AND a pre-condition to keep partners on-board, adapting to THEIR needs which were not initially identified.

There was a note in relation to the criteria: **Partnership is deep BUT also „deep“ if personal – bring all experience, not just some)** that needs clarification especially in the light of Grundtvig criteria : **(Sometimes too much adult education)**

PARTICIPATION:

(Involving the wider public or community) & Network is known and understood by general public) - both are key criteria in the light of Grundvig but as it turned out the methods to

reach a higher VISIBILITY needs to be better addressed. **(In general most of the LR couldn't find the real key to inform the whole community ...Wider public knew the network ...but didn't understand a long time what LR is about.)** Does this indicate a priority to marshal the total capacity of all the actors in the partnership towards improved dissemination and information-spreading?

Does this apply increased weight to an objective to publicise the purpose of LR to the wider public?

PROGRESS and RENEWAL

The criteria **(Partners „internalise“ evaluation and review (identifying benefits and not just an imposition)** seems to be very important, however it is obvious from the German cases that **the approaches and methods need to be developed in order to achieve the criteria. (It was not seen as a core-activity).**

Another crucial criteria: **(Benefits identified are broad-based (not just education-linked) and (Benefits are demonstrated and communicated)** have been fulfilled according to the report but it needs elaboration in the R3L+ project. Clearer definitions of „wider benefits“ and output indicators need to be developed, especially for the sake of sustainability, for the sake of influencing policy and professional practice at wider levels and most importantly to have a decisive impact on future learning communities.

Evaluation and review (quality) are prioritised – seen as a core activity and not just an add-on

Leaving evaluation as a last-minute after-thought is always a risk in innovation settings, - especially when working with partners managing on the minimal resource and a danger that will increase in cash-strapped times. Placing the link between objectives and the evaluation of achieving those objectives at the forefront of partners' thinking from the outset is a MUST. Highlighting that assessing that objectives are being implemented is taking place on an on-going basis throughout the project development is an a priori management strategy. Not an add-on, it is the CORE of implementation, at the heart of any innovation. Partners need to be helped to understand that and put it into action.