

ELGPN Task Group 2: Synergy between EU-funded projects

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Reflection Note

Saša Niklanovič

The intention of this reflection note is to discuss some findings and open issues of TG2 and ELGPN in relation to guidance projects. Reflection note is additional document to the Report on the meeting of TG 2 in Athens.

How are policy relevant projects linked to guidance policy?

On the basis of the projects, previous and current, which were presented during TG 2 meeting in Athens we can conclude that projects can have different roles in relation to guidance policy. It seems we can distinguish following types of links between the projects and the policy:

Projects which implement guidance policy

Results of these projects are usually used after the project by one or more stakeholders to the extent which allows the conclusion that these projects contribute to the implementation of guidance policy. There are many examples of such project: for example LDV project ICTEM (Integrated Counselling, Training and Employment Method) which developed half year programme for young uneducated and deprived people. This programme was introduced in Slovenia on the national level in 2006 and thus filled a gap in guidance policy. Some case studies show that it is not necessary that the project partners in the beginning had the ambition to implement their results on such level (regional or even national level). In such cases good results convinced or inspired policy makers to make them sustainable.

Projects which plan to develop guidance policy

Some projects have the goal to develop guidance policy (for example National Guidance Policy Forums - NGPF projects in 2004-2006) or develop basis for strategic policy decision (for example Comenius project on School and the World of Work in Austria).

It also seems some projects are combination of both. In some cases project implement policy goals (in education or employment) even though the country does not have explicit guidance policy.

Previous and current projects

Past and current projects cannot be dealt in the same way. In most cases the real impact of projects on the policy implementation or policy development could be identified after the end of the project. TG2 will therefore focus on the question of what happens with project results after the project. A review of existing research (TG2 - Brief thematic Study) shows that studies seldom refer to the period after the project. Such evaluation also requires diverse

methods to identify projects which could be examples of good projects or to find out what is their impact on policy. For this reason TG2 decided to test these methods in practice from the start of the work of TG2 (we named it ‘trial’). Testing procedures had been agreed before the meeting and accomplished by the end of the TG2 meeting in Athens.

Browsing of current guidance projects financed by the Leonardo da Vinci sub-programme gives an impression that the number of potentially relevant projects is quite high. This is the result of EU policy which, after 2007, strongly supports projects which aim at transfer of innovation. Some of them are specifically looking for synergistic effects between projects (for example LLL multilateral ICT Skills 2 project: ICT Tools and Training for e-practitioners). Current projects can benefit in different ways: interested ELGPN members and countries can get involved in such projects, follow the progress in these projects and try to learn from their experience; examples of good projects could be promoted etc. However it seems that it is more difficult to identify current projects which could serve as the examples of good practices. The reason is that current projects usually produce results just before the end of the projects and it is open to question whether these results will have substantial impact on the future policy or implementation of policy goals.

Relevancy of European Social Fund projects

TG2 is dealing with different types of EU-funded programmes. Some programmes, for example the Leonardo da Vinci sub-programme, are focused on international partnership, innovations and transfer of innovations and are by definition international. On the other hand European Social Fund programmes focus on the implementation of national policy over the longer period (financial perspective 2007-2013). The question is therefore to what extent are national ESF projects, which take in account specific national situations, relevant for other member states. During the TG2 meeting in Athens members presented projects which are financed from different EU funded programmes. Discussion showed that most ESF projects can be equally relevant for participants from other countries. Though many times solutions from one country cannot be directly applied in another country, ESF projects can offer other countries a good learning experience.

Linking projects with the priorities of 2008 Council Resolution on Guidance

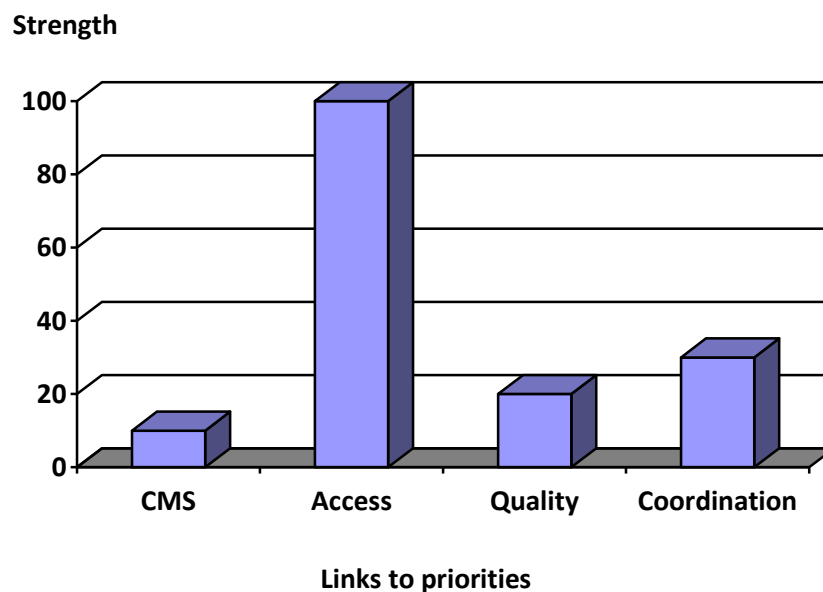
It has been agreed that TG2 will link projects with the four priorities of 2008 Council Resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies. An initial attempt of TG2 to link projects with this Resolution took place during the meeting of TG2 in Athens. TG2 member presented projects (examples of good practices) from their own countries and then members of the group analysed them from the viewpoint of four priorities of the Resolution. This exercise gave us experience which can be summarised as follows:

- In some cases project (or projects) can be simply linked to one of the priorities of the Resolution. For example NGPF (National Guidance Policy Forums) projects initiated establishment of national forums in some EU members states, therefore they can be simply categorised as projects which support the fourth priority area of the Resolution (Encourage coordination and cooperation among the various national, regional and local stakeholders).

- In most cases project could be linked to more than one priority but usually it is possible to say which priority is strongly influenced then others. However in some cases TG2 found it difficult to agree to which priorities a particular project is most strongly linked. For example, one project presented during the meeting in Athens produced a new national website which is now largely used by the end users. The project was carried out in partnership between different national institutions (ministries and other stakeholders). Some members of the group thought that the most important benefit of this project is better access to career information (priority 2) while others argue that at the same time this project strengthened cooperation between policy makers (priority 4) and contributed to better quality of career information (priority 3).

Links between projects and priorities and strength of these links can be graphically presented as follows:

Picture 1: Project example



Both 'types' of links, link to one priority and link to more priorities, are equally relevant for the EPLGPN.

Who can benefit from the work of TG 2 and how?

There are several groups and individuals who might benefit from the work of TG 2 (ELGPN members, national and regional policy makers, EU policy makers. etc.) but let us focus here on two groups:

ELGPN work-package leaders

WP leaders often present guidance projects during peer learning events. Indicating procedures for searching databases to identify relevant projects etc. could help WP leaders to identify projects which are linked to their work-packages and analyse their impact in light of four policy priorities.

ELGPN members

Work of TG 2 could increase awareness of ELGPN members about relevant guidance projects in other countries and sometimes also in their own countries. It could help them to identify clear links between these projects and policy priorities. ELGPN members could initiate discussion and policy analysis of relevant projects in their own national forums/coordination groups.

CONCLUSION

The experience from the trial is positive. TG2 members did not have problems to find one or more relevant projects from their own countries. Some projects which were presented had an impressive impact on guidance policy (for example LDV project Workplace Guidance in Denmark and Island in 2006). The general impression is that more projects have an impact on policy implementation than we generally expect. Nonetheless, though European Commission, National LLL Agencies and other bodies pay a lot of attention to promote examples of good projects the question remains to what extent these promotion activities reach guidance policy makers.

The meeting in Athens was a good learning experience for group members. Group analysis of projects from the viewpoint of the four priorities of the Resolution was a good training and it seems that the opinions of TG2 members on how projects are linked to policy became more coherent at the end of the second day of the meeting.