

Dissemination guidance note for Comenius and Grundtvig partnerships

A dissemination plan is essential to all successful partnership projects. It will enable sustainability of project results and ensure continuation of relationships between both the partners themselves and between partners and local actors.

As always planning is one of the success factors in a project. If you want the project to have a real impact you have to plan for dissemination at all stages of the project: the starting phase, during the project, at the end of the project and following completion of all project activities.

In partnership projects you focus on the process rather than on the product, and on experiences rather than on results. This will have an impact on your dissemination activities and strategies.

You should not wait until the project has been completed to share your experiences and your results. There is a link between information sharing and dissemination. If you think of information sharing and general communication to the target audience (partners, local actors, organisational community and so on) as parts of the dissemination process, you will be open to useful input from your target audience from the very beginning of the process.

1. What is meant by dissemination?

The LLP Glossary: http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/glossary_en.html gives you this definition: "Activities designed to ensure that the results of the LLP and its predecessors are appropriately recognised, demonstrated and implemented on a wide scale". Dissemination is also often described as a process that involves a share of results and experiences with the aim of influencing the way other people think and act, or of making them aware of a new idea, product or service.

2. What would you like to achieve?

- ◆ **Raise awareness** in the intended target group
- ◆ **Generate understanding** and obtain the **support** of others in disseminating information
- ◆ **Involve** others outside your own organisation
- ◆ Bring about a **change in attitudes and ways of thinking**
- ◆ Bring about a **change in attitudes towards** students visitors, lenders at libraries or colleagues
- ◆ **New patterns** of conduct in the target group – the end users of the project results.

There are many more ways to describe the aims of the dissemination process – motivate, inspire, suggest, call attention to, arouse curiosity, enlighten, encourage, make visible, channel, sum up, concentrate, caution, prevent, introduce...The main thing is that you are **aware of your aim** and that you select an appropriate method.

All QAS documents can be downloaded on the QAS website,
<http://qas.programkontoret.se>

3. Why is dissemination important and for whom?

- ◆ **The projects comes to an end – but the results live on and are only meaningful if they are put to good use and result in functional changes**
- ◆ **Concluded – but not finished.** The project contributes to lifelong learning and personal development, both with respect to those undertaking the project and those whom the project aims to support.
- ◆ Make staff and students/trainees **aware of what a good job they have done**
- ◆ **Make all interested parties** and a wider public aware of what you have accomplished
- ◆ **Influence decision-makers** – important to them, too, as a basis for decision
- ◆ Generate **general interest in transnational cooperation**
- ◆ Generate **interest in language learning**
- ◆ Raise **awareness** of European cultural diversity and similarity

4. What to disseminate?

It is vital that the participants in the project have a shared vision and understanding of what needs to be disseminated. Not only will this provide a common framework but will also enable the participants to describe the project and the planned dissemination in an informed manner.

- ◆ Products
- ◆ Methods
- ◆ Good practise
- ◆ Experience – leading to messages about findings, recommendations, warnings

5. Do you have the support of your own organisation?

International cooperation requires time, commitment and resources, and must ultimately benefit the target groups, students or learners. The way to do this is through colleagues in your own organisation. **International development projects are ultimately about achieving positive changes in terms of development. Change is often seen as something threatening.**

Real change cannot be achieved unless we share certain fundamental attitudes. A successful project requires convergence over the course of the project, but **if everyone does not have the same framework or understanding of the project activities, then what should you do?**

- ◆ The role of the leader is to **formulate** his or her vision and perceive challenges which colleagues can use as a basis for understanding the aims and strategies of the project
- ◆ The project leader makes discoveries and experiences possible, and helps colleagues to interpret their experiences so that they do not feel threatened by them

- ◆ The project leader cannot force his or her interpretation of the project on colleagues; dialogue encourages receptiveness to new ways of thinking and exposes people to alternative ideas
- ◆ Strive for a **common understanding** of the work in a way that is qualitatively different
- ◆ Display **patience** along the way – have a long-term perspective with a **balance between continuity (strengthen existing skills) and change (developing new skills)**.

People create their own understanding of reality and incorporate elements of new information and new experiences into their existing conceptions. This involves **strengthening, modifying or changing previously held ideas**.

Whatever applies to your colleagues also applies to the primary target group, and it is the messengers (your colleagues) who play the most important role in disseminating the project results.

6. Do you have several target groups and, hence, different dissemination strategies and tools?

Anyone embarking on a development project has in mind that it will ultimately benefit a certain target group. The project will affect you, personally, and other colleagues, as well as others not considered part of the target group.

This means that you will need to identify who these groups are in the preliminary project planning phase, and, if possible, **involve them in the dissemination process**. They could be people in your own organisation or others involved in similar development projects. Try to identify the **key groups** locally; they can give the dissemination process impetus. This means that even if you think of **end-users** as your target group, you should also involve for instance **stakeholders and decision makers**.

Below are some questions you can ask yourself:

- ◆ How do we **secure the support of management in our own organisation** for the project and how can we try to make use of the insight they gain of the project in the dissemination process?
- ◆ Are there any forums where we can present the project to more than one target group?
- ◆ Do we have a plan for keeping our project partners in other countries updated?
- ◆ What other **players** in the local communities, e.g. the employment office and social services, could be interested in the same target groups and how should we work with them?
- ◆ Which local, regional, national or international colleagues, associations, organisations or other players could possibly be interested?
- ◆ What does my **network** look like – can I get support elsewhere?

7. What does the toolbox look like? What methods should you use in disseminating the information, and when?

Your choice of tools will depend on your understanding of the target group as well as on your aims.

Are you aiming at **awareness, change of attitudes or create new patterns of conduct** in your target group? The aim can also vary depending on where you are in the process which calls for a deliberate, planned variation of methods.

Methods you can use in the dissemination process include:

- **Informal person-to-person meetings** – unrivalled as a way of persuading
- **Briefings**, seminars. Workshops, conferences, exhibitions – provide opportunities to inform and discuss
- Printed material, e.g. **reports**
- **Websites** – but don't forget to update them!
- **Links** to and from websites
- Videos, CDs, DVDs or other audiovisual materials
- **Mass media** – have a strategy for attracting their attention!
- **Attending conferences and seminars** presenting your project
- **Networking** – use your networks
- **E-mail** lists for mass mailing a **newsletter** – continuous dissemination of process results
- **Direct** application in a learning situation – the original aim of dissemination activities
- **Information officers**
- **Press releases**
- **Braille** to give access to the partially sighted or other methods specially adapted to cater for various other types of disability

8. What needs to be avoided in your dissemination activities?

When you are totally immersed in an activity, it is easy to lose sight of who the recipients are. It is useful to bear the following points in mind when disseminating your results and experiences:

- ♦ **Refrain from showing a lot of photographs** of the project meetings you have had – how much fun is it looking at a family album when you do not know anyone?
- ♦ Avoid giving detailed accounts of every meeting – **get to the point**
- ♦ Share the **experiences** as well as the **results** – **meta-learning** is just as important!
- ♦ **Written information** can be given out **in advance** – personal meetings provide the opportunity to talk about things more in depth (in the form of seminars) and create a basis for influencing attitudes and changing future patterns of behaviour
- ♦ Try not to give everyone the same information but **tailor** it to the target group

- ◆ Do not fall into the trap of saving the dissemination activities until the end of the project – you will miss the opportunity to get **feedback** and support from other interested players
- ◆ **Think in terms of quality, not quantity** – you are better off choosing few words that generate interest
- ◆ Be clear right from the start about who “owns” the project results so that discussions about **copyright**, for example, do not mark the end of the cooperation process

9. What effects does dissemination have besides the sharing of results?

All project activities have positive as well as negative side effects. Some of the most obvious positive side effects are listed below:

- ◆ Feedback during the project -> change of direction -> better quality
- ◆ **Strengthened cooperation and the feeling of solidarity within your own organisation** – if responsibility and authority are shared and the project has support from the start
- ◆ Increased **visibility** of the organisation in the local community
- ◆ Promotion of **innovation** in society
- ◆ New **energy** and **ideas**
- ◆ **New contacts and new projects – contagious!**
- ◆ **Awareness** of other cultures and readiness to take on cultural differences
- ◆ Foreign-language competence **and better communication skills**
- ◆ **ICT skills**
- ◆ An understanding of your own culture when faced with others
- ◆ **Personal development** and development of your own capabilities

10. Follow-up, evaluation, dissemination – how do they differ?

Follow-up is ensured during the process so that any necessary changes of direction can be made

Evaluation is carried out when the project has been completed

Dissemination, as defined earlier, is a continuous process with emphasis on informing others on your activities

11. How do I know that the project was successful?

- ◆ Have I reached my **target groups** and has there been a change in attitudes and behaviour as envisaged in the project plan?
- ◆ How **good** is the actual **product** or **service**?
- ◆ **Test method?**
- ◆ Can I see any positive or negative **side effects**?

An effective project plan includes instruments for making use of any outcome. Thinking **SMART** in the preliminary phase makes evaluation possible in the end phase. Smart objectives are, **s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**ceptable, **r**ealistic and **t**imetabled. And, to be absolutely sure, you can add an **E** – **they must be evaluable**.

After measuring the results, you enter the interpreting phase, during which you seek possible explanations and reflect on what consequences will be for the future activities.

The term **valorisation** is being used increasingly in the context of project. It means to disseminate and harness project results with the aim of:

- ◆ **Optimising** their **value**
- ◆ **Increasing** their **impact**
- ◆ **Integrating** them within education and methodological systems at local, national and European level.

Disseminating experiences and results are not enough. You also need to consider their use and long-term sustainability. The last phase in implementing a project is to ensure that the results you have achieved are put to good use. Bear this in mind in the planning stage of the project and describe your methods for achieving it in your project application.

Here are some questions to consider in connection with valorisation:

- What end results do we expect?
- Which educational or learning needs are they meeting?
- Who are the users and/or final beneficiaries of the project's results?
- What activities should we use to disseminate and harness the project's results?
- Timetable, funds and available resources?

Don't hesitate to take a look at **dissemination and exploitation of results on The European Commission's website**

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/valorisation/index_en.html

And... always ask yourselves the following questions:

Why?

How?

Who?

What?

When?

To whom?