

soufflearning Learning face-to-face

Soufflearning - Leonardo DE/10/LLP-LdV/TOI/147321

Result 12

Interim Evaluation Report

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For the evaluation process within this project period evaluation and testing was carried out on different levels and for different products to learn about:

1. The offered material
2. The Soufflearning process and the transfer of the methodology
3. The cooperation and communication between partners.

1. Offered material

Trainers' manual: During the translation of the pattern first adaptations have been made in the manuals to the national contexts. A first testing was carried out during the 'train the trainers' workshops. The practical test was performed during the preparation and implementation of the pre-tests in SMEs.

From the feedback it was decided to re-edit the trainers' manual in the second project year. The second edition will get a list of necessary skills of trainers, including specific regional aspects and best practice examples of Soufflearnings, interviews with trainers and photos of real training situations. The evaluations questionnaires - developed for the process and the transfer of the methodology - will then be added to the manual, including guidelines for the use of the questionnaires. Necessary and/or useful links to the website will complete the new edition.

If a general modification of the manual will be carried out also depends on the results and feedbacks from the project intern evaluations.

Project website: Oral and written feedback (via email) was given by the project partners during the developing period of the website. A small issue may be addressed to the work load encountered on the web site translation. Too much translation requests not properly timely planned created some problems in the resources management.

A survey about usability of the website with questionnaires for the web users is installed. It is too early to describe findings from the online evaluation as only a few questionnaires have been answered so far.

An in-depth analysis of the website analytics statistics was made. 1.200 visits within 6 months seems not overwhelming, but average time of visit duration, actions on site, less bounce-rate and notable returning visits testify rather interested professional visitors. The peak of visits occurred in May, which was the month of training workshops in partner countries. Most hits and visits were accounted on entry page, of course, followed by page titles "FAQ", "Newsticker", "Project", "Workshops" and "Experiences". For strengthening the attractiveness of project and site the partners were invited to generate more news about progresses in their pilot trainings - continuous reporting about several small steps in process would be useful for increasing attentiveness. Thematic discussions need to be debated largely public on the site via articles, posts, comments and social media. As outlook it can be stated that fresh experiences, processes and progress with Soufflearning method needs to

be reported primarily in internet. This applies to all cases of application in organisations / countries which participate on implementing and transferring the innovation. Lively conversation about Soufflearning must take place on site. In future more effort needs to be focused on actively promotion and publishing user generated content. Pilot companies and pilot trainers who take part in project will be most effective voices to paint and present their best practise experiences.

Newsletter and Overview on funding possibilities have not been evaluated.

2. The Soufflearning process and the transfer of the methodology

The introduction workshops were carried out on 02-05-2011 (ITA), 12-05-2011 (FRA), 23-05-2011 (DE) and 26-05-2011 (CZ). Some adjustments were required during the intro workshop organization (on May the 2nd in Rende, Italy,) due to the late change of flight schedule of German trainers (the airplane was broken). The issue was solved compacting in one day all the activities of Training of Trainers and the intro-workshop.

Wila Bonn in all introduction workshops asked for oral or written feedback after the workshops. Through the feedbacks it became clear that the workshops clearly helped to understand the Soufflearning methodology - which offered new perspectives on the on-the-job-training. What was quite conceptional in first information came to life - supported by concrete examples. Role plays, group work, the detailed steps written down in the trainers' manual, feedback talks and other introduced methods to coach and train employees was declared helpful. Having a kick-off workshop was a new approach for participants but welcomed. All participating trainers had good skills and specialized qualifications. But participants also realized the importance of the trainers' skills needed for the accompaniments. Additions to the trainers' manual were suggested.

It has to be emphasized that building confidence in the enterprise is a main goal for the kick-off workshops as employees often fear to loose their workplace.

SMEs are very interested in Soufflearnings, but it is hard to convince them to pay for the training. In any way the methodology has to be adjusted to the specific circumstances in each region - which will be a task for the partners.

No changes on the initial planning and organization are intended although it might be useful to consider to calculate more than just half a day for the introduction workshop.

Four questionnaires were created and prepared to address 1. SME management, 2. SME employees, 3. Trainers and 4. Project partners. The questionnaires were not set up for running a marketing analysis but used to improve the work.

When editing the questionnaires - on basis of questionnaires used by Wila Bonn before - feedback was given by project partners. The questionnaires were utilized during the pre-tests. No request to change the questionnaires was given after the pre-tests. The questionnaires can be found in the document

'Performance_indicators_Evaluation_questionnaires_all' which is part of the interim report.

A discussion about quality indicators of Soufflearnings stated that quality indicators are already part of the trainers' manual developed in work package three. In contracts made between the training organisation or the project partner, the trainer and the trainee (SME management) the specific agreements on quality indicators have to be tracked and followed. Thus feedback talks with institutions and trainers are essential part of the methodology, questionnaires are supplied to support the quality management and the offered trainer's diary will help to self assess the performed work.

The evaluation of the pre-tests was based on the questionnaires 1-3 and were handed out to the respective target group. Detailed descriptions and results of the pre-tests can be found in the document 'Pre-test activities 2011 - Summary of Activities and Experiences' which are part of the interim report. The Soufflearning pre-tests by GipFar and WTT Zittau are still in progress and not finished yet. Partners reported the results from the evaluations on basis of the state of the art by the end of September. By the end of October the pre-tests should be finished in all partner organizations.

Anyway Alvit will edit guidelines for the use of the questionnaires to be added to the trainers' manual.

The main feedback from the pre-tests is as follows - starting with positive findings: The rhythm of the trainings as offered suits better in the daily activity of the company. The turnover in one company in the Czech Republic was increased. In another company a solution for problems with specific clients was found. Positive feedback was also given on the strong link between theory and practice, and the quick implementation. The intense personal contact between trainer, employer and employee gives strong identification with the initiated process. The flexibility of the methodology and relaxed climate in the trainings was lauded.

As weak points were identified that negative attitudes of trainees can affect the whole training and that this direct method might reveal personal weakness and thus causes fear to participate. When no customers are in the shop during the training the trainer needs to be ready for alternative training ideas. It was also stated that a lot of time is requested to fully implement the methodology in a training situation in a company - more than initially expected.

The exchange of experiences between the project partners and trainers was stressed as very important.

The questionnaires will be added to the trainers' manual in the second edition.

The weak points identified in the pre-tests will be considered when offering the second round of trainings. As it were mainly specific training situations that challenged the skills of the trainers the findings from these evaluations will not influence the methodology in general. Calculating a longer period / more time for the Soufflearnings will be considered.

3. The cooperation and communication between partners.

The website is important for the cooperation activities of partners and beyond as well as an essential part of the dissemination strategies towards public areas. The forum element on the website was installed for internal discussions between partners in May 2011. But in daily

work it showed yet neither added benefit nor real practicability for our communication culture. Thus the forum is parked stand-by now and will be re-activated for discussion in the broader dissemination phase in spring 2012.

The consortium meetings and its minutes are very important elements for the cooperation and implementation of the methodology in the partner countries. The minutes with agreements, schedules and deadlines were sent out after the meetings and approved by the partners. Between the meetings email, skype, telephone and telephone conference were used for exchange and coordination. Project Partner Questionnaires will be sent after finishing the last pre-test to the work package coordinator (Alvit).

Outlook

In the second year the evaluations will have a focus on impacts – both impacts on the partners of the project, and impacts on the organisations participating in local Soufflearnings. The final evaluation report on the Soufflearning concept thus will outline cultural differences, and give recommendations and implementation activities for a future spreading of the Soufflearning concept (Summary of all the partners' project results) The evaluation questionnaires, along with a review of the test evaluations that sets out the experiences of evaluation, will be compiled and made publicly available. The final report will be made available for online discussion before presentation at the final dissemination workshops.