



PREVENTION LAB 2.0: e-content Lab for psychosocial risks at work prevention. VISIONARY project transference

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Mid-term external evaluation report

From 01/10/2011 until 30/09/2012

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Introduction

The present Mid- Term External Report is aimed at ascertaining the project results and assessing the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the project and providing findings, conclusions and recommendations. This is the result of the review by an external expert with no previous direct or indirect links to the project partners.

The present external evaluation report is focused on the first project year (1st October 2011- 30th September 2012). It will aim to assess the quality of the partnership work; the importance of the activities undertaken during the period under review; the results and products achieved; and to gauge the project's effectiveness, efficiency and relevance to date. Moreover, it will also focus on how the perspectives of the different target groups and beneficiaries identified are being taken into account.

This report will also address whether or not the project components and results agreed are being delivered as scheduled. Based on the internal evaluation elements provided by the project coordinator and the partnership, this external evaluation also intends to determine unanticipated outcomes (both positive and/or negative). The report will also look at the dissemination and exploitation (valorisation) strategy of activities and outputs achieved to date.

Methodological approach

The review of the project documentation provided by the project contractor (project outcomes, reports, agendas and minutes of the project meetings, Moodle internal management platform) was aimed at assessing whether and how the final outputs of each work package contributed to the overall project objectives. Naturally, the interim project report to be submitted to the OAPEE by the project contractor could not be included. It should be noted that no further information sources were used (such as data from the internal evaluation exercises).

The review also uncovered a number of issues that the partners had to deal with which can be categorised as positive learning experiences. In addition, the external evaluator elaborated a set of reflections on those issues, which may be used as points for debate and consideration within the consortium or by each partner for future reference in similar activities.



Project Activities Accomplished to Date

The PREVENTION LAB 2.0: e-content Lab for psychosocial risks at work prevention. VISIONARY project transference is aimed at the transfer the VISIONARY project with the following objectives:

1. To meet European challenges highlighted by different documents in which concerns the prevention of psychosocial risks (violence, bullying, mobbing, stress etc) which can lead to unproductive behaviors, mental health disorders and absenteeism on the workplace.
2. Common approach about psychosocial risks at work: causes and consequences.
3. Identify European resources to prevent psychological risks at work.
4. Create new training pathways and collaborative environments based on the Web 2.0 to improve the quality of the training offer regarding the prevention of psychosocial risks at work.

The project is aimed at improving the competences of the trainers on psychosocial risks and health and safety at work. Nevertheless, it also promotes the labour conditions of workers and boosts their wellbeing.

During the period under review, the project activities and results (outputs) are the following:

WP1: Project Management and Coordination (from 10/2011 to 09/2012)

Meetings: The partnership met twice in Bilbao (Spain) on the 14th and 15th of February 2012 and 4th and 5th of September 2012 in Landau (Germany). Furthermore, the project contractor met the Spanish National Agency on the 11th of October 2011 and 12th July 2012.

Financial Management: All partners submitted two progress reports. The financial reports assure the correct use of the financial resources by all partners during the project

Communication Management: The partnership uses several tools to guarantee decision making and define tasks and deadlines: internal management platform, skype call, mail list, email and telephone.

Analysing the implementation of WP1, it is in the view of the external evaluator that the partnership gathers the necessary experience and expertise to develop this project successfully. The PREVENTION LAB 2.0: e-content Lab for psychosocial risks at work



prevention -VISIONARY project transference partnership demonstrated its readiness to ensure that the results would be followed up after completion of the project (i.e. updating, implementation, dissemination, transfer and follow-up activities). The approach followed by the WP leader (ASIMAG) was quite appropriate and in line with usual practice in transnational collaborative projects of this nature.

WP2: Analysis of Psychosocial Risk Prevention in Europe (from 11/2011 to 06/2012)

Products and Outcomes: The WP leader (ASIMAG) elaborated the Methodological approach to the implementation of this project phase including detailed guidelines to the development of National Reports in all partners' countries regarding psychosocial risks at the workplace: desk research, interviews, questionnaires, case studies, compilation of training resources, etc. The major product of this WP was the report *PREVENTION OF PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS AT WORK- RESOURCES, STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES DEVELOPED AT EUROPEAN LEVEL* which addresses the following questions:

- Policy framework at national level including public policies supporting the prevention of psychosocial risks at work, transposition of European directives, positive and negative experiences during the implementation of the tagged policies.
- Labour market situation in relation to the prevention of psychosocial risks including economic and social impact and statistical data.
- Training offer regarding psychosocial risks prevention at the work place: courses, programmes, profiles of the trainers, financing, etc.
- Good practices at national level that present initiatives, programmes, projects, etc that can be taken as good examples in the field and can be used as inspirational material.
- Feedback from experts and end users of the future Web 2.0 tool.
- Case Studies from workers affected by psychosocial risks.

The external evaluator considers that the methodological approach to the WP is appropriated and reflects the project needs. Furthermore, it takes in consideration a general overview of the latest theoretical trends and real situation of psychosocial risks at the work place in the partners' countries. It is also remarkable to consider the participation of the target groups and indirect beneficiaries at an earlier stage of the project.

The most important project product elaborated by the partnership, the report *PREVENTION OF PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS AT WORK- RESOURCES, STRATEGIES AND*



INITIATIVES DEVELOPED AT EUROPEAN LEVEL, is a high quality product that enables the reader to know more about the impact of psychosocial risks at the work place in Spain, Germany, Lithuania, Belgium and Bulgaria. The report compiles resources and feedback from trainers, workers and experts in order to assess and identify prevention measures. It is especially valuable to know the needs and recommendations of the potential users regarding the Web 2.0 tool that the partnership intends to develop.

WP3: Transference Definition (from 07/2012 to 11/2012)

Products and Outcomes: Guide for Transference- from VISIONARY to PREVENTION LAB 2.0 developed by the WP leader (ZEPF) aims at analysing the VISIONARY project in deep and showing the strengths and weaknesses of the conception. It also assures the transferability of the different sections and gives ideas for the realization in the new PREVENTION LAB 2.0 platform. It also aims to find new, modern, appropriate training pathways based on a Web 2.0 concept.

The external evaluator had access to a draft version of this document and the agreements discussed during the 2nd partnership meeting in Landau (Germany). It is the view of the external evaluator that this WP followed an appropriate collegial working methodology, which enabled the sharing the partners competencies, knowledge and experience. As regards lessons learned from WP3, it is evident that the initial assumption that the existing learning contents would cater for most of the project needs proved to be unrealistic, especially when taking into account the results of the previous WP. The Guide for Transference stresses the needed to maintain the approach already tested successfully during the implementation of the VISIONARY project; however the contents and the technological basis need to be updated. The VISIONARY project explored the bullying related issues in school context while the PREVENTION LAB is aimed at the prevention of psychosocial risks in working context. The partnership shall invest a specific effort to assure the transferability and in parallel meet the need indentified in the framework of WP2. It seems that the lack of training and awareness regarding psychosocial risks are the most important issues to be addressed.

WP7: Valorization (from 10/2011 to 09/2013)

Products and Outcomes: The partnership coordinated by the WP leader (ASIMAG) produced the following products: Dissemination plan; Project Logo; Template to produce the final project products; Website (www.preventionlab.eu) available in all partners' languages; Leaflet available in all partners' languages; Project Groups on Social Networks (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter); Project Poster; Identification of 100 key



actors in all partners' countries and elaboration and translation of the first project newsletter; Dissemination Report (draft version).

It is the view of the external evaluator that the approach followed in WP7 is appropriate for the PREVENTION LAB 2.0 project objectives, if perhaps a little conventional. The strategy followed favoured the dissemination over the exploitation activities, and tended to have quite a broad approach in terms of the targets to reach. The planned actions and instruments are not yet finalised as the strategy is rightly open to being updated whenever appropriate, by adding more activities or different tools.

The majority of project partners has the experience and shows willingness to undertake different valorisation activities in their country, covering different target publics, a number of them organizing a conference, and some of them attending conferences and, according to their possibilities, undertaking appropriate dissemination/exploitation activities. The project partners have undertaken to share responsibility on this matter, and their roles and tasks have been defined and will be recognizable online.

The partnership provides for links (directly or via relays and networks) with representative decision-makers/stakeholders and professionals in the fields targeted by the project. The involvement of key stakeholders and beneficiaries – including national and international, non-profit and corporate ones – has stimulated further interest in the PREVENTION LAB 2.0 project.

It is important to highlight the complementary dissemination actions: face to face activities (attendance to conferences, phone contacts and meetings with members of the target group) and online activities (website, presence in social and professional networks, etc).

As weak points, it seems that not all partners are carrying out the same amount of dissemination actions and the exploitation strategy is still in a very early stage.

WP8: Evaluation (from 10/2011 to 09/2013)

Products and Outcomes: Internal and External Evaluation Methodology aimed to assure the monitoring and control of the project activities and coordinated by ESVUISI.

This WP is highly valued by the external evaluation as it is relevant in relation to the needs of the target groups and to the full achievement of the objectives of the project. Moreover, evaluation is crucial for the project's success. Besides, it also covers the formal and contractual aspects of the project including acceptance of deliverables,



payments by the funding body, contract amendments if required. Furthermore, it ensures the highest possible quality outcomes of the project, and its best possible future impacts.

The external evaluation stresses that the methodology and procedures applied by the partnership in their internal monitoring and evaluation are now more appropriate but still require committed and continuous attention.

The internal evaluation tools, even if traditional (questionnaires), are very detailed enabling to assess the whole project implementation. The external evaluator didn't have access to the Mid Term Internal Evaluation Report; however through the analysis of the conclusions of the first questionnaires provided in the 2nd meeting in Landau, it enables to appreciate a high degree of satisfaction with the project. Partners are aware of their weaknesses and propose solutions to overcome the challenges and problems they have to face.

It is especially valuable to stress the implementation of Pilot Committees in all countries favouring a closer assessment of the project implementation at national level.

Evaluation Criteria

This external evaluation report should mirror the usual evaluation criteria and take into account the nature of the PREVENTION LAB 2.0 project and the stage at which the evaluation is carried out (end of first project year). Therefore, it must be noted that this mid-term evaluation report will rather focus on questions of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, because at this stage impact is not yet of highest priority and for that reason is difficult to assess. The following evaluation criteria and their definition correspond to the traditional practice by the OECD and the European Commission.

Project Effectiveness

Effectiveness is the extent to which the project's / intervention's objectives are being achieved or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance. Effectiveness is also used as a measure of (or judgment about) the merit or worth of an activity, i.e. the extent to which an intervention has attained, or is expected to attain, its major relevant objectives efficiently and with an anticipated positive local or national impact. To measure effectiveness is to assess the extent to which shifts have taken place that support the project's goals.

During the period under review, the project's overall accomplishments seem satisfactory. However, the effectiveness of the PREVENTION LAB 2.0 project varies



depending on the different activities and measures concerned. Partners have adopted a proactive approach and improved the communication between them, which has become more frequent and fruitful during the project first year.

Project Efficiency

Efficiency is a criteria that enables measuring how (economically) resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.

To date, the project is efficient and it seems to increase through time. In order to achieve this, the partnership members dealt in a more efficient way with occasional lack of time and/or with tasks requiring more time than initially foreseen and some unexpected external circumstances. The individual partners reorganized their own timetable to work to existing or new deadlines, communicated more regularly, asked for support from the coordinator and other partners when it became necessary and even replaced/added more staff.

Project Relevance

A project's relevance is measured by the extent to which the objectives of the development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, local needs, priorities and partners' policies. Retrospectively, the question of relevance often becomes a question as to whether the objectives of an intervention or its design are still appropriate given changed circumstances.

The feedback provided during the dissemination actions show a tangible relevance that is limited but it is increasing, especially after the development of the project major product: the Web 2.0 tool.

Project Impact and Sustainability

Concerning the PREVENTION LAB 2.0 project's impact and sustainability, and as previously mentioned, it would be premature to evaluate them at this stage of its implementation.

However, if the PREVENTION LAB 2.0 project wants to be a laboratory for innovation, it will need to have a real and clear impact at the level of the public concerned with its activities and outcomes. Innovation is about ideas and the transformation of those ideas into value creating outcomes, i.e. into processes, products and services. Innovations include breakthrough ideas that lead to new products or services, and incremental ideas that improve the way processes are undertaken, or products are



manufactured. Innovation is about the creation of new knowledge and the use of that knowledge.

Therefore, if the PREVENTION LAB 2.0 project, as an instrument of vocational training policy, aspires to have an innovative impact, regular adaptations will be necessary with regard to the processes as well as the range of its activities and outcomes and their dissemination and valorisation.

Overall quality of the project activities and results to date

On average, thus far the level of accomplishment of the project can be assessed has 100%. The project finished the activities on time by respecting the project deadlines and elaborated the established results and outcomes. Furthermore, all products respect the degrees of quality required by the LLP and respect the needs of the partners and the target group.

The present external evaluation report should be focused on whether or not promised project components and results are delivered and it should compare project outcomes against the assessed needs of the targeted participants and other beneficiaries. The evaluation would also be directed at finding unanticipated outcomes. Moreover, it should also highlight how the perspectives of the different stakeholders have been taken into account, from planning to data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

The methodological approach of this evaluation should be focused on yielding data that would help answering the relevant evaluation questions. The data to be gathered by the project managers on an on-going basis should have been aligned with the overall goal and objectives that the PREVENTION LAB 2.0 project is intended to achieve.

In this sense, the overall quality is higher and the partners' commitment is positively assessed. The efforts of the partnership are reflected in the first year products that are concluded as previewed. In fact it is also worth of mention the production of products in other languages that are not covered by the project proposal (the website, newsletter and leaflet are available in Dutch). Furthermore, the external evaluator assessed the partnership started to work on WP4 which is intended to start in November 2012, two months after the conclusion of the project 1st year.



Conclusions

One first conclusion that can be drawn is that the elements provided for this mid-term external evaluation are very elucidating and informative. The information that has been made available enables some overall conclusions to be drawn in relation to the potential accomplishment of the various objectives identified.

The partnership used the human or financial resources in an effective way leading to productive cooperation situations. During the period under review, the partnership succeeded in reducing the deadlines and tasks were delivered on schedule. The communication between partners was smooth and regular, and future tasks were clearly defined and approved within the framework of balanced and effective project management.

The work thus far achieved by this partnership proves that transnational networks are relevant and that they address a clear need in the field of vocational education and training in Europe. The new political context and its focus on reinforced European co-operation in the field make this instrument still more relevant.

The quality of the partnership and the work developed in coherent with the project proposal.

Recommendations for future consideration

1. To concentrate dissemination and exploitation efforts in more focused target populations.

In view of the consortium's commitment to continue to support, make available and publicise the PREVENTION LAB 2.0 outputs, a possible avenue would be to concentrate dissemination and exploitation efforts in more focused target populations, closer to the intended target users of the PREVENTION LAB 2.0, since the more general approach has already been done during the project time span. The aim would be to be able, in a certain timeframe, to assess how many trainers and workers use the future Web 2.0 tool.

2. To undertake focussed actions aimed at key actors

To this end, focussed actions should be undertaken aimed at key actors at European and national level in order to raise awareness about the PREVENTION LAB Web 2.0



tool. CEDEFOP or OSHA might prove to be a very valuable “partner” in promoting a tool that enables to better qualify the trainers in the field of health and safety at work.

3. To engage in an in-depth debate on exploitation issues

In terms of exploitation of the PREVENTION LAB 2.0 outputs, the partners need to continue to exchange views and agree on the best way to address issues such as: how will the project outputs be used by as many target users as possible? What actions need to be taken to ensure the sustainability of this venture? Who will be responsible to make that happen and at what cost? How could the enhancements that each partner makes to the PREVENTION LAB 2.0 tool be integrated in all the other linguistic versions, thus ensuring the tool does not become outdated.

4. To consider the impact of transnational demand

In considering these questions, the consortium might also discuss the impact of potential demand for the PREVENTION LAB 2.0 tool from users who come from countries other than those covered by the consortium partners. This has a number of implications regarding the provision of support services that may be made available to users, such as animators for the discussion fora, experts to advise users or provide answers to requests for information (services which, if present, would greatly increase the appeal of the PREVENTION LAB 2.0 tool to potential users).

5. To seek endorsement for the PREVENTION LAB 2.0 tool

In addition, it might be quite useful to try and get some kind of reputed endorsement concerning the Web 2.0 tool contents, which could help with further awareness raising within the very specific group of target users of the tool.