



PROJECT IMPACT EVALUATION

WP8

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INTRODUCTION

Leonardo da Vinci innovation transfer HENGE project with a duration of two years support comparison of good practices between different countries, cooperation of trainers, target group representatives, policy makers, business persons, teachers. The projects offer those involved in vocational training a chance to learn about business possibilities in rural areas using heritage and natural resources. The HENGE project proposes to contribute to rural entrepreneurship education by geographically exporting innovative training solutions to encourage youth, women and older people across Europe who live in rural areas to evaluate and best exploit the potential of their built cultural and natural heritage for alternative enterprise and agro-tourism, whilst ensuring sustainability of these resources.

The partnership brings together a diverse range of organisations across Europe all with a common interest in resource evaluation and rural entrepreneurship. Countries represented include Spain, Romania, United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Turkey and Lithuania.

The product of the project is a training manual to aid those in rural areas to evaluate and best exploit the potential of their built, natural and cultural resources to set up a micro-company or agro-tourism business, thus aiding and encouraging them to consider self employment as a viable source of stable employment.

The long-term impacts include improvement of the quality and effectiveness of vocational training for groups at risk in rural communities as an active means of combating unemployment.

The study is based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses. Workshops, expert interviews, questionnaire were used to evaluate the impact of the project.



1. REVIEW OF THE HENGE PROJECT

1.1 HENGE overall objectives

The HENGE project was built on results from a previous project and has the following main objectives:

- To improve key skills and competencies of groups with few or no formal qualifications facing socio-economic disadvantage for personal and vocational development.
- To provide groups facing socio-economic disadvantage with lifelong learning opportunities

1.2. HENGE specific objectives

- Planning and implementation of a demand analysis of competence in rural development and entrepreneurship on the labour market in the innovation-importing partner countries.
- Adapting the results and products from the PANORAMA Grundtvig Partnership project to the requirements resulting from the demand analysis by the development partners, the innovation-exporting countries.
- Transferring the training materials to the LMS
- Translating the results (training modules, user manual, and information material) into the languages of the innovation-importing partner countries.
- Use of the material as part of a pilot phase in the innovation-importing partner countries.
- Evaluating the pilot phase, to allow the training material to be fine tuned to the target group needs.

- Finalizing the project products (training modules, tutor programme, user manual, and information material) based on feedback from the pilot phase.
- Implementing an accompanying wide dissemination and valorisation and awareness campaign of the project results - particularly as far as their implementation is concerned in all partner countries.

1.3. Proposed outcomes

- Development of a training programme which will assist people in rural communities to consider self employment and to incorporate green practices into their business ethics.
 - Provision of tools to evaluate natural and heritage resources to stimulate business growth.
 - Transfer of all content to a VTP (e-learning system).
 - Translation of results into the six partner languages.
 - Development of a project website & dissemination materials.

1.4. Target groups

Hence project target groups were:

- young people, women and older people from rural areas;
- the unemployed and people at a disadvantage at the labour market;
- people looking for new (self-)employment opportunities;
- people with no formal qualifications and
- people made redundant due to the restructuring of the economy who need re-training and training in new qualifications;



1.5. The impact of the project

The short-term impacts of the HENGE project is – the improvement of the professional skills of people at risk of social exclusion either socially or geographically. The project will substantially improve the quality of learning in disadvantaged rural areas in the EU by offering innovative learning opportunities across boundaries.

The long-term impacts include improvement of the quality and effectiveness of vocational training for groups at risk in rural communities. In addition employers suffering from labour shortages will also be beneficiaries of the improved quality of vocational training. The project will provide an active means of combating unemployment.

2. HENGE PROJECT IMPACT ANALYSES IN PARTNERS' COUNTRIES

2.1. Methodology of the Study

The objective of this study is to identify what impact HENGE project in overall and project product – training modules have on project target group, rural communities, sustainable development, the social, economic and environmental aspects. Project impact assessment was made in all partners' countries – Bulgaria, Ireland (United Kingdom), Lithuania, Romania, Spain, Turkey, Scotland (United Kingdom). This study was carried out by collecting information from each partner country.

The study is based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses.

The quantitative assessment was based on the questionnaire which was made by closed questions with answers: agree, not agree, not sure.

The qualitative analyses was based on workshops, expert interviews, a survey of VET professionals, target group representatives, policy makers, rural communities' representatives.

Questions were designed to raise basic issues on the assessment.

2.2. Quantitative impact evaluation research

In order to make a research was used a **quantitative statistical method**. Quantitative statistical methods involving baseline studies, the precise identification of baseline conditions, definition of objectives, target setting, rigorous performance evaluation and outcome measurement. Such methods can be costly, limited in the types of impacts which can be accurately measured, and may pose difficulties for inference of cause and effect. Some degree of quantification may be necessary in all impact assessments, in order to evaluate the success of the intervention and the magnitude of any adverse effects.

The goal of the quantitative impact evaluation research is – to evaluate the project impact on rural business opportunities and skills, natural resources and sustainability according to target groups, rural communities, decision makers opinion.

The objectives are:

1. To make a questionnaire and distribute it to respondents;
2. To make an analyses using Microsoft Excel programme;
3. To make conclusions.

This study was carried out by collecting information from the partnership, a questionnaire was sent to the contact people of the projects during July, August and September 2012. Responsible persons were asked to evaluate what significance and impact of the HENGE project had on the target group, rural communities, decision makers, vocational training. Were decided to make 50 questionnaires for each partner's country – in overall 7 countries and 350 questionnaires. For distribution of questionnaires there were used Survey Monkey and e-mail, some face-to-face meetings, some interviewed on the phone.

Each question had three answer choices: Agree, Disagree and Not sure.

A total of 346 representatives of partnership answered to the questionnaire: 2 questionnaires were spoilt and 2 – were not given back. Table 1 illustrates respondents’ answers in numbers, percentage analysis is given in diagrammes.

Table 1. Respondets’ answers in numbers

Question	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
Delivery of the HENGE modules within rural communities will bring positive benefits to members of the target group and the communities they live in by presenting new ideas and opportunities for them and their local area.	309	12	25
The HENGE project will support improvements in the local environment as people in rural communities will better understand the value of their local heritage and therefore not wish to see it damaged.	282	16	48
The product – Training Modules – created by the HENGE project will encourage people residing in rural areas to consider starting a business and help them improve their situation in the labour market.	283	21	42
Delivery of the HENGE modules in rural areas will support rural development and be an aid to maintaining rural communities.	295	12	39

Demographic characteristics of respondents

The questionnaires were answered by 191 men and 155 women (table 1 illustrates respondents’ answers about their gender and position).

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of respondents

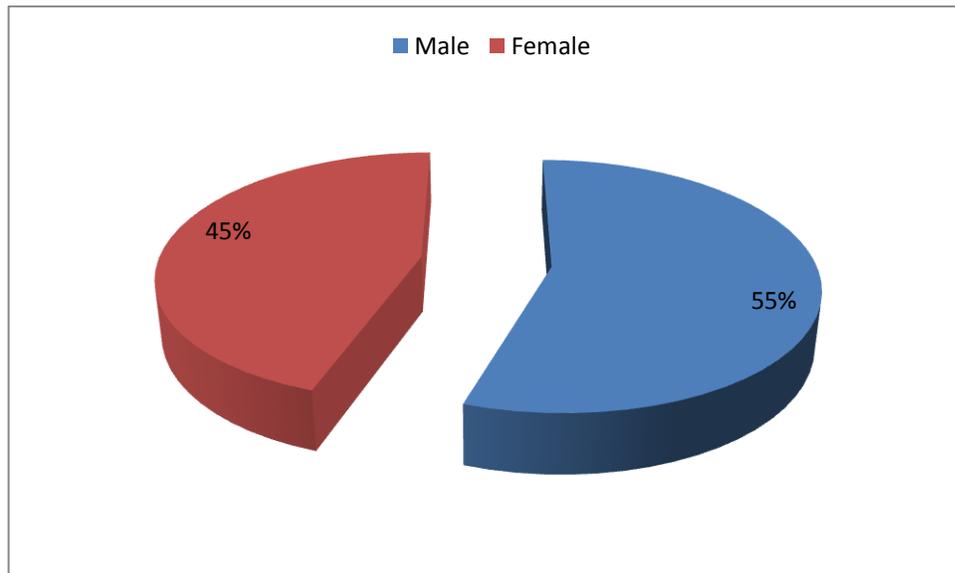
Respondents gender	Women 155	Men 191				
Respondent’s position	Unemployed	Starting rural business	Disable	Represent. of rural community	Represent. of Municipality	Other

	115	84	25	90	22	10
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1

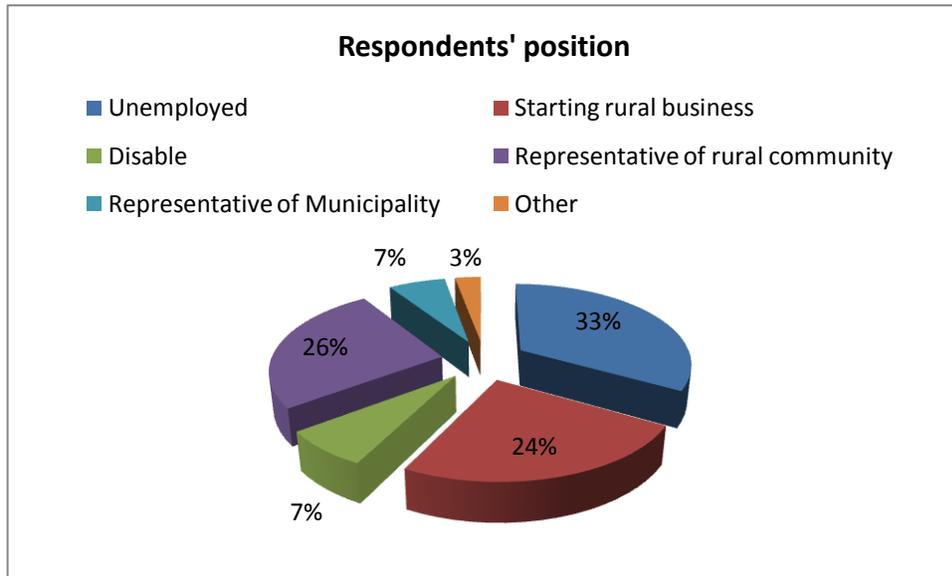
diagramme illustrates the gender of respondents' percentage – 45% – women and 55% – men.

1 Figure. Respondents' gender



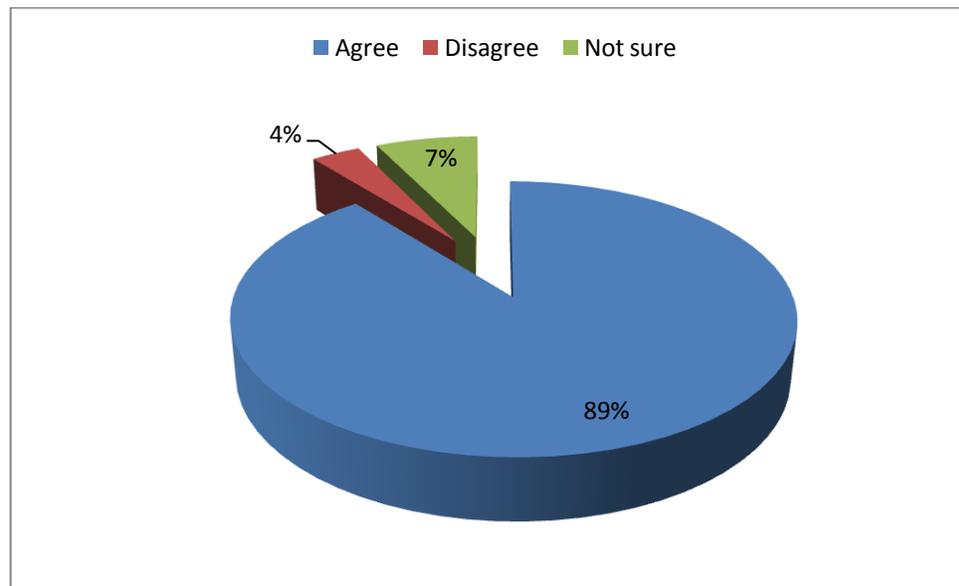
The largest number of respondents' were unemployed people – 115 (33%), second largest number – representatives of rural communities – 90 (26%). Quite a large number of people who are going to start their own business or just started – 84 (24%), disabled were 25 (7%) and 22 (7%) representatives of municipality, other respondents 10 (3%) were students (look at 2 table, 2 figure).

Figure 2. Respondents' position



The first question-statement was “Delivery of the HENGE modules within rural communities will bring positive benefits to members of the target group and the communities they live in by presenting new ideas and opportunities for them and their local area”.

Figure 3. Respondents' view on positive benefits of HENGE modules for rural communities and target group

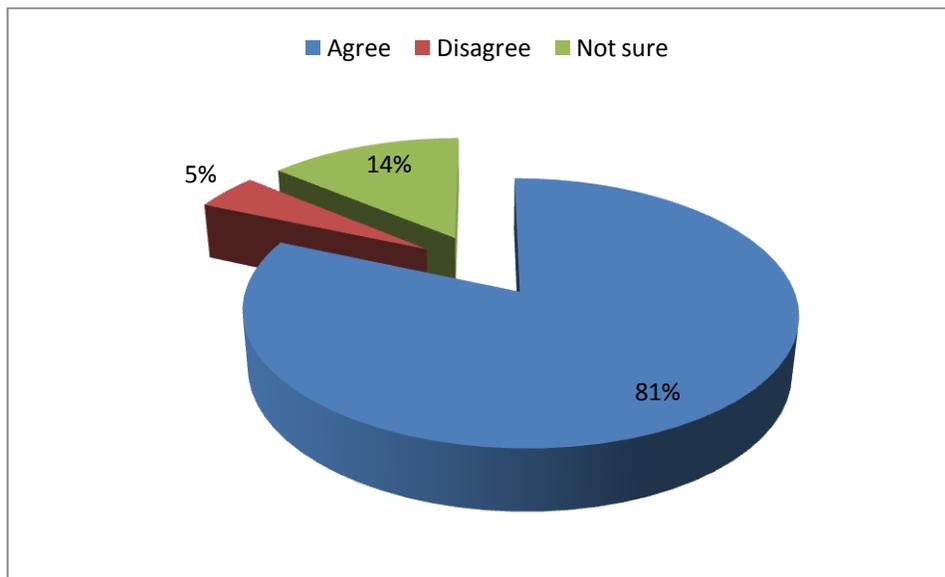


3 figure shows that 89 percent of respondents' agree with the statement, 7% are not sure and 4% disagree.

The responses suggest that HENGE project gave benefit to all members of rural areas by presenting new ideas and opportunities for them.

The 4 figure presents respondents' view on HENGE support improvements in the local environment and better understanding of the value of the local heritage.

Figure 4. Respondents' view on HENGE support improvements in the local environment and better understanding of the value of the local heritage



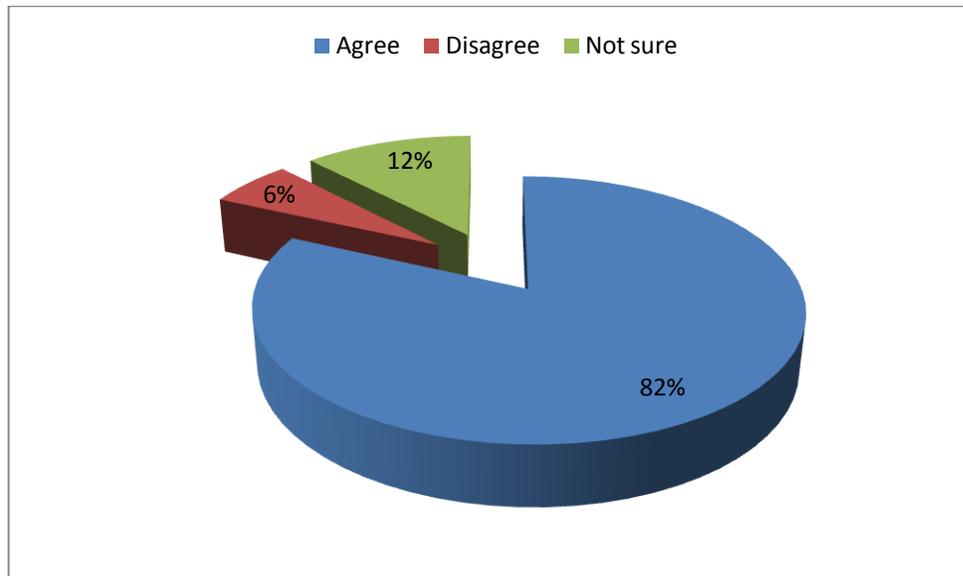
81% of respondents' agree with the statement, they agree that HENGE project will support improvements in the local environment as people in rural communities will better understand the value of their local heritage and therefore not wish to see it damaged. 14% of respondents' are not sure of the statement idea and 5% disagree with the statement.

According to survey results it can be concluded that the most of the respondents' considered, that HENGE project will support improvements in the local environment as people in rural communities will better understand the value of their local heritage and therefore not wish to see it damaged.

The third statement was "The product – Training Modules – created by the HENGE project will encourage people residing in rural areas to consider starting a business and

help them improve their situation in the labour market“. Respondents’ attitudes expressed in the 5 figure.

Figure 5. Respondents' view on HENGE product – training modules as a tool to encourage people to start business

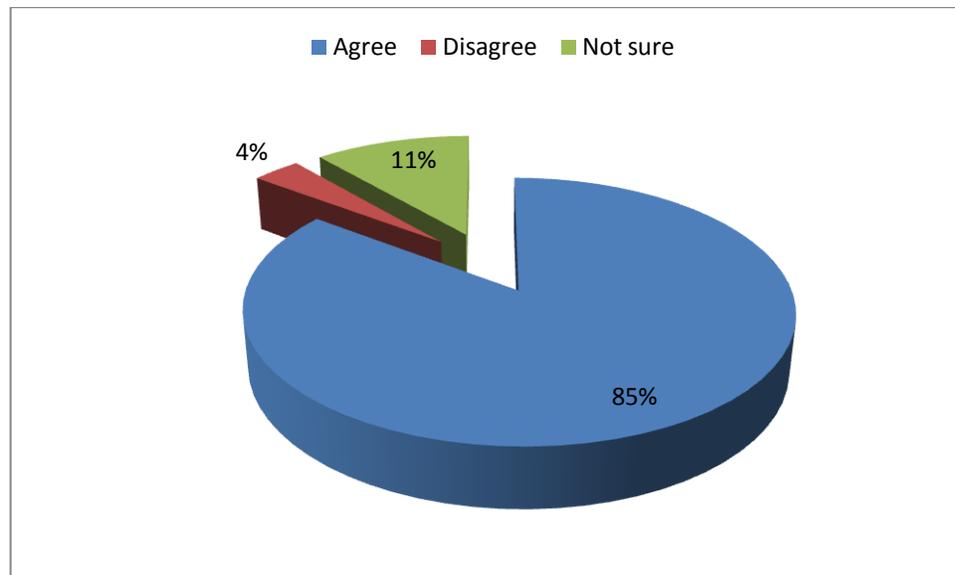


82% of respondents’ agreed with the statement, 12 % – are not sure, 6 % – disagree.

It can be concluded that training modules will encourage people to consider starting a business.

To the statement “Delivery of the HENGE modules in rural areas will support rural development and be an aid to maintaining rural communities“, respondents’ gave such opinions: 85% – agreed with the statement, 11% – were not sure about the statement and 4% – disagreed (look at the 6 figure).

Figure 6. Respondents' view on HENGE modules for rural development



According to the survey results, respondents agreed that HENGE modules in rural areas will support rural development and be an aid to maintaining rural communities.

Conclusions of the quantitative research:

In accordance with respondents' answers to the questionnaire could be given conclusions:

1. HENGE modules will bring positive benefits to members of the target group and the communities they live in by presenting new ideas and opportunities for them and their local area.
2. The HENGE project will support improvements in the local environment as people in rural communities will better understand the value of their local heritage and therefore not wish to see it damaged.

3. The product – Training Modules – will encourage people residing in rural areas to consider starting a business and help them improve their situation in the labour market.
4. Delivery of the HENGE modules in rural areas will support rural development and be an aid to maintaining rural communities.

2.3. Qualitative impact evaluation research

Qualitative methods suitable for investigating more complex and/or sensitive types of social impacts, e.g. intra-household processes, policy issues and investigation of reasons for statistical relationships and policy implications. These methods generally require high levels of skill, and may be relatively costly. Some degree of qualitative interpretation may be necessary in all impact assessments, in order to evaluate the causes of impacts which have been observed.

Partnerships have had a great impact on training and competences in vocational institutions and other organisations. During their visits to partner organisations, participants often adopted new practices which they then started using and developed further in their own organisations. These included new practical teaching and guidance tools and new teaching materials. Projects had also led to new teaching modules.

All partner organisations during all project time had many meetings, seminars, workshops with a big variety of people – young unemployed people, women, elderly, young entrepreneurs, people starting business, students, policy and decision makers, other authorities, project partners. This allowed to sum all ideas, minds, thoughts said by these people and to make a summary of long-term impact of HENGE project.

2.3.1. Impact of project on vocational training

Project has/had a positive impact on cooperation between vocational training institutions and employers. HENGE Project have helped rural communities, local policy makers, stakeholders learn about the international work of the partnership. Marketing of training provision locally also improved. Regional service providers have adopted processes developed for people with special needs. Project had had an impact on

training practices of organisations, for example, and improved the quality of vocational training in the partner organisations.

One of positive impact for the VET institutions – innovations in teaching and learning methods, they can be used in continuing training for adults.

Regarding the impact on the VET-systems, it has to be stressed that project activities contributed to a general improvement of quality in the initial vocational training.

2.3.2. Impact on local communities

The impact of the project and training modules on local communities has been quite big. Of course, it is difficult to measure long-term impact, but representatives of rural communities stated that training modules will give great opportunity for local people for several years or maybe more, especially if someone creates his/her rural business. Also it was said that training material is different from others, it is new, that's why it is interesting and attractive for rural people. Information about project was spread widely for all communities of the partnerships' region. People were involved into discussions, workshops.

Project in overall and training modules will bring benefits to local communities by helping to create jobs, capacity building, technology, contracting and business opportunities and social investment in the surrounding area. They can also give rise to concerns, for example over environmental and social impacts.

Training modules of the project helps to

- identify valuable environmental resources in the community and surrounding area that may be useful for creating a new rural business;
- evaluate the community's capacity for additional development given environmental protection priorities;
- determine which groups in the community may be directly or indirectly affected by the project.

2.3.3. Impact on intercultural communication

Organisations had become more international through participation in the project and their interest in international cooperation had often grown. Language and cultural skills were the most common skills developed during participation in the project. Participants learned to communicate and interact better in international situations. Project had provided organisations with new opportunities and ideas for mobility. Models and practices for mobility that were designed in projects were also used to develop practices in home organisations.

Organisations also acquired new international partners and they often continued working with them even after the end of the project.

In addition to international cooperation, organisations had increased their cooperation with a variety of other organisations involved in vocational education and training, enterprises and other organisations and stakeholders that had an interest in the theme of the project across different sectors locally, nationally and regionally. Project meetings and intervening activities had raised the team spirit within the participating organisations

Exchanging experiences with colleagues from abroad was regarded as rewarding and interesting. It was inspiring to realise that partners had similar problems to which you could try to find solutions together.

2.3.4. Impact on IT skills

IT skills of the target group improved as they use new learning platform, such as Moodle. IT skills were developed by project participants, project partners as well as groups of people who participated in pilot testing of training modules. Participants of pilot testing had to learn to use new tools during project modules pilot testing. The use of new IT solutions has also aroused interest in other new IT tools.



2.3.5. Impact on further collaboration of the partnership

Respondents to the survey considered the long-term impact of partnerships to be significant.

The majority of organisations had continued their cooperation with their project partners after the end of the projects. In most cases, cooperation was continued in the context of established networks, international events, mobility and new projects. Transfer of information was also common among partners.

Planning of new projects was common. Especially those organisations that rated the impact of their project as significant had continued cooperation in another project. According to the final reports, it was easier to start new projects when you had worked together with your partners before. Further more, target group representatives and authorities wish to meet and collaborate after the end of the project.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Based on the survey and the final reports, the end products of partnership projects related to training and its development or to management and development of processes. The most common concrete end products were:

new training material surveys about training in certain sectors sectoral glossaries, and a variety of publications, such as websites, CDs, reports, brochures, guidebooks or other documents relating to the theme of the project or about good practices collected during the project. It was also common to organise seminars for the partners or for a wider audience around the theme of the project.

2. The majority of respondents to the survey rated the impact of the project as significant for rural life. According to the survey the project products and results had had the biggest impact on partner organisations, target groups, rural communities.

3. Exchanging experiences with colleagues from abroad was regarded as rewarding and interesting. It was inspiring to realise that partners had similar problems to which you could try to find solutions together. Job-shadowing was regarded as very useful because it developed teachers' professional skills in addition to increasing motivation. Mobilities also helped improve administration of international exchanges and placements, by providing information about students of partner institutions, about their studies and preferences regarding leisure activities and accommodation



REFERENCES

1. The final reports of Leonardo da Vinci partnerships 2008–2012.
2. European Shared Treasure. EST database. www.europeansharedtreasure.eu
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ANNEX

HENGE PROJECT IMPACT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Delivery of the HENGE modules within rural communities will bring positive benefits to members of the target group and the communities they live in by presenting new ideas and opportunities for them and their local area.

- Agree
- Disagree
- Not Sure

2. The HENGE project will support improvements in the local environment as people in rural communities will better understand the value of their local heritage and therefore not wish to see it damaged.

- Agree
- Disagree
- Not Sure

3. The product – Training Modules – created by the HENGE project will encourage people residing in rural areas to consider starting a business and help them improve their situation in the labour market.

- Agree
- Disagree
- Not Sure



4. Delivery of the HENGE modules in rural areas will support rural development and be an aid to maintaining rural communities.

- Agree
- Disagree
- Not Sure

5. Your gender

- Male
- Female

6. You are

- Unemployed
- Starting rural business
- Disable
- Representative of rural community
- Representative of Municipality
- Other