

CoPIM Seminar

Results and Reflection

Innovation and mainstreaming: Cultivating social innovation
in ESF Programmes
Warsaw, 4th April 2008

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Introduction

Here are some of the results of the workshops run at the seminar led by the CoP on Innovation and Mainstreaming in Warsaw in April 2008.

The conclusions of each workgroup are presented as well as the reflections by the Steering Group about the seminar.

Workshop 1: Validation of innovative results / products

The workshop started with hearing participants' expectations for this part of the seminar. Expectations were to:

- pick up ideas,
- learn from experience of the others and to share experience,
- see how people react to different approaches to innovation,
- learn about the tools,
- find about CoP.

The presentations were given by:

- Maria do Carmo Nunes (Portugal) - the validation process,
- Jenny Charlier (Belgium) - how to present products and how communication is important in the validation process,
- Renáta Haroková (Czech Republic) – the adaptation of the Portuguese method of validation into Czech context and success MA achieved in validating products.

The reflections and inspirations to come from the discussion were:

1. If the validation process is to be successful, many actors need to be involved in and feel as owners of the process. Without engagement and debate between all actors nothing would be achieved.
2. Communication is a critical issue in the validation process.
3. Transferability: if something is transferable – is it still innovative? When discussing innovation it is important to discuss transferability conditions.
4. The true legitimization occurs when innovation is incorporated in the work processes and services.
5. Potential for mainstreaming (modify + adopt innovations according to the comments of potential users) – important feedback.
6. Creating the culture.
7. Questions for the new ESF programming period 2007 – 2013:
 - Complexity of the method,
 - Voluntary vs obligatory,
 - Criteria for project application according to future validation,
 - Credibility.

Workshop 2: Mainstreaming innovative solutions

We started with hearing people's expectations for these workshops. The expectations were to hear about different approaches to innovation and mainstreaming, to pick up ideas, to present a tool and to network and find out about CoPs. We heard from:

- Christian Vaske in Estonia, about getting compulsive gamblers back into the workforce and mainstreaming this process into legislation.
- Margo Kerkhof in the Netherlands where they produced a manual for mainstreaming: "Selling innovation".
- Fernanda Mora in France where they produced a self e-learning mainstreaming kit.

The reflections and inspirations to come from the following discussions were:

- There are lots of ideas around that can be adapted and used in ones own context. The question is how to keep up this circulation of ideas?
- Sharing ideas creates the sharing of ideas.
- Tools or processes on their own are not enough. You also need persistence and enthusiasm.
- Publishing information or providing decision-makers with results is not enough. You have to connect decision-makers and provide opportunities for them to come together to solve their problems.
- Mainstreaming should be part of the initial plan.
- Managing Authority websites should have links to the CoPs to give them greater visibility.

Workshop 3: Building skills for innovation

The workshop started with hearing people's expectations for this part of the seminar. They were the same as for the workshop 1.

The presentations were given by:

- Dorothee Wagner (UK Ni) - the Rickter Scale - a simple tool developed by the Rickter Company, widely used in the ESF projects in the UK,
- Stefan Schultz – Trieglaff (Germany) - transnational thematic networking,
- Javier Sáez del Álamo (Spain) - three models of networking and how they contribute to building skills for innovation.

The reflections and inspirations to come from the discussion were:

1. Networking helps to build and reinforce skills.
2. Transferability of the results is easier between network members.

3. Networks help to incorporate different ideas into the work processes (Spanish examples:
 - incorporation of social clauses into the public procurement procedures, creation of social companies).
 - Communication is critical in the process (involvement of policy makers).

Workshop 4: Promoting and evaluating innovation

We heard from Tony Tyrell about the framework from the CoP for Programme management, Louis Vervloet about PCM for innovation projects, and Piotr Sarecki about identifying innovation in National Thematic Networks. The key issues to come from this workshop were:

1. The importance of communication (horizontal and vertical) and clarity of focus. The question is: How do we connect those two between the different layers of management?
2. The need to know the market before innovation as well as having a supporting structure for that innovation.
3. A question: how do you set the criteria for the innovative part of the project?
4. Every product/process has to be adopted to the particular context.
5. Programme Managers should include a quality approach, not just a financial one.
6. The marriage between innovation and mainstreaming. Mainstreaming proposals should include that marriage.
7. The responsibility for Programme Managers to provide networking solutions.

After Action Review

These were the organisers reflections after the event, using the After Action Review method for reviewing an event, based on three questions:

- What did you expect?
- What happened?
- What would you do differently next time?

What did we expect?

- I expected a significant number of esf participants at management level
- I expected a high number of Polish participants
- I expected examples and stories of innovation and mainstreaming activity of other Member State
- I saw it as an opportunity for worthwhile discussion with other people from other MS
- I hoped to hear examples that would be helpful for my own context

What happened?

- There was a low number of ESF participants at management level
- There was a fairly low number of Polish participants
- There were many examples and stories of innovation and mainstreaming activities in other Member States
- The interaction and context was informal and a good sharing atmosphere
- I got lots of examples of tools and experiences
- There was a lot of opportunity for worthwhile discussion
- Because of the construction of the event I could only go to half of the presentations
- Bev's facilitation procedure worked... i.e. opening the floor to talk after each was helpful
- some people said it was the best seminar they had been to of its kind.
- I liked the discussion in whole group
- Splitting into smaller groups where people made a summary was important
- We hear the experiences of other cops in the final session
- At the last minute the ??? association didn't come
- The feeling i got from that meeting was very positive - pilot study of how to present tools
- The initial session with SG members was informal, focused on people and was not held behind the tables at the front. This was important for setting the tone of the workshop.

What would we do similarly/differently next time?

Do similarly

- a short presentation of many tools

- event format with that workshop methodology - informal, lots of discussion
- invite members of other CoPs to present their tools

Do differently

- Preparation with ESF players: give them more notice of the event, have more direct contact with them, consult with them about the event.
- perhaps have even shorter presentations and with more discussion
- invite presenters to bring hard copies of tools to be exhibited
- do more research to identify even more innovative experiences
- run the event over two days
- see this as part of a regular series of events, building on the methodology
- hold more such events the day after ESF admin meetings
- pay attention to the recruitment and preparation of external facilitators
- video the presentations and interviews with workshop participants