

Final Evaluation Summary Report



NextStep – Evaluation of the project

The evaluation of the project focused on the contributions of each partnership meeting and the partners' evaluation of the project's progress and results. The data for the evaluation was gathered from documents presented during joint working as well as by questionnaires answered by each partner after each meeting. The aim of the questionnaires was to gather information about the partners' experiences and assessments of the work of the partnership. The results were used to develop the work programme of the partnership and to specify the key concepts and working methods during the implementation of the joint working programme. The evaluation questions for the partners were the following:

- a) How well did the partnership meeting address its objectives and the project's aims?
- b) Did the case studies/data presented in the meeting correspond with the aims of the project (e.g. relevance, clarity and correspondence with the 5-stage model)?
- c) What was the most relevant content or contribution of the meeting; does it impact your own/your organization's practice in the future?
- d) Were you satisfied with the practical organization of the meeting (e.g. agenda, time schedule, place)?
- e) Was communication between partners before/ in between the meetings effective; if not, how should it be improved?
- f) Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the quality of the partner meetings in the future?

What follows is a concise report based partly on the partners' answers concerning joint working and its gains and relevance as well as documents produced during the partnership. A more detailed summary of the partners' answers to each question concerning the four meetings is attached at the end of this document. Detailed reports from the meetings, agendas and case studies are given elsewhere in the project's main report.

Organization of meetings and joint working. As in many other projects consisting of several partners as well as several individuals from different European countries the beginning of collaboration started with discussions of the general aims and means of the project. This meant that at the first meeting much time was spent on practical issues as well as on getting acquainted with each partner organization. This also meant that at the beginning the concrete aims and ways of working seemed to the partners to be a bit unclear and according to their evaluations too much time was spent with general discussions. However, after the first start the meetings were organized in a more structured way and concentrated on the key issues mentioned in the aims of the partnership. One way of structuring the meetings was to divide the participants into smaller groups of practitioners and researchers and to organize the presentations and comments concerning the so-called case studies in a more strict way. These principles were followed in the subsequent meetings.

Although the structure of the meetings and their course was improved during the collaboration, the partners regarded that communication between the meetings was not as intensive as was needed. One expressed reason by some partners was that the extra work in between the meetings with funding only for travel costs was not sufficient.

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Relevance and impact. According to the project plan, a key issue of the partnership was to look at the quality standards and good practice models of supported employment. It was assumed, that each partner country has implemented these practices and models in various ways and through joint working the partners have an opportunity to learn new ways and ideas of working with persons in a vulnerable position in the labour market. On the basis from the meeting discussions and the evaluation answers it was evident that at the beginning of the project the partnership did not have a coherent joint understanding about the key elements of supported employment, its quality standards or how it is implemented in partner countries. During the project, however, for most of the partners the main impact or relevance of the project was manifested by getting a deeper understanding of the concept and fidelity issues of supported employment and the 5 stage model. Also discussions of quality issues connected to supported employment in practice were regarded important. New ideas for developing practices of one's own organization as well as understanding the importance of quality standards and service indicators were reported. The reported case studies from each partner country, their critical assessments and joint discussions were regarded highly relevant and inspiring and useful for further development work in partner countries.

Future needs and recommendations. All in all it can be said that the main objectives of the partnership were met rather well. The partnership can be seen as a starting point for developing European quality- and evidence-based employment support systems for persons in a vulnerable position in the labour market. However, it is important that in future collaboration all partners share the same interests on what is the main focus of the joint development work.

Appendix. Evaluation answers from joint meetings.

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Summary of partners' evaluations Salamanca November 2013

1. How well did the partnership meeting address its objectives and the project's aims?

- Most of the partners saw that the meeting went well, was a good start for the project and addressed the objectives adequately, taking into account that this was the first meeting
- Some confusion seemed to prevail concerning the goals of the project and the contents of case studies
- More time for discussions – also in small groups - is needed (less time for presentations)

2. Did the case studies/data presented in the meeting correspond with the aims of the project (e.g. relevance, clarity and correspondence with the 5-stage model)?

- The presented case study was regarded as relevant, interesting and to correspond partly, although on a general level, to SE and the 5-stage model, but more detailed information about how the 5 stages are implemented was required
- To be able to compare case studies from different countries/organizations we need a joint understanding about the five stage model, e.g. how does the model differ from other models of vocational rehabilitation
- Too much time was spent on issues not relevant/related to the 5-stage model
- More time for critical assessment of presented cases: how the 5-stage model actually works and is implemented – not only successes but also failures/problems and lessons learned

3. What was the most relevant content or contribution of the meeting; does it impact your own/your organisation's practice in the future?

- Getting to meet all partners, discussions in general and especially on future research options
- Understanding that there is a need for joint fidelity criteria for SE in Europe that enables comparisons between countries that are in different phases in developing SE
- Need to analyse the different steps in the service in a more detailed way
- Information about how SE is implemented in other countries and in a tight economic situation

4. Were you satisfied with the practical organisation of the meeting (e.g. agenda, time schedule, place)

- The meeting was well organised and relevant information was sent before the meeting

5. Was communication between partners before/in between the meetings effective; if not, how should it be improved?

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- see above

6. Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the quality of the partner meetings in the future?

- More time for (critical) discussions – especially focusing on the 5-stage model
- Separate discussion groups for practitioners and researchers as they may have different interests (e.g. sharing research data)
- Visits to service provider organizations and work places
- More facts about how the service works and what is the outcome of the service. Essential questions to be added to the questions and guidelines of case studies, e.g.:
 - How are natural supports used in each of the five stages of the model?
 - How do organisations make information about SE accessible to potential clients?
 - How do they sell SE to employers?
 - What type of jobs do people get?
 - What do job coaches do to promote job and career development?
 - How do job finders/coaches negotiate the going rate for the job and not just the minimum wage?
 - How long are people in the same job with no changes? Why is this? Does it vary for different target groups?
 - How many hours and days per week does a person work? How do job coaches negotiate more hours/days with employers?
 - How do job coaches work to support social inclusion of the supported employee in the work place?
 - Do supported employees have standard employment contracts? How are these negotiated?

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Summary of partners' evaluations Stockholm, May 2014

1. How well did the partnership meeting address its objectives and the project's aims?

- The meeting addressed well its objectives, although I think we should be more concrete at the following meetings concerning the project's aims.
- I felt that the meeting was far more focused this time and the cases gave good grounds for interesting discussions (although in my opinion they were not always examples of supported employment).
- Good approach, shared reflections on how to make the five stage model evolve and improve, and also new goals for future research, and synergies between research and practice.
- Excellent
- The objectives were met correctly.
- I think that we are reaching objectives related to reflections about the 5 stages model, but we had an important goal related to future research, and we are far from it. The partnership is so big that it makes difficult to find agreements in this sense. I think we need to focus more on research.
- To a high degree
- Not too bad, but the Five-Step Process was not enough in focus
- Yes, the meeting focused on the three case studies and future areas of research.
- Very well. At least a step forward from the first meeting. We were better prepared and used the time efficiently.
- The basic structure works well and things are going on as planned. More discussion / information about the final outcome / product would be nice.
- Quite well I think. We went through the cases and opponents gave good comments. We have now divided in two groups: the practitioners and researcher. What will be the future roles for these groups? Researcher will make an analysis, and practitioners? Also it would be interesting to see the plan of the study you are going to make. It is because I'm thinking of what kind of new information do you (we) get out of these case descriptions? I think in next meeting we should have an idea of the product we are going to make.

2. Did the case studies/data presented in the meeting correspond with the aims of the project (e.g. relevance, clarity and correspondence with the 5-stage model)?

- yes
- I felt that the cases were not always relevant in terms of not being examples of supported employment. Some seemed to describe assessment and clarification with an element of pre-vocational training through work experience or "apprenticeships" rather than paid work. What differentiates supported employment is the focus on the support that is given to the person after they are employed - not before they are employed. There are plenty of other vocational rehabilitation programs that focus on the training and preparation for work and

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the support in identifying work suited to the individual. I felt that most cases tried to illustrate the 5 stage model but that our discussions were not clear enough in terms of critically analysing the information from the cases in terms of the model. It is not enough to give an estimate of the amount of time spent on the five stages - we need to be clearer about the elements of the stages that work or don't work and ways in which they could be improved.

- Case studies made clear that the 5 stage model needs evolving, so presented cases have been useful.
- OK
- After the experiences known in Spain and Sweden, I'm increasingly clear that the model must be configured flexibly, not by the rigidity of five very compartmentalized stages.
- Cases were good and clearly presented. The cases correspond with the aims of the project.
- Yes they did to a certain degree. However, I think the 5-stage model is a bit fuzzy and imprecise, so too many activities are possible to subsume under the 5 headings.
- Partly, but the case-presentations did not focus enough on the "model", and was also not sufficiently self-critical.
- Most of the case studies did highlight the use of the 5 stage process however I felt that in some cases for example in the Finnish Case Studies (Kiipula) that not all of the stages were followed such as ongoing support. Furthermore, case studies used did not support individuals with significant disabilities or people from disadvantage situations with additional support requirements. It would seem that the organisations are working with in funding or programme requirements and are therefore unable to deliver the 5 stage model as funding is not available for the ongoing support.
- We still have some work to do here but I think it was pretty good. I think we could benefit from using a strict template with national legislations, organization and how the 5-stage model was implemented. And we need to agree that the organization and the case presented is expresses SE as the main model.
- Yes, it was the idea that the texts are the raw material for further work. Also the 5-stage model can be seen inside the case studies. Maybe I'd like to hear more about the money. "The ratio of clients to staff is quiet high". 5-stage model maybe is the skeleton of the services. Then we have to modify the content according the resources we have. We just got the information that now we will arrange job coaching in seven cities (we got what we offered). Next step is to calculate what can we do, what kind of personnel can we afford etc. -it is a question of the ideal vs. possible.

3. What was the most relevant content or contribution of the meeting; does it impact your own/your organization's practice in the future?

- The case studies and the critical friends' comments were very informative and also the discussions with the professionals from other countries.
- I felt inspired by the meeting and re-engaged with supported employment. My organization supports people with intellectual disability and still uses a pretty "pure" model of supported employment. I can see however, how this becomes more diluted when working with other disability groups and particularly with disadvantaged groups. Although I strongly agree that we should look on individual needs of people wanting to be part of a supported employment program, rather than on diagnosis groups - I still feel that there are trends in the diagnosis groups that might become more apparent over time. e.g. socially disadvantaged groups might

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need more support in the stages of the model re. engagement and vocational profiling, rather than the often ongoing support on the job needed by people with intellectual disability.

- Becoming aware of the need of research on process and outcome indicators is enough for one meeting. Also the recognition of limitations of five stage model and need for further development is a relevant cue.
- We need also to concentrate on research issues, those are relevant for our organization
- From a social policy perspective, I have found differences in services funding which shows new ideas for reflection and research.
- It is interesting and useful to have a model to follow, but the model must not constrain the development of the organizations in the sense that it must be flexible.
- The critical friends' comments and the group/plenary discussions after the presentations.
- The critical friends' comments were the most interesting and relevant and it may impact how we continue with the research part.
- One of the main areas of relevance to EUSE and NIUSE is that organisations are not delivering the fully model of Supported Employment therefore we need to go back to basics and ensure that organisation implement the full model of Supported Employment and ensure that they are supporting people with significant disabilities or people who are further removed from the labour market. Also, we need to ensure that the definition of Supported Employment is maintained.
- I think that splitting the group into practitioners and researchers in the last discussion group was great. Here we could discuss where the five stage model is easy to use and where we meet the challenges due to organizational issues and how job coaches are trained
- We know we don't have ongoing support, but there is not much we can do about it. Lack of statistics... we have now proven our follow-up schedule. It is also part of the quality.
- "Is there a direct route/transition for clients from vocational training in to Supported Employment?" This is something we'd like to develop. We had good discussion about the client-centered - funder-centered orientation in our work. The notice about the monitoring is good. When we are short of resources, monitoring and face-to-face meetings are rare. "Could the results be better if you have more time..." Yes, maybe, but the cost-benefit- analyses we don't have.

4. Were you satisfied with the practical organization of the meeting (e.g. agenda, time schedule, place)

- Yes, very much.
- Yes – excellent
- Practical organization was good, and facilitated work.
- YES!
- I am satisfied with the organization and hospitality of our Swedish friends. Very grateful for the treatment received.
- Very good organization, time and agenda, but we need more time to discuss and reflect about research possibilities.
- Yes, overall.
- Yes
- Yes – very happy. The lead partner and through the chair, Steinar kept the discussion moving a long and on time.

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- Misa staff were excellent hosts – in providing information about accommodation and travel arrangements and for their kind hospitality. – Thank you!
- We used the time efficiently. But since I arranged the meeting and some of you showed up to the wrong address, there must have been something we could have done better.
- Yes, when we finally found the right place :-)

5. Was communication between partners before/ in between the meetings effective; if not, how should it be improved?

- Yes, communication was effective.
- Communication about the meeting was very good. However, we did not get all the cases and critical friends' responses by the deadlines given. This meant that preparation prior to the meeting was not as good as it should have been and this impacted on the quality of the discussions. I think that the deadlines should have been earlier i.e. not so close to the actual meeting - so that there is plenty of time to chase up on the reports and still give people a chance to read them. I know "chasing up" should not be necessary but experience shows the same old story...
- As it was already commented in the meeting, having more time for reading documents that will be used in the meeting would allow better performance in meetings.
- It is better to receive earlier the documents to be treated or presented in the meeting
- Could be improved in terms that were discussed at the meeting.
- I think that information and relevant documents for the meetings could be circulated earlier.
- Some case studies and therefore also critical friends' comments were delivered too late.
- The partnership is large. Maybe the partners could be organized in smaller more thematically specialized groups?
- Some case-presentations and critical friends' comments were not well enough prepared. Participants must keep the time schedule for the preparations.
- Communication is good between meetings and in particular prior to the meeting. However, timelines for activities do tend to slip which have a knock on effect for partners in preparing for the meeting.
- I think we also need to look at a communication strategy for the partnership as we need to disseminate the information at a local, national and European level.
- Review what is required for the final report – after the next meeting in Dublin there will only be one meeting in Hungary. Also, need to look at future project for the group.
- The case studies and the critical friends' statements reached the partners too late to be able to really prepare for the discussions.
- Yes, it is a good idea to use smaller groups.

6. Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the quality of the partner meetings in the future?

- I would appreciate more structured discussion between researchers and job coaches.
- The one thing I did feel concerned about was the domination of the English speaking participants who are fluent in English. I often wonder whether those that are not so comfortable expressing themselves in English are also struggling to follow the discussions. One way of supporting them would be to provide visual information as well so that those presenting materials should accompany their 20 minute input with bullet points on the screen.

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Some people may find it easier to read the points than to listen to the English with all the different accents. The chair should perhaps also make a point of asking those that are not saying so much what their opinions/thoughts/questions are.

- Maybe sending proposals for research and practice in advance would help, allowing better organization and deeper reflection when we gather for work, as it happens with cases.
- Programming leisure time in addition to the meeting
- I think the agenda related to partners from research institutes has not been addressed.
- More time for research discussions. Previous indications and maps to allocate restaurants, meeting place, hotels, could be useful.
- In the group and plenary discussions: a stronger focus on the way the presented cases handle and implement the 5-stage model, weaknesses with this model and how they can be overcome and more tight and precise recommendations for a) how the presented cases can improve their practice and b) how the 5-stage model can be improved.
- Participants must be better prepared and the questions for the discussions must be less general, especially in the researchers' group.
- Review what is required for the final report – after the next meeting in Dublin there will only be one meeting in Hungary. Also, need to look at future project for the group.
- Using the five stage model more strict and get the documents out in time.

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Summary of evaluation responses

Dublin, October 2014

1. How well did the partnership meeting address its objectives and the project's aims?

- The objectives and the project's aims were really well addressed. During workshops the cultural differences were interesting to see. It was interesting to see the cultural differences during the workshops.
- The partnership meeting met the aims and objectives of the project in critically reviewing case studies.
- It allowed to go through some important issues that could be addressed for next meeting.
- The objectives related to reflection of best practices on the model of five stages have been developed suitably. The objectives related to research reflection and proposals have advanced more than in previous meetings, but must be identified with more concretion.
- The objectives related to best practices on "the 5-stage model" were improved and some important issues were discussed. The objectives related to research on the "5-step model" were much more developed and improved through this meeting.
- Very well
- This meeting, more than any of the previous meetings, was useful in defining what the original aims of the 5 stage model were and bringing attention to the fact that the toolkit was designed to be used as a best practice model and not stuck to too rigidly. The idea of research questions was advanced more in this meeting but still none were actually set that would allow researchers to go away and make a start on something.

2. Did the case studies/data presented in the meeting correspond with the aims of the project (e.g. relevance, clarity and correspondence with the 5-stage model)?

- They showed the 5-stage model generally, however, some of those cases did not meet all the requirements of the strictly offered 5-stage model. That can be attributed to different cultural and personal needs.
- Case studies were very good and outlined the 5 main stages of SE - however through discussions it became apparent that the partners presenting their Case Study did not follow the 5 stage process for example the case study would have been around work experience and job sampling but not finding a paid job.
- They did in general, though some cases do not correspond strictly to the model. But that has to be adequately analyzed, as there are reasons for it.
- Yes I think. Like in previous meetings, the cases fit more with some features of the model than with others. It reflects the variety of situations and realities in different organizations and countries.
- In general, the cases fit with the model, but they don't challenge the model as well as I had hoped, and I think the variety (in and) between countries is not visible enough.

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- Yes they did.
 - The Norwegian case had a number of strengths in its demonstration of how they are working to the 5 stage model but brought up some important issues around clarity of what the model is and what is offered by SE services and job coaches. It brought attention to the importance of all stakeholders understanding what can be provided. Again highlighted the issue of an over-emphasis on work experience. Led to important discussion regarding dilution of job roles. The Irish case demonstrated that they are using the 5 stage model but more data was needed regarding costs. Again, cases are difficult to compare as they are being applied to different client groups.

3. What was the most relevant content or contribution of the meeting; does it impact your own/your organization's practice in the future?

- It was really interesting to see the whole picture of the Kare's practice on the additional day. It certainly impacts our organization to do our job more effectively.
- The main relevance is highlighting the need for quality standards and training for practitioners.
- Need for indicators was pointed out clearly, hopefully it will be a future trend in research and practice.
- The advance in reflection about research possibilities, themes and possible projects.
- The need to develop/identify measurable indicators for the "5-stage model" was clearly pointed out by both representatives of practical organisations/service providers and by researchers. This is a topic that most likely will have an impact on future research.
- Very important is the critical view of the cases from the perspective of the case preparation as well as from the critical friends.
- More productive than previous meetings regarding how we move forward with research. The need to review existing literature was highlighted and new areas for research were suggested. It was highlighted that the model was being stuck to too rigidly and that it is only meant to be used a best practice guide- which may impact on some organisation's implementation of the stages. (We are a research partner).

4. Were you satisfied with the practical organization of the meeting (e.g. agenda, time schedule, place)

- Yes, the meeting was very well organized and everything was in place.
- We didn't get a chance to go through the minutes of the last meeting and discuss some of the feedback from year 1 reports submitted to our Managing Authorities as a number of issues were raised regarding communication and dissemination events.
- Yes, nice place and nice timing (I love siesta anyway)
- Yes of course. It was well organized. The place was comfortable and practice.
- Yes it was very well organized, and the place was nice.
- Yes we were.
- Having the meeting in the hotel was actually a really good idea as it saved time waiting for people who struggle to find the venue and such. However, having more appropriate rooms

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for group discussions would have been helpful. Time schedule was as usual- always feels like an extra day would be useful but hard to get everyone together for 3 days.

5. Was communication between partners before/ in between the meetings effective; if not, how should it be improved?

- Yes, they were really effective, however, the schedule provided only little time to have personal conversations.
- Communication was good between partners prior to the meeting regarding the meeting and practical arrangements. A number of partners are still having some difficulties regarding Drop Box and I am not sure if this is the best way to communicate or it needs to be used in conjunction with other communication methods.
- Timing is an issue in receiving the case studies to read and reflect.
- Timing, as usual, was an issue, as there was hardly time to read everything, not to mention to reflect about readings.
- The communication was good enough. There was no problem.
- Mostly ok, apart from the fact that papers have not been read in advance by everybody; this influences the level of reflection and discussion at the meetings.
- It was effective.
- Not all partners were involved in the communication before the meeting so therefore did not have the schedule or reading in advance. A list of attendees should be sought as soon as possible and steps taken to ensure all attendees are included in communication.

6. Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the quality of the partner meetings in the future?

- Since after Dublin, a last meeting is scheduled in Budapest, Hungary, we feel like there is a need to keep in touch with those organizations in the future as well. That would help us to improve our services in each country as well as being updated with the latest research findings related to Supported Employment.
- As we only have one meeting left it is important that we spend some time regarding the final report and final products and future planning - what's next? Have we achieved what we set out to do - create a network of researchers and SE organizations?
- We already know that a bit more time to read and reflect on readings would be fruitful, but it is also difficult for partners to be in time.
- To maintain the division of working groups focused on practices and research and the time spent for discussing about research proposals and possibilities, which should be one of the preferences of the last meeting. Other important question is to receive the material to read with time enough before the meeting.
- Ensure improved preparations in order to increase the level of reflection and discussion.
- So far it was ok.
- Again the idea of setting research questions was widely discussed, as was each research partner reviewing existing literature in their country. However there doesn't seem to be much of a proactive approach to make sure this is pursued between meetings. Ensuring that time is

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given at the meeting to assign research teams particular tasks may ensure that some research is generated from this.

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Summary of evaluation responses Budapest, April 2015

1. Objectives. To what extent did the meeting address the objectives of the programme?

- Case studies day 1 fairly ok, day 2 was a good summing up of the project, good discussions on quality criteria and very active participants
- Medium, because part of the time was a repetition of previous meetings, and research proposals were not really examined.
- The objectives were achieved overall
- Final activities, aimed at advancing improvements and further development of the SE model, have allowed to address those objectives, with useful proposals.
- Only in part. The exchange of experiences has been a repetition in each meeting and the reflection about research has been conducted only to one objective related to standards forgetting other possible research lines.

2. Results/Outcomes. What was the most relevant part of the meeting for you? And how will this impact on your own practice?

- That there is further need to develop the 5 stage process so that there are much clearer quality criteria and measurable indicators
- Self-criticism about the dissemination process
- The discussion about evaluation instruments Communication of needs, practical issues and shared concerns and visions.
- The assumption of the need to advance in practice based on research evidences. This generates opportunities for future research partnerships.

3. Impact. Which competencies do you think you bettered as a result of this meeting?

- Knowledge about lack of knowledge about quality criteria and quality indicators
- Knowledge of European situation regarding Supported Employment
- Comparative information on supported employment in different countries
- Better knowledge of practitioner's needs and experiences, both related to their daily work and their need for a solid model and scientific evidence to support their job.
- Managing projects with an extent group of partners.

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4. Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the quality of the partner meetings in the future?

- Better knowledge of practitioner's needs and experiences, both related to their daily work and their need for a solid model and scientific evidence to support their job.
- A better funding that allows work hours to be put into the project, especially for researchers; improved preparations and a clearer agenda that all partners have agreed upon
- It should systematize the discussions by group work techniques
- Clear objectives. More leadership in the project. Smaller group.

5. Has communication between the meetings been effective? How can it be improved?

- It has been ok
- It was good but it can be improved if all the partners create a Web page with information of each country.
- Communication has been good. Better timing in the delivery of local case studies and "critical friends" would allow better analysis.
- Only in part. Could be improved with a systematic communication procedure, promotion of website and local websites, implication of partners and more leaderships.

6. To what extent do you think the partnership has reached the goals of its original plan?

- We're almost where we started, but the challenges have become more visible
- Only half of them.
- The objectives were achieved overall, but in a low concrete and systematic way
- Reflection about the SE five step model and possibilities to improve it and agreements on how to use it have been done. Need for better indicators has been detected, but needs further work to be accomplished.
- Only in part, I think that we have no clear product of the partnership, because the objectives could be better defined, the project run with a lack of leaderships and we have worked with an unclear approach.

7. Do you have concrete suggestions for future collaboration?

- Take care that partners share the same interest on what to develop.
- The objectives were achieved overall, but in a low concrete and systematic way
- New funding model, that will foster work between meetings, is more adequate, as that is the best improvement tip I can suggest.
- Better definition of the project, more leadership, more research focus.