Innovation in Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships

A second study on the impact

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Acknowledgements

Introduction

For years, aside from developing management practices and implementing the Programme, the INDIRE Erasmus+ National Agency has been dedicating itself to study the impact of its project activities in terms of participation and the effect on education and learning. The sectors which INDIRE deals with belong to three key branches of Italy's education system: school education, higher education and adult education.

This new Erasmus+ publication (the third one) *Innovation in Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships. A second study on the impact* provides a survey of European cooperation for innovation in Italy under Key Action 2 – KA2 in short – with reference to the 2015 Call.

The new study, carried out in 2019, re-proposes the methodological approach used in the previous Erasmus+ publication[1]; however, the tools have been further upgraded in line with the objectives of the survey, which set out to debate the results, the impact, and the whole process of exploiting and disseminating the intellectual outputs produced by the respective sectors from a cross-sector perspective.

The main goal was to trial and document a comparative study, an analytical comparison of the effect and impact that have taken place at individual and institutional levels and in the national education systems of the countries involved in these projects. Consequently, the analyses have a methodological importance, which exploits and delineates the affinities and similarities of this type of partnership, characterized by cooperation between institutes and organizations operating in different contexts – schools, universities, associations, training agencies, research institutes and companies, all of which bring both professionalism and experience to the table.

The survey was split into two main stages: the first consisting of a desk analysis, i.e. collection and studying of official documents related to the project-end reports, supplemented by statistical summaries of the Programme implementation (Chapter 2). The second stage, the core of the study illustrated in Chapters 3-4-5, is a qualitative investigation conducted using three different tools: an online questionnaire[2], which was identical for all the partnerships' coordinators (school, higher and adult education); impact visits (in-depth interviews) to six case studies; a focus group involving a debate with the representatives interviewed during the visits. The tool and the analytical perspective were innovative, the results of this study strategic, with their presentation of a comparative view of the impact and the changes not only for the staff involved in the projects, but for the institutes inside and outside the partnerships.

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1 - The reference is to Erasmus+ publication no. 2, Strategic partnerships for innovation in Erasmus+. A study on the impact, December 2019, http://www.erasmusplus.it/disponibile-il-quaderno-erasmus-indire-strategic-partnerships-for-innovation-in-erasmus-a-study-on-the-impact-in-lingua-inglese/
2 - The questionnaire was designed and structured by the Studies and Analysis Unit, which organizes and conducts the surveys and edits the Erasmus+ publications.

Chapter 1
Survey design

Summary

Survey objectives

Erasmus+ publication no. 3 collects the main results of a qualitative survey on the outcome of the Strategic Partnerships for Innovation funded in 2015 under Key Action 2 of the Erasmus+ Programme, for the areas within the INDIRE National Agency's remit: school education, higher education, and adult education[3].

The objectives of the survey were:

- to identify and exploit the effect of the activities carried out both inside the work team and outside the partnership;
- to seek out the successful mechanisms of the Erasmus+ projects and the most significant factors that characterize the good practices;
- to investigate those aspects which have produced a qualitative impact at professional, institutional and systemic levels.

Methodology and tools of the survey

As the Erasmus+ Programme fosters cross-sectoral collaboration, shared research tools were adopted to compare and aggregate the data collected. Furthermore, the need to collect experiences, opinions and reflections on what produces innovative changes, possibly lasting and transferable, has recommended the use of **qualitative techniques**.

The survey was split into two stages. In the first, a desk analysis of the reference context was carried out by collecting and studying some documents[4] relating to the projects in question, supplemented by statistical summaries of the Programme implementation. This was part of the run-up to the next stage of the investigation, which consisted in administering an online questionnaire, identical for all the partnerships' coordinators in the three sectors, the conducting of dedicated impact visits to six case studies (in-depth interviews) and a focus group involving a debate with the representatives interviewed during the visits.
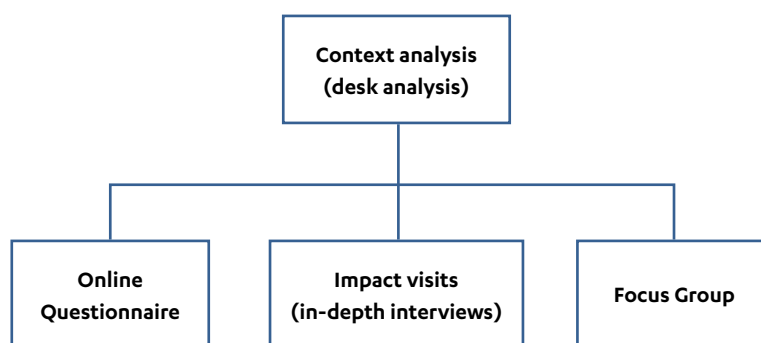

Fig. 1 - Diagram of the main activities of the survey

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3 - The Key Actions concerned are KA201 for the school education sector, KA203 for higher education and KA204 for adult education.
4 - Final reports sent by the strategic partnerships' coordinators and assessment forms compiled by external experts.

Desk analysis and reference context

To begin with, the reference context was analysed by collecting aggregated data relating to Italy's participation in the Erasmus+ Programme, particularly as regards strategic cooperation for innovation in the three educational areas within our remit. This first phase was carried out using databases which the European Commission has made available to the National Agencies and was accompanied by an analysis of the final reports from the partnerships being studied and of their respective assessments carried out by experts from outside INDIRE.

Online questionnaire

The questionnaire comprises four areas related to the project's processes: innovation, dissemination, exploitation/transferability and lastly, sustainability. On the one hand, this design aimed to stimulate reflection on the innovative value and quality of the project results, on the other, it sought to investigate which sustainability strategies had proved most effective in the medium to long term. It was uploaded onto a web interface and sent to all the Italian coordinators of strategic partnerships for innovation funded in 2015: a single questionnaire for all three sectors in order to facilitate data comparison.

Out of 47 projects funded (24 partnerships for school, 15 for adult education, 8 for the university), 39 questionnaires were completed between April and May 2019.

In-depth interviews: impact visits

As for the impact visits, the sample consisted of 6 strategic partnerships, 2 for each educational sector within our remit, selected following a careful reading of their final reports, with particular reference being given to the assessments obtained from external experts. Specifically, the projects were picked out of those which in the final report had achieved an overall score greater than 85/100 and between 30 and 40 for the criteria of impact and dissemination. In addition, to carry out the in-depth interviews a semi-structured chart was prepared which contained the list of topics to be addressed, leaving a certain freedom in conducting the actual conversation. The meetings were held at the headquarters of each partnership's coordinator. At 4 of the 6 visits, some representatives of the Italian partners or stakeholders involved in the projects also took part.

Focus Group

The focus group technique was chosen to study in depth the understanding of which elements influence the impact quality and stimulate interaction between the participants as well as exchanges of experiences and reflections on the theme. Starting from a common experience of innovative European project design, it was thus possible to educe various interpretations and evaluations which rounded off the wealth of information collected by the other survey tools. In the wake of visits, to emphasize the importance of the complementarity of these types of project it was decided to put together a single cross-sector focus group, at INDIRE Erasmus+ Agency in Rome.

Chapter 2
Field of inquiry: strategic partnerships in support of innovation, the 2015 Call

Summary

Our sources of reference for the survey included the European *Erasmus+ Project Results Platform and the Erasmus+ QlikView Dashboard*[5], a tool for processing aggregated data. The preparatory work took approximately three months, during which, in addition to the data we are showing in the paragraphs of this chapter, the online questionnaire was drafted, an experimental tool intended for coordinators of the partnerships for innovation funded in 2015. We subsequently analysed and studied some of the documentation relating to the projects examined, namely, the **Final Reports** and the **Assessment Forms** from external experts, which the Agency uses in selecting proposals. This specific qualitative analysis then allowed us to select **6 case studies** from among 47 strategic partnerships for subsequent investigation, consisting of an in-depth interview (impact visit), to which stakeholders, coordinators and sometimes even partners' representatives were invited, to retrace and reflect on fundamental aspects of their project experiences.

Data on participation

Italian participation in the KA2 project dedicated to innovation was extensive: 433 submitted applications in 2015, of which **47 were approved**. As regards the grant available, as always happens in all deadlines, not all the requests had been satisfied despite a significant increase in the funds which the Agency devoted to innovation. This emphasizes the world of education and learning interest for project experiences in Europe and throughout the world. In the base year of the survey more than **14 million Euro** were earmarked for the Italian coordinators while the success rate of applications in Italy was around 11% for the three education fields (Fig.1).

CALL 2015	Projects received/ Grant requested	Projects approved / Grant awarded
Strategic partnerships for innovation in schools, higher and adult education	433	**47**
Grant	126.545.353	**14.047.971**

Fig. 1 - Total projects received and funded in 2015 for the three sectors in Italy

At the various deadlines, the involvement of the institutes in the innovative partnerships showed a slight numerical increase, due as pointed out earlier, to an exponential growth in Erasmus+ funds. Below are some details (Fig.2):

CALL	Projects awarded KA201-KA203-KA204	Projects approved KA201-KA203-KA204
2015	14.048.056	47
2016	16.151.175	63
2017	23.602.104	91
2018	21.968.322	86
2019	28.225.666	108

Fig. 2 -Total funding allocated to KA2 partnerships for innovation from 2015 to 2019

5 - The European Commission DG EAC provides National Agencies with the Erasmus+ QlikView Dashboard. It works as a unified interface for Erasmus+ Programme management databases (EPlusLink, Mobility Tool and EU Survey). The Erasmus+ Project Results Platform is public and available at https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus- plus/projects/

Below are the types of institute involved in the partnerships for innovation:

Partnerships for innovation 2015
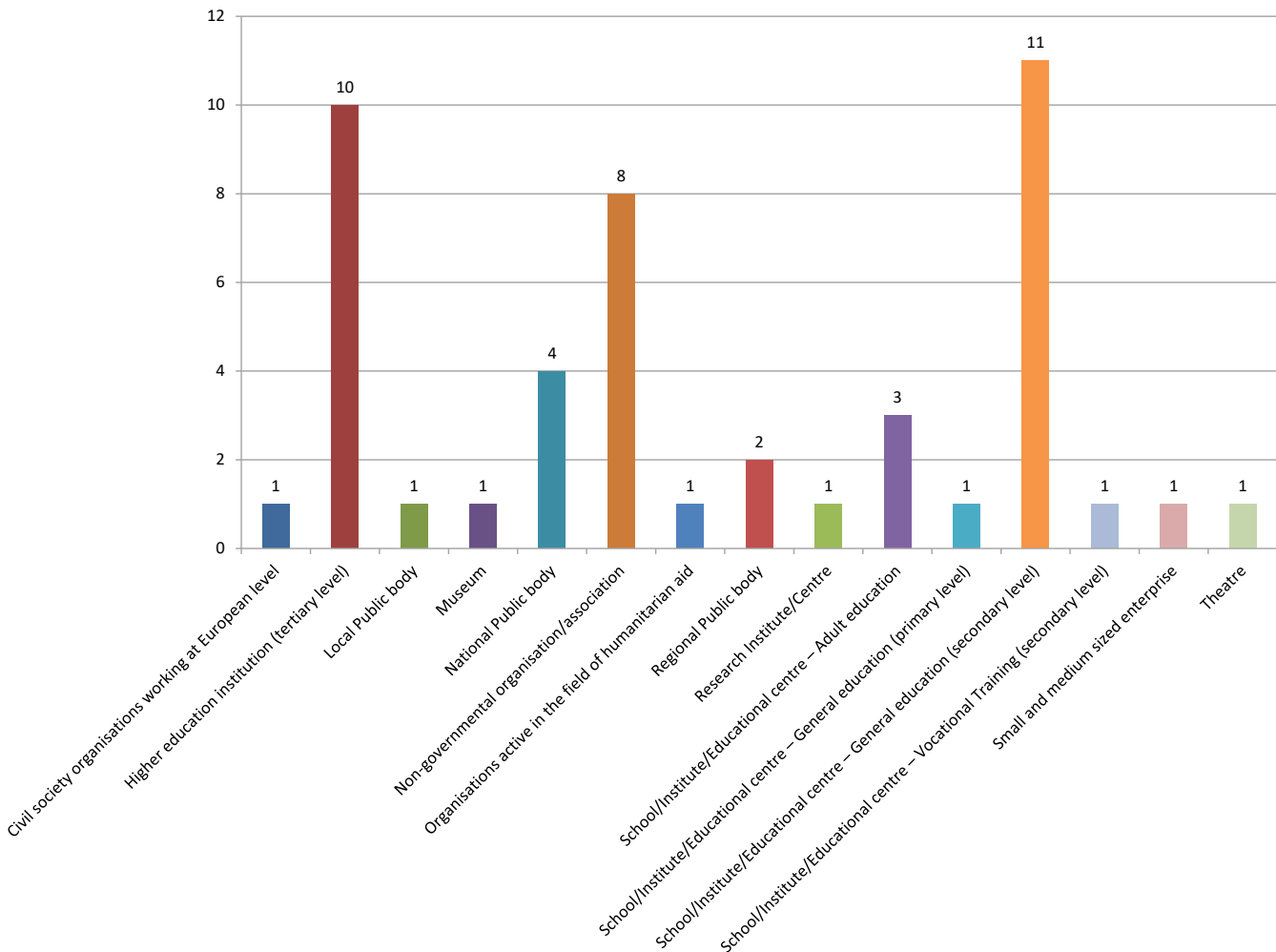
Fig. 3 - Strategic Partnerships in 2015

The chart above shows that among the types, Schools came out on top numerically (11), followed by the University (10) and then the third sector (8 of the institutes are NGOs).

Intellectual outputs are the most important structural element of the partnerships for innovation. The number and quality of the intellectual products varies depending on the objectives to be achieved, the themes being dealt with, the tools used, the specific target group, and to some extent also the number of institutes involved. The table below shows the number of intellectual outputs produced and the related initiatives and multiplier events geared to disseminating and exploiting the results.
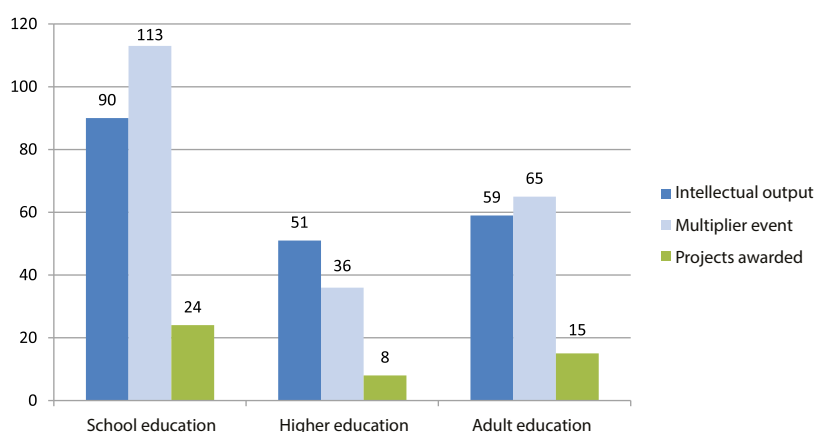
Fig. 4 - Number of intellectual outputs and multiplier events realized among 47 partnerships for innovation in 2015

The dissemination plan includes a minimum number of 1 event per project up to a maximum of 12 events. In total, the innovative **intellectual outputs** produced over a period of two to three years numbered 200 within the 47 strategic partnerships funded. All the partnerships analysed can be found on the *Erasmus+ Project Results* platform, and to facilitate consultation we have arranged the list of 2015 projects in the appendix with respective links to information sheets. From this conceptual and programmatic mixture of educational aims and needs, significant results were achieved which represent a legacy of excellence and good practice. Within the sample in question we can find **19 good practices**, projects distinguished by a solid system of cooperation, consistent objectives and strategic relevance, extensive exploitation of results, and innovative intellectual outputs that are transferable and sustainable.

The KA2 Projects have evolved a wide range of **themes** related to educational innovation, new teachers' training and refresher courses, the quality of learning, the recognition of skills, and so forth. Below we show the main themes linked to the programme's priorities, investigated and developed during cooperation in the following partnerships KA201, School; KA203, University; and KA204, Adults.

Themes of the school education project	Projects
New innovative curricula/educational methods/development of training courses	12
ICT - new technologies - digital competences	10
Pedagogy and didactics	7
Early School Leaving / combating failure in education	5
Key Competences (incl. mathematics and literacy) - basic skills	4
Teaching and learning of foreign languages	4
EU Citizenship, EU awareness and Democracy	4
Quality Improvement Institutions and/or methods (incl. school development)	3
Natural sciences	2
Research and innovation	2
International cooperation, international relations, development cooperation	2
Recognition, transparency, certification	2
Disabilities - special needs	2
Labour market issues incl. career guidance / youth unemployment	2
Transport and mobility	2
Overcoming skills mismatches (basic/transversal)	1
Creativity and culture	1

Reaching the policy level/dialogue with decision makers	1
Open and distance learning	1
Intercultural/intergenerational education and (lifelong)learning	1
Environment and climate change	1

Themes of the projects in the higher education sector	Projects
New innovative curricula/educational methods/development of training courses	6
ICT - new technologies - digital competences	4
Teaching and learning of foreign languages	3
Open and distance learning	2
International cooperation, international relations, development cooperation	2
Overcoming skills mismatches (basic/transversal)	2
Quality and Relevance of Higher Education in Partner Countries	2
Labour market issues incl. career guidance / youth unemployment	1
Energy and resources	1

Themes of the projects in the AE sector	Projects
New innovative curricula/educational methods/development of training courses	7
ICT - new technologies - digital competences	6
Inclusion - equity	4
Entrepreneurial learning - entrepreneurship education	4
Intercultural/intergenerational education and (lifelong)learning	3
Access for disadvantaged	3
Key Competences (incl. mathematics and literacy) - basic skills	2
Creativity and culture	2
Overcoming skills mismatches (basic/transversal)	2
Pedagogy and didactics	2
Recognition (non-formal and informal learning/credits)	1
Health and wellbeing	1
Disabilities - special needs	1
International cooperation, international relations, development cooperation	1
Reaching the policy level/dialogue with decision makers	1
Social dialogue	1
Economic and financial affairs (incl. funding issues)	1
Environment and climate change	1
Early School Leaving / combating failure in education	1
Gender equality / equal opportunities	1

Fig.5 - Main themes of the KA201-KA203-KA204 partnerships

The first two themes, *New innovative curricula/educational methods/development of training courses and ICT – new technologies – digital competencies*, came out top in the ranking of preferences in the three reference sectors. This similarity of thematic approach reflects both a particular interest and a methodological requirement which translates into digital tools applied to educational innovation. As regards the third thematic option, we can observe different choices: schools prefer themes linked to pedagogy and didactics, higher education opts for the learning and teaching of foreign languages, and finally in the field of AE what prevails is an interest in the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups.

Chapter 3
Results of the questionnaire: a comparative analysis of the school, higher education and adult education sectors

Summary

In the online questionnaire, the first set of questions focused on the organizational and management dynamics of the coordinating and partner institutes which carried out projects relating to the three education sectors: school, university and adult. Subsequently, the emphasis was on the effects of the project on the staff involved and the reference target. This line of inquiry served to evaluate the effects and benefits at three levels: In terms of the development and consolidation of management and administrative practices, the impact on the educational offering, the development of synergies with the territory (institutional level); the growth and improvement of skills, professional and personal capacities (individual level), and finally the impact at a systemic level. The third group of questions focused on the dynamics of the phase to disseminate and exploit results. The final questions focused on the project's sustainability, to grasp those aspects which favour this and those elements which, instead, hinder it.

From the answers given in the online questionnaire, it emerged that strategic partnerships have allowed us to create design groups of an international type or strengthen existing ones, bringing new stimuli to those involved in a cooperation project for the first time. It was possible to observe **changes in the educational offering, in the teaching, in local and international relationships** thanks to the involvement of a large number of different interlocutors. The results had a positive impact on all the partner organizations, at both institutional and individual levels. The staff involved grew professionally broadening their skills in several fields, from education using innovative tools, to the management of a European project. Albeit with different orientations among the sectors, enjoying support from national authorities, and involving stakeholders right from the stage of implementing the project are important elements to ensure a medium- to long-term sustainability strategy.

Institutional Impact

With regard to the changes found in the organizational context (models of administrative and financial management, organization of curricular or training activities, involvement of management and staff not directly associated with the project, staff training and mobility), the attempt is to bring out how and to what extent the experience of the project has changed, improved, or confirmed certain practices, management systems and cooperation within the coordinating institutes. We analysed the positive answers as "very" and "somewhat".

To what extent has the project determined, within the coordinating institution, the adoption and consolidation of methodologies and practices that characterize the organizational context? % Answers: Very + Somewhat

	School Education	Higher Education	Adult Education	Total
New administration and management models inside the institute	73%	33%	75%	68%
New activity organization models: educational and cultural, extracurricular and/or learnig offer	86%	100%	83%	88%
New financial resource management methods	73%	17%	58%	60%
Active involvement of the management	82%	83%	83%	83%
"Active involvement of administrative staff	81,8%	66,7%	66,7%	75,0%
and teachers, in addition to the project team"	95%	100%	92%	95%
New forms and initiatives for staff training and mobility	86%	50%	83%	80%

Fig. 1 – Institutional impact

The strategic Erasmus+ partnership has proved at all educational levels to be a very important flywheel **to introduce or consolidate methodologies and practices which characterize the scope of the coordinating institute's educational offering**. And if on the one hand the strategic partnerships have wrought changes within the framework of the educational offering, on the other they have also represented a trigger for new projects in 90% of the responses collected, while there were less evident effects with regard to the new services developed (Fig. 2).

To what extent has the project determined the adoption and consolidation of certain methodologies and practices that characterize the scope of the offering within the coordinating institute?

Educational and teaching innovation compared to normal: 90.9% | 100.0% | 83.3% | 90.0%

New services: 77.3% | 67.7% | 83.3% | 77.5%

Management and launch of new projects: 90.9% | 83.3% | 91.7% | 90.0%

■ School ■ University ■ Adults ■ Total

Fig. 2 – Educational impact

Continuing our analysis of the effects on the coordinating institute, in most cases the strategic partnership encouraged **the involvement of a large number of different subjects** and gave the opportunity to **create lasting synergistic networks**: the beneficiaries interviewed testified, with very high percentages, to the development of links with different sectors and the participation of stakeholders and the local community; however, the numbers also show a reduction in the positive assessments with regard to relationships with local and national authorities. A closer look at the data analysis revealed differences between the three sectors in the structure of the partnership, given that in the partnerships dedicated to higher and adult education there was a predictable relationship with the experts and the local community (100% positive responses), while in the partnerships for the school the participation of local and national authorities was more frequent compared to the other two targets (Fig. 3).

To what extent has the project determined the adoption and consolidation of certain methods and practices which characterize the local area network within the coordinating institute? % Answers: Very + Somewhat
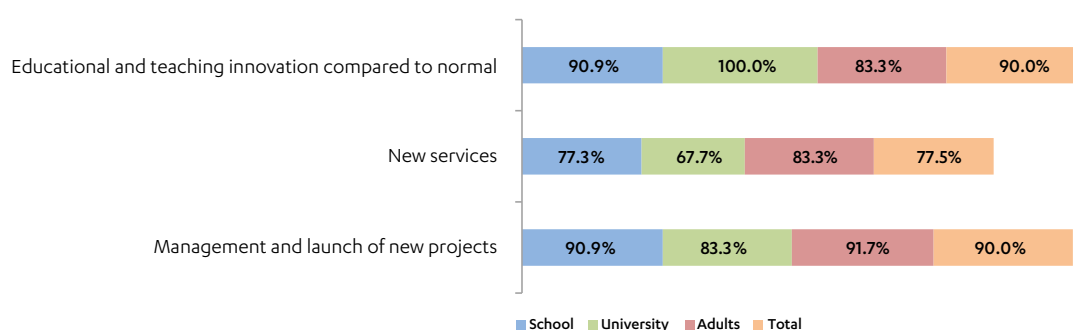
	School Education	Higher Education	Adult Education	Total
Synergy with other organizations in the same sector	77.3%	83.3%	91.7%	82.5%
Synergy with other organizations from different sectors	77.3%	83.3%	100.0%	85.0%
Involvement of stakeholders/experts	86.4%	100.0%	100.0%	92.5%
Involvement of the local community	86.4%	100.0%	100.0%	92.5%
Involvement of local authorities	81.8%	66.7%	66.7%	75.0%
Involvement of national authorities	59.1%	50.0%	50.0%	55.0%

Fig. 3 – Impact at local level

The characteristic common to all three sectors is **the impact at an international level** generated by the partnerships, explained through participation in other projects and actions of the Erasmus+ Programme or with the consolidation of relationships with other European institutes, especially if the project was carried out in the field of higher education. As in the local area, also in reference to international contexts the stakeholders involved made their own contribution, particularly in higher adult education projects; with regard to the latter context it is interesting to note that among the coordinating organizations of partnerships developed in the field of adult education it is very frequent (91.7% of positive responses) to synergize several projects, in this way capitalizing on the results obtained in the various contexts. And it is precisely a lack of direction which can occasionally hinder communication between the various design departments of the same institute, limiting its potential (Fig.4).

To what extent has the project determined the adoption and consolidation of certain methods and practices that characterize the international context within the coordinating institute? % Answers: Very + Somewhat
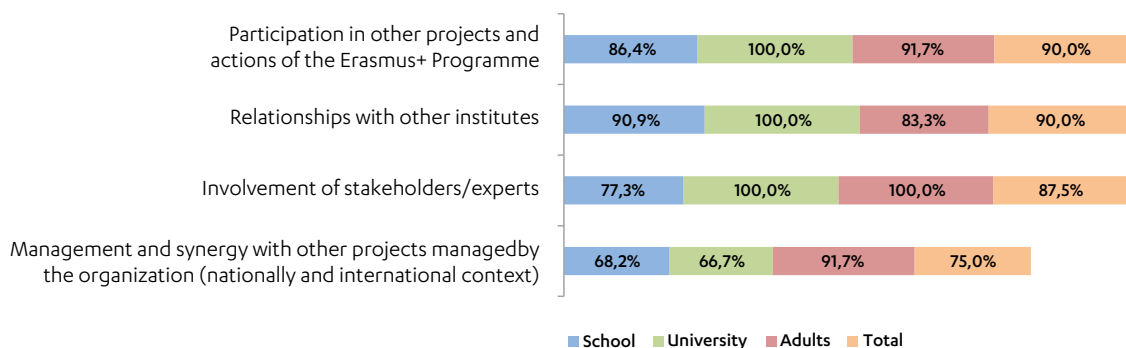

Fig. 4 – Impact at international level

In cases where synergies had been consolidated with other projects managed by the organization, Erasmus+ and the National Operational Program (NOP ESF-ERDF) represent the main sources of funding.

If synergies have been consolidated with other projects managed by the organization, please indicate in which programmes they were funded:

Programme	School Education	Higher Education	Adult Education	Total
National Operational Programme (NOP ESF/ERDF)	11	1	1	13
Regional Operational Programme (ROP ESF/ERDF)	2	3		5
Creative Europe				
Horizon 2020	1		1	2
LIFE				
Others (please specify): Erasmus+	4		4	8

Fig. 5 – Synergies with other programmes

In reference to the impact on partner institutes, the analysis was geared to an evaluation of the benefits and improvements within the partnership as a whole and in the individual institutes involved. To check and measure in comparative terms the impact at professional, institutional and systemic levels among the partners, we asked some questions again to compare the data and percentages which had emerged. In the Erasmus+ scheme, impact and improvements must be measurable and quantifiable for all the partnership institutes. The success and sustainability of the results is strictly proportional to the ability to share and produce innovation in each partner country, at both institutional and systemic levels. The project coordinator has the task and duty to verify and ensure an effect that is as wide ranging as possible.

The assessments show an impact on the educational offering, through experimentation and the adoption of innovative tools; in addition, the representatives interviewed believe that the cooperation project has wrought changes in partner organizations thanks to the networks created within both local and international contexts (81.6% and 79% replied "very" or "somewhat", respectively), while changes in the organizational context were seen less frequently. Major changes were evident in the project partners for higher education and adult education, in particular with regard to the educational offering and the local and international relationships (Fig.6)

To what extent has the project determined the adoption and consolidation of methods and practices which characterize within the partner institutes? % Answers: Very + Somewhat
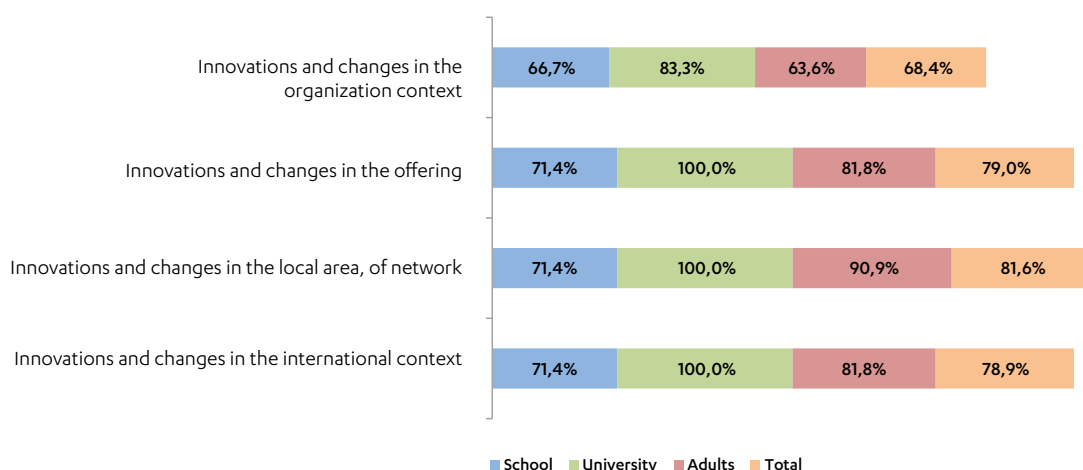

Fig. 7 – Institutional impact – Partner countries

Individual impact

In the Erasmus+ scheme, among the criteria to allocate funding we find on the one hand the quality of the measures to evaluate the project results and on the other the potential impact on individuals and the participating organizations, both during and after the duration of the funding, as well as outside the organizations and individuals directly involved in the project, at local, regional, national and European levels.

From our analysis it emerges that the effect of an international project on the staff involved is tangible, considering the percentages of extremely positive responses given to the topic, with no distinction between sectors, from the school to university projects and adult education. Work within a multidisciplinary team helped to strengthen individual skills, through experimentation with new teaching tools and innovative educational methodologies; it contributed to comparisons with the design in sectors other than their own, offering the chance to build new relationships in their field and also come into contact with new disciplines and different ways of working (Fig.7).

The community project thus proves to be a key tool for all the institutes, from the smallest school to the largest organization; it represents a period for training and continuous learning and offers an opportunity for exchange and growth for those participating in activities within the framework of an international working group.

To what extent has implementation of the partnership consolidated and enriched the staff's skills and abilities on a personal level? (% Answers: Very + Somewhat)

	School Education	Higher Education	Adult Education	Total
Cooperation and exchange in a European team	95.2%	100.0%	100.0%	97.4%
Knowledge of new teaching tools	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Adoption of innovative educational methodologies	95.2%	83.3%	100.0%	94.7%
Designing with different fields of learning	81.0%	83.3%	100.0%	86.8%
Use of foreign languages and digital tools for design and teaching	95.2%	100.0%	90.9%	94.7%
Using models and tools to measure impact	85.7%	83.3%	100.0%	89.5%
New methods to manage and resolve shortcomings	85.7%	66.7%	100.0%	86.8%
New relationships in one's own workplace	95.2%	100.0%	100.0%	97.4%
New professional relationships with colleagues from other disciplines/professional skills	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Fig. 7 – Individual and professional impact – Partner countries

Continuing our analysis of the impact at an individual level, the project representatives were extremely positive about the changes observed in end-users who participated in the activities funded within the strategic partnership context. Very high percentages were expressed in terms of personal, cultural and professional growth; the same positive effects were also highlighted in reference to study and learning (Fig.8).

To what extent has the project produced changes among end-users of the project results in terms of these categories?: % Answers: Very + Somewhat
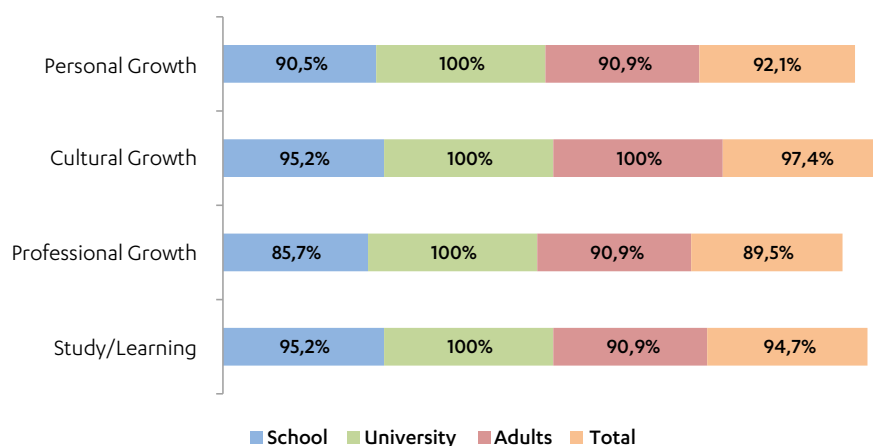

Fig. 8 - Impact on target groups

Many of the projects had a "follow-up", thanks to partners committed to disseminating the results achieved or developing new ideas. It is interesting to note that collaborations created at a local level proved to be lasting, so much so that they continued to be active even after the end of the project and, in some cases, also through Memoranda of Understanding between the parties concerned. Schools, local authorities and associations were the organizations involved (Fig.9).

Which of the following organizations operating within the local community are still an active part of the territorial network created for the partnership?

Organizations	School Education	Higher Education	Adult Education	Total
Other Schools	81.0%	66.7%	27.3%	62.2%
Other territorial universities	33.3%	50.0%	18.2%	29.7%
Local organizations/authorities	66.7%	50.0%	54.6%	59.5%
Associations	71.4%	83.3%	81.8%	75.7%
Research institutes	23.8%	16.7, 0%	18.2%	21.6%
Companies	9.5%	66.7%	18.2%	18.9%
Others (please specify):	14.3%	16.7%	36.4%	18.9%

Fig. 9 - Territorial Networks

Systemic impact

Systematizing the result of a project, even if valid, certainly presents some difficulties; however, albeit only in rare cases it is possible to speak of systemic changes at a national level, frequently the adoption of the outputs is at an organizational level inside or outside the partnership. When challenged on the topic, the representatives revealed an encouraging picture, demonstrating that if a partnership is well-matched, if good planning and project management are also coupled with effective dissemination and exploitation of the results, the material produced can have a follow-up even after the end of the funding, maximising the financial and human capital invested. We have extrapolated some comments from the online questionnaire to confirm the significant changes recorded at the systemic level in the various educational sectors:

- In Italy, particularly in Tuscany, a coordination of the museums was systematized which offered programmes dedicated to people with dementia and their careers.

- At the University of Lodz in Poland, CLIL modules developed by the project have become an integral part of the BA and MA teachers' training courses (bachelor's degrees and specializations) at the university's Anglistics Institute.

- All the partner organizations of the project systematized their intellectual outputs resulting from this project. In particular, the introduction of an inclusive teacher for music and physical education.

- Until now, this course is the only international Level 5 one in Europe. Also in Greece, the project offered the occasion to introduce Level 5 as a result of the implementation at a national level by the legislation on higher professional education which included organization by professional higher education institutes. In addition, during the experimentation, Greece and Belgium considered introducing Level 5 in their Universities' educational offering.

- In my opinion, what happened in Hungary is very interesting: if in the other countries the project results reached a certain degree of sustainability, then the accreditation of a course based on our project experience has surely brought to life something autonomous which has an edge over other already positive experiences.

- In all the countries of the partnership, thanks to our project, we have changed the paradigm in relation to theatre in prison, from an entertainment activity to one which is valid for learning and rehabilitation.

- The model was included among the good practices for work-related learning by the MIUR, and various scholastic institutes and research bodies have also adopted it within their organization.

According to the project coordinators, to facilitate the implementation of the outputs produced it is necessary to involve stakeholders in all phases of the project, to have local and national authorities join the partnership as a partner or associate, "deputed to regulate and manage the instances raised"; some have also proposed themed seminars outside the contractual period. To ensure that the results are used, many opined to share them free of charge through open platforms. Some coordinators suggested setting up a commission to select the outputs of partnerships and identify the most significant ones; a procedure should also be established to report them to those responsible in a way that produces a more effective impact and less dispersion.

Dissemination of results

The strategy of dissemination adopted has led to the consolidation of networks at local, national and international levels, and has brought to life new projects, also of mobility. In most cases, the activities to disseminate the results, also through open platforms created in the projects, have allowed continuous usability of the outputs produced; in addition, communities have been born engaged in the themes promoted by the projects.

To what extent have the following tools been effective for the diffusion/dissemination of the results?

Tool	not at all	little	somewhat	very	don't know	Total
Website	5.3%	7.9%	23.7%	60.5%	2.6%	100.0%
Newsletter	5.3%	15.8%	44.7%	23.7%	10.5%	100.0%
Social channels	2.6%	7.9%	26.3%	57.9%	5.3%	100.0%
Publications	2.6%	5.3%	44.7%	42.1%	5.3%	100.0%
Seminars	0.0%	7.9%	26.3%	55.3%	10.5%	100.0%
Public Presentation	0.0%	2.6%	26.3%	71.1%	0.0%	100.0%
Cultural event	0.0%	7.9%	36.8%	23.7%	31.6%	100.0%
Participation in events	0.0%	5.2%	21.1%	73.7%	0.0%	100.0%

Fig. 10 – Dissemination tools

We asked the project coordinators for their point of view on some features of the dissemination platform. The main doubts expressed concerned the visibility it can offer, since more than 20% of the replies believed that it is "little" or "not at all" effective, compensated by 47.4% and 26.3% of responses which, respectively, maintained that is "very" and "somewhat" useful to this end (Fig. 10). Most of the representatives thought that the Erasmus+ Project Results platform is adequate to find contacts from other organizations, while nearly 8% expressed doubts in this regard. Thematic research and the availability of project data were two functions assessed in a positive way on the whole, even if in 15.8% and 13.2% of cases, respectively, they were "little" appreciated.

Is the Erasmus+ Project Results platform effective in disseminating results and geared to the following purposes?

Objective	not at all	little	somewhat	very	don't know/ unable to answer	Total
Visibility	2.6%	18.4%	26.3%	47.4%	5.3%	100%
Ease of making contacts in other organizations	0.0%	7.9%	44.7%	42.1%	5.3%	100%
Functionality of research by theme	0.0%	15.8%	42.1%	39.5%	2.6%	100%
Availability of project data	0.0%	13.2%	39.5%	47.4%	0.0%	100%

Fig. 11 – Effectiveness of Erasmus+ Project Results platform

Navigation from one project page to another, the project data and, in particular, the search fields, are aspects which, according to the project representatives interviewed, need to be modified (Fig.12).

Which of the following areas of the platform could be improved?

Areas of the platform	Answers
The search fields	55.3%
Navigation from one project page to another	42.1%
Project data	39.5%
Others (please specify):	15.8%

Fig. 12 – Improvements to be made to the Erasmus+ Project Platform Results

Many representatives registered on one or more community platforms such as Epale, eTwinning and School Education Gateway[6] (Fig.13).
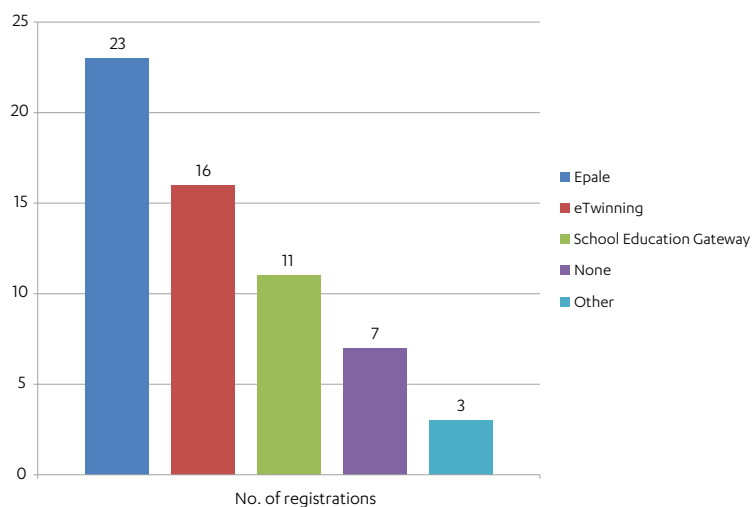

Fig. 13 - European digital platforms

Transferability and sustainability of intellectual outputs

The intellectual outputs produced, whose fundamental element is innovation, have proved to be transferable to other situations if they are geared and designed to be adapted to different contexts. The percentages of positive responses were very high in this regard and particularly in the context of projects intended for adult and higher education.

In your opinion, are the exploitation and transferability of intellectual outputs in other contexts directly linked to the factors listed below? % Answers: Strongly agree + Somewhat agree
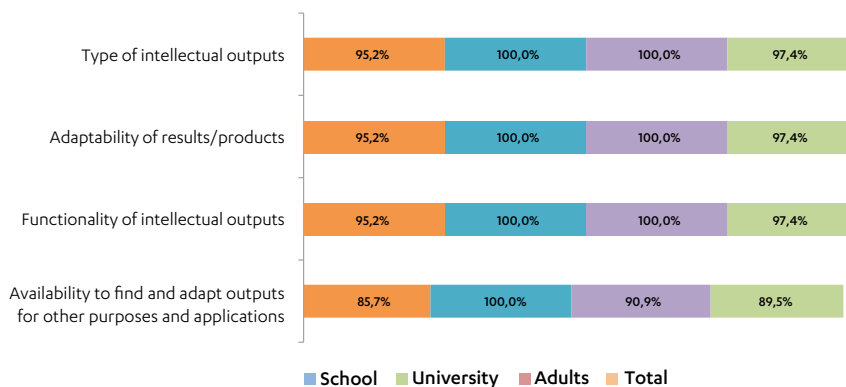

Fig. 14 - Transferability of intellectual outputs

Looking after the networks created with the partnership, bringing to life new projects, keeping websites and social channels operational, continuing to promote results in order to take advantage of the outputs realized (in many cases Open Educational Resources), are just some tools to make the intellectual outputs achieved by the partnership sustainable over time.

6 - EPALE, Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe, https://epale.ec.europa.eu/it; eTwinning is the community of European schools, https://www.etwinning.net/it/pub/index.htm; SchoolEducationGateway, an online platform for school education, https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/it/pub/index.htm.

Considering the sustainability strategy of intellectual outputs, is it possible to quantify the duration of results, as well as their possible use, after the project funding period has ended?

Duration of results	School Education	Higher Education	Adult Education	Total
up to 2 Years	14%		9%	11%
from 3 to 5 years	43%	17%	36%	37%
more than 5 years	24%	50%	45%	34%
No, it is not possible to quantify this, because....	19%	33%	9%	18%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Fig. 15 - Duration of the results for the sustainability of intellectual outputs

Below we present the outcome of the last question in the questionnaire, asked in order to obtain more information and points of view **on the measures to be taken to promote the sustainability** of the final products of the partnerships for innovation. The answers agreed that it is necessary to use more resources, both human and financial. A very high percentage considered support by the national authorities and the involvement of stakeholders right from the implementation of the project fundamental to ensure a medium- to long-term sustainability strategy.

We would like your opinion on the following statements regarding the sustainability of the final products of the partnerships for innovation (% Answers: Strongly agree + Somewhat agree):

|	School Education	Higher Education	Adult Education	Total
The sustainability of final products depends on the availability of additional financial resources	76.2%	100.0%	100.0%	86.9%
Medium- to long-term sustainability of the project outputs is closely linked to the use of additional human resources	85.7%	100.0%	81.8%	86.8%
Greater support from national authorities (Ministries, accreditation bodies recognized by Ministries, etc.) is an indispensable factor for lasting sustainability of the final products	81.0%	100.0%	90.9%	86.8%
The involvement of stakeholders at the implementation stage of the project ensures an effective medium- to long-term sustainability strategy	95.2%	83.3%	100.0%	94.7%

Fig. 16 – Factors for sustainability

Chapter 4

Meetings at the organizations coordinating the projects: the validity of the impact visits

Summary

The criterion used to identify 6 case studies, two for each sector, from among the 47 partnerships, was based on the assessment forms which formed part of the final reports, from among which we picked those proposals with an overall score equal to/over 85/100 and between 30 and 40 in the impact and dissemination assessments. The objective of the visits, as already trialled in the previous survey published in Erasmus+ publication no. 2, was geared to sharing and listening to (and therefore not merely consultation of printed documentation) the experiences of the project representatives, their stories, the genesis of their project idea, and the successes and shortcomings, focusing attention on aspects linked to the quality and potential transferability of the results, including the sustainability of the intellectual outputs.

The in-depth interviews with the project coordinators and partners proved of great use to understand the real dynamics generated after the natural conclusion of the project (lasting two or three years), exploring the impact, the changes which had occurred at professional and structural levels, whether planned or unanticipated, but which determined a domino effect. Impact visits in a context which was informal but operational were designed as a tool to complement the online questionnaire (whose results are extensively described in Chapter 3), which resulted in a series of reflections, considerations and opinions concerning the impact and the various design stages. In reality, further elements were added, useful to better define the qualitative model of partnerships in terms of achieving their objectives.

Diagram of impact visits by case study
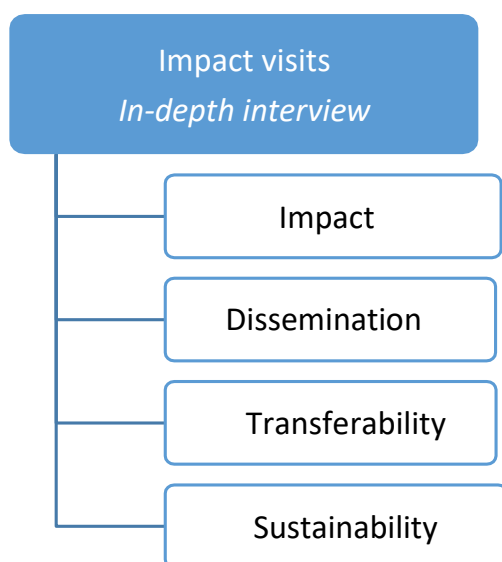
The checklist used for the interview was divided into two parts, the impact inside and outside the partnership, with specific questions on what happened within a year or two after the end of the activities. We also asked the parties to notify us of particular considerations on implementation, further developments in terms of monitoring and verification of the impact on partner institutes, initiatives for additional dissemination at local and national levels and in partner countries, and finally, any reflections on the role of stakeholders in transferring and upholding the results.

CASE STUDIES

School education

DESCI - Developing and Evaluating Skills for Creativity and Innovation
Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, (National Research Council) Rome
http://www.desci.eu/
The Financial and Business Learning Activities project for primary school students was geared to entrepreneurship and financial literacy, eliminating the idea of a financial world which is closed, complex, elitist and decontextualized from daily life and activities. At the centre of the design, the adoption of an integrated model to teach entrepreneurial skills and economic/financial knowledge, in order to deeply evolve methods, tools, solutions and learning situations using an interdisciplinary teaching approach. The development of financial capability involved students of Classes IV and V at primary schools, by constructing educational goals which produced literacy in money and prices, an ability to plan for the future, and the capacity to manage a small budget.

F.A.BU.L.A. - Financial And Business Learning Activities
Suor Orsola Benincasa Institute, Naples
http://www.fabula.conform.it
The Financial and Business Learning Activities project for primary school students, was geared to entrepreneurship and financial literacy, eliminating the idea of a financial world which is closed, complex, elitist and decontextualized from daily life and activities. At the centre of the design, the adoption of an integrated model to teach entrepreneurial skills and economic/financial knowledge, in order to deeply evolve methods, tools, solutions and learning situations using an interdisciplinary teaching approach. The development of financial capability involved students of Classes IV and V at primary schools, by constructing educational goals which produced literacy in money and prices, an ability to plan for the future, and the capacity to manage a small budget.

Higher education

AMICO: A new Alliance for Mobility InComing and Outgoing
E.ri.fo. Ente di ricerca e formazione Roma
http://www.amicomobility.eu/
The AMICO project facilitated labour mobility between European countries. Main objectives: 1. improving the professionalising of labour consultants, designing an innovative curriculum for "professional mobility advisers"; 2. strengthening the matching of skills at an international level, with a series of bespoke tools; 3. improving the provision of services to support labour mobility within the EU. The project involved "La Sapienza" University in Rome and other universities, regional bodies which contributed to the sustainability of the curricular model included in their educational offering.

Higher Education Innovation in Plant Diversity: flexible learning paths for emerging labour market
University of Molise
https://dibt.unimol.it/HEI-PLADI/home/
The HeiPladi project developed, tested and implemented a pilot higher education programme on various issues relating to plant biodiversity. HeiPladi follows the priorities on the 2011 modernization agenda of the EU to equip young generations with generic skills for the emerging new labour markets, such as 'green' jobs linked to the protection and preservation of the environment. Five e-learning modules were implemented, rendered open to and usable by different subjects: students, educators, laboratories, herbaria, museums, germplasm banks,

botanical gardens, natural parks and the staff of nurseries at national and international levels. During the project seven short-term training sessions were organized including fieldwork with the objective of developing skills and deepening knowledge of the subjects in the e-learning module.

Adult education

Museums Art & Alzheimer's

Marino Marini Foundation, San Pancrazio, Florence

http://www.maaproject.eu

The main objectives of this project were the development of tools and educational activities to promote the welfare of people with dementia and their families and professional carers through artistic and museum programmes, helping to trigger a change in the social perception of dementia and build a community called "friend of dementia". The idea behind MA&A is that art, seen as a complex cultural and relational experience, and the museum, conceived as an inclusive space for informal learning, could help to develop new strategies and ways of communicating and relating to people suffering from dementia.

Senior plus

CEMEA del Mezzogiorno, Rome

http://www.cemea.eu/seniorplus/

The focus of Senior Plus are adults aged over 50, unemployed or inactive, who need to improve their employability. Among the objectives of Senior Plus are those of devising, trialling and evaluating an innovative combined path for employability of the over-50s. The project proposes innovative and combined methods and courses, aimed at enhancing the potential of senior citizens, promoting self-esteem, motivation, personal branding and a spirit of initiative. All the tools and documentation of the project can be freely downloaded by accessing the various sections of the site.

The sample of interviewees reiterated in a very clear way the strategic importance of the exploitation and dissemination of the results, given that they facilitate the involvement and adoption of good practices by stakeholders. Many elements recorded during the meetings confirmed what had already been revealed by online questionnaires, focusing interest on two aspects:

- the adaptability of products to bolster transferability to other contexts. The phase of experimentation and testing of the products made it possible to verify the effectiveness and accessibility of the contents and methodologies

- the sustainability of the products over time, normally through availability of intellectual outputs on the various digital channels, was envisaged to be 2-3 years after the ending of the partnership.

Overall, as the results show, the impact visit experience is a flexible method applicable also to other activities of the (KA1) programme, a moment for field observation which allows dialogue, comparison, and fruitful reflection on themes, procedures, processes and objectives that have been developed within European cooperation. With this activity, the Agency performs a further function to raise awareness and exploit some good practices implemented within the framework of the programme activities, which can inspire and suggest other ideas for future projects.

Chapter 5
The focus group

Summary

The final part of the survey was a focus group held at the Erasmus+ National Agency in Rome in December 2019. As illustrated in the methodological chapter, the focus group technique was chosen to study in depth which elements influence the impact quality and stimulate interaction between the participants as well as exchanges of experiences and reflections on the theme.

One of the distinctive features of the Key Action 2 structure is to foster the presence of different institutes active in different educational contexts, but which develop and implement an innovative project activity pursuing a common objective. Therefore, in the composition of the target group we considered it useful and consistent to follow a cross-sector approach, involving the coordinators interviewed during the impact visits. In attendance therefore were: 1 strategic partnership for innovation in school education KA201, 2 partnerships for higher education KA203 and 2 for Adult Education KA204, for a total of 7 people.

The focus group's discussion was divided into 3 thematic areas deemed the most interesting and useful for the purposes of the survey:

- types and levels of impact
- transferability
- sustainability

The themes identified were introduced and stimulated by questions and by the projection of a slide containing the keywords useful to the debate. As is appropriate for this type of group interview, we tried to formulate the questions so as to give the broadest expressive freedom, to avoid "suggesting" answers and to create the most fertile terrain on which an open discussion could arise.

Impact: type and levels

Question 1 *How many levels of impact are there and of what kind? Is it possible to define the impact levels of a strategic partnership for innovation?*

With the first question participants were asked to discuss the concept of the impact produced by the project.

Already in the first stage of the investigation, through the compilation of questionnaires, and in the second, with interviews conducted during visits to coordinating institutes, the theme of impact had been dealt with and enriched by individual experiences, especially in terms of the change and innovation occurring inside and outside the partnerships. In particular, attention was paid to those changes considered still valid for some time after the end of the activities. This discussion opens up a further distinction between measured impact (stated by the project, explicit and assessed) and measurable impact (achieved even without being planned and not measured, still not fully understood).

The debate continued by accepting this scheme and looking over the elements that characterized the different types of impact. One of these elements is certainly the context, or better, the plurality of **contexts** in which a partnership finds itself operating. Rigid contexts in which it is difficult to intervene and implement the products realized; constantly changing contexts in which the reference standards change; contexts not fully explored with the result that unforeseen prospects and opportunities for the project can appear. In order to govern the

partnership it then becomes essential to define from the outset a **shared implementation framework** for the parties involved, which maps all the elements (observed in the design phase) which may or not contribute to achieving the goals set.

> *"An impact trajectory: it is good to seize all opportunities, but it is important to already start from the idea (as far as we can in the initial moments of the project) that every research activity, every activity within the partnership, every opportunity, multiplier event, etc., is an element designed and defined within this impact trajectory."*

The variety of contexts and forms which produces the impact resulting from the project results is related to the diversity of the partners themselves: from the one grappling with insurmountable red tape, to the one who did not fully understand all the implications of the methodology chosen; from the one who goes beyond expectations by linking the tool to a Ministerial policy but, at the end of the project, fails to continue at a European dimension, to the one who must reckon with binding national legislation which was not there at the beginning of the design. The role of the coordinator therefore becomes crucial in promoting an understanding of all aspects of the project, not only operational ones but also those to do with the context.

> *"There is the phase of project understanding. [...] There is work not so much of mediation, as of context related understanding."*

The coordinator's activity is therefore decisive throughout the implementation of the project via non-stop work of negotiation and sharing to construct knowledge and tools, exhorting the contribution of each partner and social actor involved in a perspective of exchange and mutual enrichment.

Another element considered important in the definition and quality of the impact is **time**: over the 2/3 years necessary to develop innovative intellectual outputs, experiment with paths and tools, disseminate results and exploit them, there are many variables involved which can also change the reference context. The possibility of providing a **follow-up** action after the end of a project, funded after a careful evaluation by the National Agencies would guarantee greater consolidation, in-depth study, and systematization of the strategic partnership results.

It is not only a matter of time and additional funding. Also the European added value of the partnership, which ensures **credibility** in the eyes of stakeholders, contributes to further develop and systematize the intellectual outputs and innovative processes.

Transferability

Question 2: *Transferability. The projects were characterised by innovation, which is embodied in an intellectual output, so can we say that the greater the impact the easier it is to transfer these outputs?*

Here we have the element of the context again, which is enriched by the presence of **stakeholders**, key players in the construction of transferability and in the creation of a necessary *polyphony* so that the results obtained can effectively reach other subjects and other areas. We must underline the need not to stop at a mere recognition of the stakeholders, but to identify the different types, for example by identifying external and internal stakeholders.

> *"When we talk about stakeholders and social actors we must be careful, not only to analyse (which ones), but precisely what the different type is. There are also those who have said: "different disciplines are also different stakeholders" (Funtowicz, father of post-normal science, one of the important conceptual references). In addition to an external usership/collaboration, also an internal usership has been built. [...] At this point, the analysis of stakeholders, just observing the stakeholders, who they are, who they can be, has also helped create a positive cycle, not only between the schools and the territory outside but also inside the school."*

The transferability of the project results may encounter many **obstacles** during and after the implementation of the activities funded. According to one of the participants, paradoxically, some may even be induced by the Erasmus+ Programme. For example, difficulties have emerged in the development of experimentation and adaptability of intellectual outputs at **local and regional levels**, linked to the eligibility of the cost items:

> *"Fundamentally, there is an ineligibility of all the resources spent during implementation, because, being carried out at a local level, they are not recognized. [...] because there is a basic problem: the programme promotes transnational action and not local action."*

Among the elements which facilitate the transfer of project results to other contexts the importance is underlined of how the intellectual output is designed. Especially where it is planned to realize educational pathways, a **flexible** and **open** architecture proves to be a winning formula, allowing as it does appreciation on the part of recipients from different disciplines or even different professional spheres.

A particular aspect of transferability is also highlighted: **mediation** is needed to use properly the tools produced. In this case, the action of a subject other than the final beneficiary is necessary, to support end users in finding and using the forms developed by the partnership.

Sustainability

Question 3: *Sustainability - A project is sustainable to the extent that I involve a group of stakeholders and share it with them right from the outset. What is your experience of this?*

The third theme proposed for discussion was sustainability, i.e. the capacity of a project to continue to use and exploit its results beyond the end of the period of funding, also through accreditation, integration or marketing. The group recalls the concept of sustainability derived from the environmental sphere and the ethics of **responsibility** as opposed to that of intention.

The role of stakeholders had already emerged with regard to the ability to capitalize on intellectual outputs in areas other than that of the partnership. Its centrality was confirmed by the participants in the discussion, during which they placed particular emphasis on procedures of involvement, motivation and **care**.

A double level of sustainability was highlighted: **inside** and **outside** the partnership. The former was generally considered more predictable and dependable, even if, from the study of individual cases through interviews conducted during the impact visits, this was not always the case. The latter, which extends to the sectors concerned by the partnership, was carried out by other social actors and, as has been said regarding transferability, must also be applied from the outset in order to encourage sufficient involvement by the stakeholders. The ability to recognize the value of stakeholders' experiences and their potential contribution which can enrich both parties, becomes a key element in ensuring the project a duration that lasts beyond the depletion of EC contributions, particularly outside the strategic partnership.

The sustainability strategies adopted are linked to the impact which the project has had and the ability to **systematize** the innovative products realized. For example, the fact that the modules developed by the universities were recognized for education credits has allowed students of different disciplines to use the intellectual outputs and prompted the partners to seek other developments and lines of funding.

Other factors contribute to a project's sustainability. According to the representatives interviewed, one of these is **language** and consequently the translation of intellectual outputs must be addressed taking into consideration the innovative and experimental nature of the results.

"An intellectual output that is translated into the language of the country has a totally different impact. [...] it is necessary to create a definition, a new taxonomy. This is very complicated: it cannot be a translation made by a single person, but by a team, or by someone inside who has followed the matter [...]. In this case, translation is a particular intellectual operation. Sometimes it is necessary to create or coin new terms or expressions since there may be no direct match."

Coordinators grappling with multilingual products have adopted different solutions, from a translation made by the partner in the language of their home country to a richer solution including a further revision carried out by a control team consisting of experts in the field from outside the partnership. However, all the procedures have a common goal: **accessibility** of the results of the project and their usability.

Impact keywords

In the concluding part of the debate the group was asked to highlight some keywords from among those that had emerged during the session. The concepts of impact, transferability and sustainability were accompanied by boxes representing the elements that support them, like satellites, which maintain the balance of a larger system and positively affect its changes and evolution.
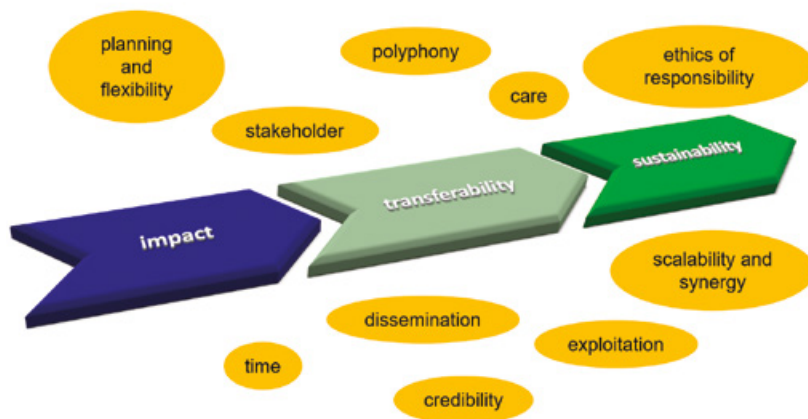
The debate ended with a suggestion for the National Agency: **to organize thematic workshops** and present projects selected by the Agency so to extend the opportunity to discover and try out the innovative products realized by good practices to a broader audience (that is not only to those who attends the general informative events on the Erasmus+ deadlines). A sort of tool fair at which people interested in the theme, regardless of their own educational sector, could try out the tools and methodologies developed and, if they wish, even use them in their activities or in other EC projects.

Chapter 6
Final reflections

Summary

Cross-sector approach

By the end of the survey, we were able to highlight the many aspects and points of convergence of partnerships in support of innovation, designed and implemented in three different education sectors, which influence and interact with one another to achieve important and strategic objectives in various education systems. In the three phases of the survey (the online questionnaire, impact visits and focus group dealt with in the previous chapters), in investigating the same type of partnerships, we realized that it is the blend of expertise and skills which represents the strong point of the internationalization process. In the European context, the design experience is characterized by a sort of 'polyphony', a concept which we adopted from a suggestion by a representative who took part in the focus group, ("*a transfer is always polyphonic and is always born with the project*") which hints at other meanings, a fusion of different cultures and different languages, generating meetings, common interests, and cooperation.

The final result is built up through cooperation, a multiplicity of 'headings', each one different but unique in its diversity and determining the composition of a multiplicity of effects and impacts in a cascade, in the transfer and "in the creation of *polyphony* necessary so that the results obtained can effectively reach other target groups and other areas".

A successful project requires a whole series of **skills and abilities**, and the protagonists of the survey showed that they had exploited all those soft skills which help a team to follow and share the plan of activities, to find a solution to every shortcoming, to show flexibility with respect to certain dynamics created in contexts that are very different from one another.

On a **methodological and operational level**, we found a system based on field research, sector investigations, and an exchange of good practices that produces innovation and develops new products. Not only are activities coordinated within a partnership, but mechanisms and tools are also developed that help to understand and measure the qualitative effects which can be reached in relation to the objectives set. The monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the tools and methodologies is a point of force of innovative projects.

The qualitative impact of the partnerships has different connotations, depending on the objectives to be achieved. In this **cross-sectoral survey**, the areas of education were studied transversely with respect to the levels we referred to regarding impact.

Innovation in partnerships brings concrete results

There can be no doubt that staff directly involved in projects can develop a set of skills and knowledge which benefit their colleagues thanks to the sharing and dissemination of the results. In the same way, in a shared implementation, many actors are influenced by the innovative effects of the cooperation (individual impact), who in turn can become propagators of new educational and cultural models. Consequently, the professional growth of staff leads to a positive impact on students and learners. The ability to work in a heterogeneous group brings added value to the professional dimension but especially to people's emotional sphere.

As regards **institutional impact**, the most significant changes which occurred among the institutes, coordinators and partners were concentrated, in almost all cases, in the following areas:

• Organizational innovation

• Network innovation

• Innovation of the offering

• Digital innovation

The change that has taken place in organizations due to exposure to the international sphere is reflected in and strengthens the collaboration with their own territory: it expands the networks in their sector, where it is possible to identify new interlocutors, associations, local authorities, enterprises and stakeholders also thanks to the practice of dissemination and exploitation throughout the territory.

The concrete results, not always measurable or measured, have produced changes inside and outside the institutes in terms of modernization and a methodological and organizational internationalization, but in particular in the direct beneficiaries (students, teachers, managers, people at risk of social exclusion, disabled people, and prisoners).

Discussion of the results of the various stages of the survey revealed a significant effort and interest in the **systematizing** of the outputs developed during the design. It should be emphasized that the systemic impact inside and outside partnerships has been moderately successful, however there are still some areas for improvement to be made at an institutional level, namely, at the level of institutional policy in the various national systems. In the sample surveyed, very few results and intellectual outputs had been systematized at a national level or adopted as models and paradigms for the pertinent education sectors.

Certainly, the institutes which carried through an Erasmus+ Project contributed significantly to the achievement of the goals set by the Programme; proof of this being their testing and auditing activities (verifications of impact on the target group) used at an experimental level among the various institutes . This represents an important milestone.

The **systemic impact** of methodologies and educational models resulting from innovative partnerships struck home in a significant way in the school sector and even more so in the tertiary education sector, institutionally geared to innovation and research. More complex was the field of adult education, where the institutes involved were chiefly representatives of non-formal adult learning, whose target groups are those who have left formal education for various reasons, and therefore the methodological practices and experiences of the project, while certainly important and significant, did not demonstrate very significant margins of incidence on policies nor the national systems which govern the adult education system in the various countries.

The dissemination strategy grows in visibility

Visibility offers a wider audience of partners and stakeholders at both local and national levels. In several innovative project developments, we observed that the translation of intellectual outputs into the various languages of the countries involved facilitated the use and dissemination of the results both inside and outside the partnerships, as amply illustrated in Chapter 3 dedicated to the questionnaire results. The European ***Erasmus+ Project Results Platform*** is the main repository for all the products realized over the years. However, for many representatives, it does not fully absolve the function it should have in terms of visibility and dissemination; its shortcomings including a dispersive structure, even if it remains "an important archive", as emphasized by one representative. It works for those who already know the Programme, for the professionals, but it does not reach a very large audience of new participants, it is poor from the point of view of the social channels, for example, which could expand access to it.

Designing sustainably

We used the survey to outline a reference framework of the contents, strategies and methodologies resulting from the cooperation which gathers many experiences, some similar others remote, but united by a need to formulate and develop new ideas for growth and to improve both formal and non-formal learning systems. This line of qualitative analysis allowed us to exploit all the resources of the project design, focusing on the transferability and exploitation of intellectual outputs which might indicate new paths and procedures for the internationalization of the institutes, the development of new skills, and improve the relationship between the worlds of education and industry.

The partnerships have created *communities* within which the individuals continue to work and maintain pro-

fessional and personal relationships. This aspect of continuity which ensures greater sustainability of the results over time was fundamental in all the experiences we analysed. Compared to the first Erasmus+ projects selected in 2014, we observed a greater awareness of the dynamics that produce innovation (greater clarity in the definition of intellectual outputs), a major structural and functional solidity in the project proposals.

Unquestionably, a qualitative leap has been produced, a change and development that have strengthened the impact of the partnerships, in which the connection between the **project space** – the partnership – and the **timeframe** – the programming of the activities in phases, has become consolidated producing cross-sectoral exchanges abounding in thematic and methodological innovation.

In this survey we talked several times about the concept of sustainability, in particular the measures put in place to **uphold** the results achieved, to make them accessible and adaptable to the different sectors. This demonstrates that what the analysed project experiences have in common – whether in schools, universities or adult education – is a growing urge to question and act in brand-new contexts. The multiplier effect of the partnerships in support of innovation has almost always produced a fresh idea for a new Erasmus+ project, or complementary projects, with the use of other sources of funding, such as structural funds. A synergy that exploits and amplifies the impact of the products which are not static results or arrival points, but **stages**, goals which can envisage additional implementations, with a view to a vital and constant interaction in the scientific and educational communities.