



Report on the Active Inclusion Learning Network: Marginalised in Communities Transnational Event

Athens, 11 – 12 June 2014



Overview

- The event focused on the sub-themes of:
 - “Homelessness”
 - “Offenders / Ex-Offenders”
 - “Mental health, physical and learning disabilities”
 - “Drugs and Alcohol”
- 41 experts, from 13 different nationalities, participated in the event.
- 8 project partners attended to facilitate and scribe the 4 sub-theme groups (Kirsty Jacobs, Heather Law, Giovanna Mangano, John Noble, Olwen Lyner, Chris Holmes, Koen De Temmerman and Craig Georgiou). Dr Ioan Durnescu attended the event in the capacity of the researcher and moved between the workshops to observe.
- Presentations were given from representatives from The National Centre of Social Research (Greece), as well as from partners of the project, and The Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion – the organisation who is evaluating the Network.
- 116 surveys on marginalised in communities were reviewed - the homelessness group assessed 20 surveys; the drug and alcohol group assessed 27 surveys; the offenders/ex-offenders group assessed 37 surveys and the disabilities group assessed 32 surveys.

- Each sub-theme group then identified 8 collective practices (top 5 and 3 reserves) that should be invited to the Platform 2 Peer review events which will be held later this year.

What worked well

- The adjustments made to the agenda, following lessons learnt from the Stockholm event, worked well as we gave the delegates more time on the second day to identify the Top 8 collective practices. This enabled the group to engage in a more detailed debate and discussion about what were the most innovative and effective collective practices to invite to the next events.
- The Network was very upfront with the delegates about the varying quality of the surveys and why the Network had not pre-filtered the surveys. This vastly reduced the number of queries received from delegates about why they were being asked to mark certain surveys in comparison to the previous events. A statement about the quality of the surveys, and the methodology chosen, was included in an email to the delegates, and in their packs, prior to the event. It was then re-iterated at the Active Inclusion presentation during the plenary session at the event.

The statement said:

“The Network knows that some of the collected practices may not be written in very good English, or do not provide very much detail. So, I would just like to explain that we are including all of the surveys that the Network has received in this assessment process (rather than pre-selecting the surveys) to ensure that we are using a rigorous and transparent methodology to identify and select the most innovative and effective collected practices. It also enables strong justification to be provided to those organisations whose collected practices are not selected as being the most innovative and effective.”

- The Network really emphasised the importance of reading the surveys before attending the event. As per the message about the quality of the surveys, this request was also sent to the delegates in an email prior to the event, and was also highlighted in their delegate pack. The result was that the vast majority of the delegates had read the surveys beforehand, and studied the evaluation grid, which helped the workshops to run on time due and enabled the delegates to have interesting and informed discussions about their surveys whilst assessing them in pairs during the workshops.
- The partner’s ensured they had a clear and agreed methodology for selecting the Top 8 collective practices on Day 2 of the event. This was facilitated by a one page briefing document, which was shared with the

partners in advance of the event, to ensure a good understand of the process and principles to be adopted.

- The approach used for printing the surveys to be assessed at this event was much more environmentally friendly. For this event, 5 copies of each survey for each sub-theme group were printed and put each of the breakout rooms. This meant that each delegate had individual surveys to read on Day 1, and , dramatically reduced the amount of paper that had to be thrown out at the end of Day 1(i.e. the surveys that did not make it into the 'Top 10' to be assessed again on Day 2 were thrown out). It also meant that that there was enough copies for at least one between two, on Day 2, and the issues related to having to print out the surveys to be used at Day 2, at the end of Day 1, which were experienced in Stockholm, were avoided.

Feedback

- Very positive feedback was received from the delegates who attended the event. The feedback focused on the good organisation of the events; how the opportunity to network with other experts from across the EU was appreciated, and how they enjoyed the interactive nature of the events. One piece of feedback that particularly stood out was from an expert commented that she has attended a lot of ESF funded events, yet this event was the only event that she found truly valuable and a pleasure to attend. An example of the feedback received is below:

"Thank you very much for all your help and the great organisation, I thought the event was very stimulating."

Dutch delegate

"Thank you for the opportunity to take part in the Athens meeting – I found it very interesting to look through all the survey case studies, to meet the wider network of experts and to see how the AI network actually functions in practice."

British / French delegate

"I really enjoyed the three days and wanted to say thanks for the invitation."

British Delegate

"I would like to thank you again for the well organized and informative meeting in Athens last week. I am impressed with the amount of projects you collected and I enjoyed meeting so many interesting people in your network."

Dutch Delegate

"Thank you very much for the interesting meeting!"

Italian Delegate

“It was a very pleasant and useful meeting and it offered me the opportunity to meet a lot of most interesting people working for the marginalized groups all around Europe. Thank you for this opportunity.”

Romanian Delegate

“The event was excellent and I enjoyed the experience and the work that was presented to the panel. It was very interesting to review the different projects and having an opportunity to mix with a variety of people from all walks of life.”

British Delegate

Learning and suggestion points for next events

- It could have been useful to have included experts “by experience” e.g. experts with experience of the sub-theme topic that is being looked at, at the event. This is something, therefore, that could be considered for the peer review sessions. This would help to give a different and interesting perspective when assessing the collective practices in order to find those which are the most innovative.
- Ensure the map on how to get to the venue is accurate!