

**Trade Union and University Lifelong
Learning in Partnership TULIP**

Final External Evaluation Report

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Foreword

This external evaluation report is written at the end of a Socrates-Leonardo project called TULIP “Trade Union and University Lifelong Learning in Partnership” (2007 - 1984 /001 -002).

The key focus of the evaluation was the role of partners in an international network project.

The evaluation was implemented in fruitful cooperation with the Coordinator and Contractor. An interactive and target-oriented approach has shown to be an effective tool to support the production of outcomes in European projects.

This report reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Turku, Finland 30 November 2009

Kari Seppälä

1 EVALUATION SUPPORTING THE TULIP PROJECT

1.1. THE TULIP PROJECT IN BRIEF

The project facilitated the exchange and transfer of models of cooperation between Trade Unions (TUs) and Universities in the delivery of work based lifelong learning (WLLL) to Trade Union members/employees.

The TULIP Project produced a web-based resource kit, publicly available to all interested parties, including national reports, case studies, papers, collated papers from the final conference, details of 'experts' and bibliography & links to relevant websites. These resources are found at www.tulipnetwork.org.uk.

In addition to the major web resource, the network activities included network meetings, an open conference in 2009, dissemination and exploitation.

TULIP had fourteen partners from nine countries, including those where the TU movement was comparatively newly developed. The partners included Trade Unions working at both regional and national level, universities and the European-wide university LLL network EUCEN.

1.2. EVALUATION IN ITS ENTIRETY

The TULIP evaluation covered (1) the monitoring and internal evaluation functions of the project as well as the (2) external evaluation. The Coordinator and the Contractor took good care of following the activities and production of outcomes in the project. As the external evaluator I concentrated on the partner roles in the project and the specified and agreed foci of evaluation.

1.3. THE LOGIC OF EXTERNAL EVALUATION

The main idea was to use the evaluation to remind the TULIP partners of certain key issues that are relevant, when we want the project to be a success both for each individual and his/her institution as well as the project and its financiers. This took place by a two-phase-enquiry, where the partners answered more or less the same questions in the beginning and at the end of the project. Only few questions about the project experience of the partners were added into the second enquiry.

The set of questions aimed to ensure that the partners would act in an appropriate way in relation to the general aims of the project as well as the partners' professional development. The approach was parallel to giving the students the questions for an examination in advance so as to focus their attention on the key elements of the required reading.

1.4. IMPLEMENTING THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION

1. The evaluator drafted *the evaluation plan* for the project. The plan was finalised for the management group with the Coordinator and Contractor in professional and friendly cooperation.
2. The evaluator drafted *the first set of questions* for the enquiry. The questions

- were structured and modified with the Coordinator and Contractor so as to sharpen the focus and make answering practical, convenient and useful.
3. The evaluator presented the approach to evaluation and the practical arrangements in *the Partner Meeting* in Manchester 20th February 2008.
 4. *The Management Group* discussed the principles and practices of evaluation in Manchester 21st February 2008 and agreed that:
 - the principles were approved as suggested by the evaluator,
 - each partner would fill in the questionnaire individually,
 - the answers would be requested with names (i.e. not anonymously),
 - open questions would serve the needs of the project better than “ticking the boxes”,
 - no alterations to the questions in the draft questionnaire were needed,
 - the deadlines for the answers would be: 15th April 2008 for the first questionnaire and 30th June 2009 for the second questionnaire (later postponed till September),
 - the findings would be presented on the Versailles University website and in the Partner Meeting in Tallinn and MG meeting in Tampere and
 - that the interim and final evaluation reports to the Commission would be included in the public TULIP website.
 5. The partners gave their *answers* through the web. In the first phase, sixteen responses from thirteen partner institutions were received; each institution was covered; most partners answered all the questions. The answers were a source of ideas for further work in TULIP that the partners could return to. It was necessarily not relevant to view all of them at the same time, but to look at the slides that were relevant in certain phases of the project.
 6. The evaluator *collected* the answers as they were written on the project website. The collection of answers was a wide and versatile source of ideas and tools for the implementation of the project.
 7. The evaluator *analysed* the answers and produced a presentation with the key findings.
 8. The evaluator *presented* the outcomes of the first part of the enquiry in the partner meeting in Tallinn 6th November 2008. The findings were discussed and they were at the disposal of the Coordinator and partners in the future implementation of the project.
 9. The evaluator finalised *the interim report*.
 10. The evaluator drafted *the second set of questions* for the enquiry. The questions were fine-tuned with the Coordinator and Contractor so as to concentrate on the key issues at the final stages of the project.
 11. The partners gave their *answers* through the web. In the second phase, thirteen responses from thirteen partner institutions were received. Again, most partners answered all the questions.
 12. The evaluator *collected* the answers as they were written on the project website. The second collection of answers reflected the activities and experience of the partners, whereas the first answers had given a picture of their plans and understanding about the project.
 13. The evaluator *analysed* the answers and produced a presentation with the key findings.
 14. The evaluator *presented* the outcomes of the second part of the enquiry in the management group meeting in Tampere 22nd September 2009. After the presentation, the findings were used in the workshops where the future of the project was discussed.
 15. The evaluator finalised *the final report*.

The Webropol tool supported the answering, analysis and reporting on the internet.

2 THE FINDINGS OF THE TWO ENQUIRIES

2.1. PARTNER MOTIVATIONS AND EXPECTED BENEFITS

(The questions to sharpen the expectations of the project partners)

Start. The recruitment of partners was premised on the idea of two groups of partners: some partners were to be experienced in the cooperation of universities and trade unions and others newcomers to this kind of activity. The answers to the first enquiry showed that partners were recognisably conscious of their different roles. Another favourable starting point was the fact that the partners seemed to join the project with their responsibilities for their membership in mind. Their basic mission is to support the good of their members or clients.

The allocation of resources for such a project seemed justifiable in the situation, where the partners claimed that they had not found chances for European cooperation in this area. The answers also covered the typical motivations for any European projects, e.g. cooperation and contacts, finding good practices and ideas. The trade union partners were especially motivated to get acquainted with lifelong learning issues and APEL & RPL. For the university institutions, also the potential education markets seemed to be an interesting possibility.

The motivations were a mix of institutional and personal professional interests. No doubt, the motivation base was stronger where the two of these supported each other.

"We are collaborating with different actors of economic and social environment, among which companies and trade unions."

"Since ... the trade unions and universities are not in close cooperation"

"I joined the project to try to gain a greater understanding of how we can support our members more effectively and how we can enhance and diversify our approach to Life long learning in the trade union."

End. The answers to the second enquiry about the motivations of the participants were not unexpectedly well in line with the answers of the first round. The general view was that the participants made a clear decision to take part in a project that aimed for learning, networking and development in the cooperation between higher education institutions and trade unions. In other words, the partners joined the TULIP project so as to bridge the two institutional spheres, to share versatile expertise and to widen the services of academic lifelong learning for trade union members.

"To underpin current university activities with expanded networking with the 2 sectors."

"To confront our own experience of the relationship University-Trade union with that of the other European countries, who have different socio-economic and TU contexts."

2.2. THINGS TO LEARN

(The question to raise the awareness of the learning objectives)

Start. The main issue of the project was the trade union-university-partnership. The partnership wanted to learn about the philosophy, principles, models, managing and practices of the versatile companionships that these parties construct. The notion of the partnerships in their social contexts was also referred to. Understandably, the higher education institutions wanted to know more about the logic of trade unions and vice versa. The key angle of the project was lifelong learning that seemed to be a special activity also in the TU/HEI partnerships.

Interestingly, some partners emphasised that taking part in a European project would give them a chance to learn at home. Allocating staff time into the project was a legitimate basis for the construction of a learning environment. More obvious answers named the will to bring the European agenda into national discussion and the use of the solutions and practices of other countries for development in home country.

"I plan to learn, how partnership between universities and trade unions can be developed, which models can be used. "

"... more about the TU culture and their attitude to LLL."

"We believe that there is more than one model for lifelong learning and we need to determine what might be appropriate for our particular circumstances."

End. The second inquiry gave clear evidence that the partners of the TULIP project learned what they had expected. They had found many possibilities for learning, networking and development or bridging, sharing and widening expertise. As to learning, examples were given about interesting alternative ways of lifelong learning and good experience about learning by doing. As to networking, e.g. strengthened relationships with various partners to future working were mentioned. As to development, many partners had found ways to exploit new practices in their countries.

"We have developed our pedagogy continuously during 30 years. Especially we are interested to get more experience about learning by doing. This was the most important viewpoint for me."

"Great debates showed me a new perspective and insight on LLL and especially to the future of education within ageing society in EU."

"I've learned much more about the LLL in general, and of course specifically in the context of University-Trade Unions cooperation."

2.3. WAYS OF LEARNING

(The question to enhance the relevant use of the various learning modes)

Start. The European projects are fundamentally fora of interaction. The partners clearly understood the relevance of the exchange of experience, the collaboration of colleagues and confrontation of approaches. As professional experts in their fields, the partners were able to list the typical formal and informal ways of learning.

Not unnaturally, many of the ways of learning that were mentioned, referred to learning at work. The partners planned to test their ideas, pilot models and propose projects that as such shape practical learning environments. Meeting local trade unions activists was a key activity both for the interaction, promotion of new practices and professional learning.

"By the collaborative working of academic people and union activists"

"... learn from the various mistakes we make along the way"

"testing out some of the ideas"

End. The partners seemed to have used the ways of learning that they had planned at the time of the first enquiry. The TULIP project showed to be successful in that no single way of learning was especially relevant to all the partners. Rather, each partner had followed his or her own individual pathway in the learning environment that the partnership constructed during the project.

"very useful was the conference and presentation of case studies."

"writing own reports"

"By exploring case studies"

"Our own project was very exciting"

2.4. PARTNER EXPERTISE

(The question to encourage the partners to make use of their versatile expertise for the project)

Start. The project key content determined the general expertise of the partnership: trade unions and university lifelong learning. The partners also named special themes in these key areas, like women's networks and the work for the excluded in the labour market sector as well as cooperation with SME's and in-house training in the continuing professional training market. The experience of cooperation between TU's and HEI's differed in line with the basic partner role.

In addition to the general expertise, individual partners were experienced in many relevant professional fields. These included quality assurance, financial expertise, structural and policy issues as well as law and human resources. In the Tallinn meeting the partners were strongly recommended to make use of these specialisation profiles for the benefit of the project.

"knowledge concerning trade union movement"

"Development of ULLL projects"

"APL, quality, accreditation"

End. It is probably typical that the partners are active to use their expertise in the core themes of the European projects. Also many of the TULIP project partners found the will and the ways to use their trade union or university experience and expertise for the efficient production of the project outcomes. Also the experiences of cooperation between the two were made good use of. The special feature of the TULIP project was the courage to use the versatile specialized expertise of the partners that was not the main content of the project. The answers gave interesting examples of this.

"Developing partnerships with other sectors e.g. voluntary organisations, cultural sector"

"Strong experience of working with firms both in the field of staff/personal development and in general business development"

"Our university is working on the competence design issue and the translation of curricula into this context."

2.5. KEY NETWORKS AND PROJECT ACTIVITIES

(The questions to attract the partners' attention to the various stakeholders and operations that could be useful in the TULIP project.)

Start. The partners coming from the trade unions and the universities each carried their relevant networks and experience. The networks covered the institutional, professional as well as the regional, national and European. On the other hand, the typical present-day expert work is no more carried out in isolation from other working life organisations. The partners' everyday work consists of cooperation projects in various forms.

Some university employees took part in in-company training projects and management development programmes. Quite a few of the partners were involved in national initiatives and European projects. These covered e.g. themes like quality assurance, lifelong learning, accreditation, volunteering, work in Europe and workers' participation.

"European Metal Workers Union networks"

"Research network on Adult Education"

"Network of the LLL institutions"

End. In the TULIP project, most of the partners made good use of their relevant networks. Even though all the partners had no special expertise in university-trade

union-partnerships, they were well acquainted with the principles and practices of networking. Exploiting other projects for the benefit of TULIP was not so usual. This seemed to be an option for the most experienced partners. The synergy was obvious in some cases, either in separate projects or in a series of projects.

“National project between social Partners in metal Sector was used as a platform to our concrete case.”

“Many European projects working on the creation and implementation of skills referentials”

“Social security system modernisation – improving old workers employability”

2.6. TULIP FOR THE INSTITUTIONS

(The question to support the integration of the project development into the missions and activities of the partner organisations))

Start. The expected answers about the objectives of the institutions were concerned with the finding of knowledge, finding new contacts, construction of relations, professional collaboration and construction of networks. Again, we could read the general aims of the project: consolidating lifelong learning in the agendas of the universities and trade unions and launching the accreditation of prior experiential learning APEL. Bringing in the quality culture into the institutions widened the perspective essentially.

Some partners were able to make concrete their ideas of how their institutions could make use of the project. The university partners wanted to widen their provision of programs and awards. Some of them planned to modify their internal structures for the benefit of lifelong learning. The trade union partners stressed the final aim of supporting the 'underrepresented' with the help of the outcomes of the project.

“Our support to working women and men who have missed out on educational opportunities in the mainstream schools system “

“... enhance the quality culture in my university by focussing on the communities' needs”

“Contribution to European activities”

End. There is absolutely no doubt that TULIP supported the relationships between the Universities and Trade Unions involved and externally. It was able to offer new opportunities for learning even outside the active project participants. Some partners were also able to make profit of the TULIP experience for new projects. Summing up these three results gives us a view to a project, where the links between the project activities and the institutional reality were exceptionally strong. TULIP was both relevant to the partners and effective in its procedures.

“Thanks to TULIP, we could establish the direct relationships at national level with CGT Union.” “The faculty established contacts with three different

TU confederations"

"taking TU members opinions", "Training method development"

*"Successful bid for similar project = establishing another European network
= key plank of the contribution to the internationalisation of the
university"*

2.7. MAKING USE OF THE RESULTS

(The question to promote the exploitation of the TULIP outcomes in the home organisations)

Start. The partner organisations have a key role in the exploitation of the outcomes of European projects. It will be optimistic to rely on the effects of dissemination unless the partners themselves will find ways to embed the results into their own organisations. Again, we could find two different groups of partners, those who planned to exploit the results so as to launch a new set of activities and those who were to redesign their offer. Reports, monographs, MA student thesis as well as fora and workshops were the typical answers you could read in the answers to such a questionnaire.

At the institutional level, the partners planned to find ways to develop their projects. The universities were also active in searching for research possibilities. At the national level, both groups of partners wanted to influence the political agenda through lobbying.

"... to shape the policy of ... education programme "

"a great starting point for some national research and for starting some programs of LLL"

"Taking the results and ideas coming out from TULIP project into the product development discussions"

End. The exploitation of the TULIP results comes close to the development tasks of the partner institutions. The university partners reported on the profitability of the outcomes in their lifelong learning strategy process and development of existing and new training service. Trade union experts had become members of committees of accreditation of prior learning in some countries.

The outcomes were used in various ways in the dissemination activities: presentation in a European Federation, article in a magazine, strengthened links to key persons, use of website and sending materials.

"We put these methods as part of our normal training. I also use cases from France and UK as development base in our work in ... adult education in Trade Union Movement."

"We tested the new training method both with the groups of TU members and with a group of owner -managers."

"The TULIP project findings were integrated/related into further development of LLL strategy at the Faculty level."

2.8. STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND INVOLVING STAFF

(The questions to widen the participation into the TULIP project from individual to institutional))

Start. Most partners saw staff development as an inherent function of the local activities of the project. Availability of materials and the partner oneself were the easy and practical solutions. Some partners had serious plans of organising conferences or training programs. Obviously, taking part in a project itself was a staff development activity as such.

Involving staff covered a wider perspective than pure staff development. Some partners were organising part of the project activities with their colleagues. Typical activities were the search of references and experts and teacher training and other delivery. MA students were also a possibility in the widening of participation. Some partners thought that it would be realistic to recruit the colleagues into the next phase of the project.

"we will be able to use the real examples"

"in some LLL training programs"

"participate in the extension of this project"

End. The partners used TULIP as a learning environment for their personal professional development, which is the typical human resources process in European projects. Many partners reported on extending the staff development activities beyond the participants of the project. Usually, the extension took place with the junior members or administrative staff or students.

The traditional examples of staff development activities were presentations and discussions. In line with the general themes of the project, work-based learning was widely present. This included e.g. shared responsibility in case study writing and piloting workshops. The partners reported that the possibility to invite colleagues to the final conference was a most useful form of involvement.

"Throughout the TULIP project I have involved a member of management team as part of her management development training."

"The work for the project and the partner experience allowed to take into account at the internal level of the university, as regards the students and the LLL, the citizenship aspect, which is necessary within the TU commitment, or more generally within an associative activity."

"Pointing out the importance of Training Methods in successful training process"

2.9. INVOLVING NETWORKS

(The question to contribute to the wide involvement of the key stakeholders into the TU/HEI cooperation)

Start. The networks that the partners wanted to get into contact with were both internal to the project (TULIP partners), internal to the institutions (university colleagues and institutions, and external to them (crossing the TU/HEI boarder, voluntary and employer organisations and work councils).

Involving external people was planned to take place with both materials and meetings. Aiming at common plans and strategies seemed to be an ambitious objective. Making the link through the support to the key colleagues in the networks was one of the suggested routes to companionship. The breakthrough could then be followed by the snow ball effect.

"Develop a strategy with a colleague from the trade union to support him"

"snow ball principle"

"We aim to empower our members"

End. In the second enquiry, the university partners reported on having produced new activities for trade union members, taken part in their seminars and consulted them prior to dissemination. Here too, inviting the colleagues into the final conference, was seen as an essential benefit.

As to the concrete links strengthened between the parties, TULIP was seen as a practical motivation to link also in the partners' own country. This took place through conference participations, giving keynote speeches, producing case studies etc. The partners' view was that both the regional, national and European links had gained intensity from the TULIP activities. Especially in the trade union sector, the links to the partners' own colleagues in Europe were very important.

"Developed new activities for their TU members. Now talking to national level TUC re union learning opportunities."

" When informing various TU's, good practices learned through TULIP project were discussed and analysed, seeking the possibilities of its application in our country."

"By explaining opportunities given by the cooperation between the two sectors"

2.10. PROMOTING DISCUSSION

(The question to advance the status of the TULIP project themes in the institutional, national and European agendas)

Start. The aim of promoting discussion about the development of the university trade union relationships was understood to reach all the levels from institutional to

national and European. The main approach seemed to be going into the situations, where the key people met otherwise. These included senate bureau meetings, lay member briefings and 'open doors' for discussion during the so called University Days.

Universities planned to connect the promotion of discussion into their learning structures. The trade unions on the other hand wanted to link it into their lobbying activities. Collecting a group of supporters to be 'a vanguard' for the intensified cooperation was a shared aim.

"lay member briefings "

"Senate Bureau meetings "

"an "Open Door" for discussion during the University Days"

End. The second round of answers clearly showed that many partners were most determined and conscious of their role as promoters of discussion. They implemented the task in various ways. In some of the fruitful examples the TULIP message was carried out to other contexts, like conferences with linked themes, national development projects and general political discussion. Feedback external to Europe gave evidence of the usability of the project website.

"We stressed at every opportunity the value we believe comes from the TU having a good working relationship with the university."

"This does not happen by chance it has to be initiated, sustained and developed by joint working and mutual trust."

"Conference of Intergenerational solidarity " "National Qualifications Framework Project" "within LLL and ageing population context "

2.11. DISSEMINATION

(The question to promote the exploitation of the TULIP outcomes)

Start. The partners demonstrated their readiness to consider the dissemination activities already at the beginning of the project. They were able to mention many tools for dissemination (website, leaflets, articles, monograph, HEI newspaper etc.). The list of potential events was also versatile (conferences, round tables, presentations, seminars, project fairs etc.) Also the different levels of dissemination were well-known in the partnership (institutional, national, European).

The expertise and experience of the partners became evident when they added their viewpoints to dissemination. They aimed at the development of their services and the integration of the project results into the activities, projects and policies of their organisations. The partners were going to design dissemination plans during the later phases of the project.

"do a planning for dissemination"

"through other training activities"

"... our networks to integrate the project results into their activities"

End. At the end of the project, the partners reported on various dissemination activities. It is important to remember that in addition to the separate dissemination activities, the partners were competent to link the project processes and outcomes into their institutional activities, which produced a most powerful tool for dissemination in a network project like TULIP.

"At our homepage, delivering the national reports to our governing bodies and teachers"

"Verbal discussions with representatives of the two sectors and during conferences. - Leaflets. - Link in internet to the network information"

"The Drama is now "in the market" in active use ... both as a separate "product" or integrated in courses and programmes"

2.12. TULIP RESOURCES AND OUTCOMES

Earlier we found out that the TULIP partners did not use the same ways of learning but rather followed their own individual pathways. The situation is the same when we look at the estimation of the outcomes at the end of the project. The partners agreed that the outcomes were relevant and useful, but referred very often to different results and resources. Some partners mentioned the concrete outcomes like bibliography, expert lists and the web page, whereas others emphasized the face-to-face discussion and social network.

"Can't differentiate between most useful as they all meet different needs."

"Also some national cases were exceptionally useful."

"I found some articles submitted by other project partners very interesting and useful."

When the partners were asked, which resources and outcomes they found the least useful, the typical answer was: "None". Single references were made to expert lists, material databases and bibliography. One partner mentioned the problem of countries, where the cooperation between the universities and trade unions was not very intensive, which led to some superficial reports. On the other hand, the partners would have liked to use more time in the meetings to discuss the good products, like the national projects. We must again remember that the partnership was collected with the idea of recruiting partners also from countries, where the cooperation was not very active.

2.13. UNEXPECTED AND MISSING OUTCOMES

The partners mentioned only few examples of outcomes that they had not expected or the ones that they thought were missing. Individual references were made to the surprise that the outstanding social network gave and to the improved knowledge about the structures in Eastern Europe. One partner would have liked to make more use of the theoretical and political background. The argument is relevant especially in a project, where half of the partners came from the universities.

"We hadn't specified that university partners in some of the newer member states had to work with new TU colleagues - but this happened."

"certain results correspond to a method addressing a specific public (women, people without diploma..."

"It is important to do a synthesis of all partner models presented within the project through the citizen aspect, which is characteristic in the relationship university - TUs, both at internal and external level."

2.14. TULIP METHODS AND PRACTICES

At the end of the project, the TULIP partners were very satisfied with the ways of working in the project. The fundamental learning context arose from the linkage between the higher education institutions and the trade unions. It was something that the partners had not found in other circumstances and something that they thought was very relevant and useful. All the methods and practices of the project received the flavour from this balance.

It is not surprising that the partner meetings were an essential forum for learning and networking. Previously, we learned that the possibility to invite colleagues to the final conference was one of the very important elements of the project. The basic conditions for the success of a European project lie in the effective implementation of the project plan, which in partners' views had taken place in TULIP. One partner mentioned the use of evaluation to support the project management.

"The basic idea of ULL/TU partners cases produced in cooperation in practice"

"very intensive care of the coordinator"

"connection, from the beginning of the project, between evaluation and project management"

Most partners did not name any methods or practices that they did not find useful. One partner noted that the topic was too wide in some of the workshops. One of the coordinators referred to the fact that the management group covered almost all the partners. Thus, the participation in the management group meetings was almost as large as in the general meetings, which did not encourage effective debate.

2.15. LIFE AFTER TULIP

(The question to widen the scope of the partnership over the life span of the TULIP project)

Start. As to the TULIP project itself, the parties wanted to see the experience and results of the cooperation. Even at the point of the first enquiry, some partners wanted to continue the cooperation with or without a project. One option would be to expand the network. The maintenance and development of the TULIP website was mentioned as one concrete tool to keep the cooperation going.

In their home organisations, the partners wanted the TU/HEI cooperation to become an essential element of their everyday work. Delivering courses and programs, developing methods and tools and continuing research in the theme were examples of the expectations that the universities had. They also wanted to develop the structures of their organisations for the benefit of this kind of cooperation. The trade unions aimed at the establishment of the companionship within lifelong learning. Both parties saw the importance of the continuation of the international interaction.

"We hope that this will be the start of a long and fruitful relationship."

"... what opportunities arise during the project"

"Expanding the actual network"

End. At the time of the second enquiry, the partners had more clear ideas of how to continue the cooperation between universities and trade unions. On one hand, they had developed their own institutional, national and international plans. On the other, their visions about the continuation of TULIP had become more structured.

The motivation and practical tools for intensifying the cooperation with the partner institutions had grown widely in the partnership. The plans were not only ideas and will to organise meetings, but also concrete actions like new products and projects. In line with the project ideas, one of the key areas of cooperation was offering lifelong learning opportunities. The international level focused both on the project possibilities and bilateral cooperation.

Project proposal: "The role of LLL in the career steps from an individual point of view"

"regularly approaching TU involving them in CE programmes development"

"making a course in CD form"

The partners see two potential paths for the continuation of the TULIP project itself. One is to construct a new linked project to continue, complement and widen the TULIP activities. The other is to carry on as a network for knowledge sharing and benchmarking. The two options are not totally separate: continuation as a project would still be based on network assumptions and practices; founding a network would demand a realistic agenda with concrete work packages and

responsibilities. Below you can read the core elements of the two options as described by the partners themselves.

TULIP As a project

- "TULIP partnership a basis for a new project proposal"
- "A follow-up project"
- "more focused small group work"
- "New theme: the problems of "more and more multicultural organisations"

TULIP As a network

- "a platform for the dissemination of good practices"
- "constant update and widening of the network and resource base"
- "knowledge sharing and benchmarking"
- "informing national developments"

Both alternatives demand shared interest, determined planning and committed partnership. The majority of the partners are prepared to join the cooperation in the future independent of the organisational structure. However, in the answers we could read that there are two issues that we have to notice considering the continuation of TULIP. One is the activity of the parties: one trade union partner demanded that a new project is possible, if the trade union partners are more active than in the original TULIP project. The other is the question of competing interests: some trade union partners seemed to be very interested in the cooperation between the trade unions across the national borders.

3 THE EVALUATOR'S APPRAISAL

My estimation and recommendations are based on the answers that the partners gave to the two parts of the enquiry. I have also had the chance to make myself familiar with the paperwork and the website of the project. Giving me the chance to take part in the partner and management group meetings adds to the TULIP openness and ability to cooperate. All this has given me good conditions to implement the evaluation.

My general impression has not changed from the mid-term till the end of the project: The TULIP project was carefully planned and organised. The Contractor and the Coordinator were equal to their tasks. The composition of the partnership was appropriate and the individual partners were experienced and committed to realize the aims of the project. The meetings were well-organized and the communication between the Coordinator and the partners functioned well. The project was no doubt able to accomplish the intended outcomes.

In my presentation about the evaluation in the partner meeting in Manchester 20th February 2008 I raised three key features that the TULIP project was working for: learning - networking - development. The partners' feedback, both in the answers to the questionnaire and otherwise, confirmed that the process of the project was a cooperative learning environment that promoted the rooting of the university/trade union partnerships.

I structure my appraisal into three parts. First I go through the key elements of participation based on the information from the two enquiries. Then I summarize my understanding about the success of TULIP and conclude with a note for the future steps.

3.1. PARTNER PARTICIPATION

Below you can read my detached projections to the separate questions. First you can read my impression on each of the issues at the time of the interim report. In the italics, I quote my recommendations that were discussed in the project meeting in Tallinn. These try to bring possibilities for further advancement to the attention of those involved in the project. The third paragraph includes my estimation at the end of the project when I had all the information from the two enquiries as well as the outcomes of TULIP at hand.

Partner motivations & expected benefits

Interim report. "The partners are aware of the aims and objectives of the project. They have clear motivations for their participation. They are able to analyse the expected benefits both at the personal and the institutional level."

Recommendations at the midterm of TULIP. "The good starting point for the project stems from the expertise and experience of the partners as well as the careful coordination of the project. While the starting point is better than in many European projects, the Coordinator and partners need to be conscious of their expectations

in relation to the agreed project objectives and ready for modifications where necessary.”

Estimation at the end of the project. The TULIP project succeeded in constructing a partnership with severe commitment to the project aims and clear expertise and institutional motivations. The motivation stayed at a high level because the partners experienced a professional and pleasant cooperation atmosphere, where they could produce the outcomes that they had expected. One indicator of success is the high motivation to continue the work in a new project.

Things to learn

Interim report. “Whereas the partners have positioned themselves properly in relation to the aims of the project, their estimation of their potential learning in the project seems somewhat overdone, especially given the short timescale of the project (two years). They have very ambitious learning objectives. The practical intensive work situation in the home organisations will probably not give the partners the chance to learn everything that they plan to.”

Recommendations at the midterm of TULIP. “For practical reasons, it would be appropriate that each partner reflected his or her learning objectives with the project aims. The vivid and interactive process of the project may have caused too optimistic expectations compared with the hard pressures of daily work.”

Estimation at the end of the project. Finally at the end of the project, the partners were most content with their learning in TULIP. It is noteworthy that this was the case even though the partners had very high expectations for their learning. The project was successful also in that it offered many possibilities for learning where the partners could make their own choices.

Ways of learning

Interim report. “While somewhat optimistic of their learning outcomes in the project, the partners have good understanding and knowledge of various learning methods. It is encouraging that they are also acquainted with the versatile forms of learning at work.”

Recommendations at the midterm of TULIP. “The partners do not necessarily need any special support by the Coordinator for their learning. The embedding of the project outcomes would probably gain from combinations of learning and piloting the discovered viable practices.”

Estimation at the end of the project. The partners could use versatile approaches to learning because of the

flexible work plan and rich resources produced in the project. It was very practical that many partners could base their learning in the world of work, also making use of informal learning. Learning by doing and practising supported the reflective discussions in the face-to-face meetings.

TULIP for the institutions

Interim report. “The links from the project into the daily lives and the development of the institutions do not go by the board in the answers. As a matter of fact, the partners have some quite innovative ideas of how to exploit the TULIP outcomes. Because the partners have different starting points for the TU/HEI partnerships they are also unequal in their taking into possession of the exploitation of the project.”

Recommendations at the midterm of TULIP. “All the partners will benefit from some more thinking of how to concretise the benefits for their organisation. This is especially the case for the newcomers into the TU/HEI companionships. See also the comment above.”

Estimation at the end of the project. Some of the ideas of institutional developments may not have taken place as fundamentally as the partners described in the first enquiry. The general picture, however, is very positive in terms of exploitation of project outcomes in the partner institution. We know that this is a challenge for any European project, but TULIP partners showed innovative capabilities in modifying the outcomes of the project into practices and development paths in their own organizations.

Partner expertise & key networks and project activities

Interim report. “The Coordinator has been successful in finding a good composition of partners. They have the relevant expertise and networks for the implementation of the project. The project has an adequate proportion of practised and newcomers in the TU/HEI companionships. In addition, many partners have some relevant specialisation.”

Recommendations at the midterm of TULIP. “The Coordinator could enrich the project learning and deliverable outcomes by encouraging the partners to use their specialised expertise during the process of the project.”

Estimation at the end of the project. In their participation into TULIP, the partners showed remarkable capacity using their expertise both in terms of university trade union relationships but also their own specialized expertise. This was especially the case with the experienced partners of the project. All the partners

could benefit from their earlier networks, but linking TULIP into other relevant projects was again possible only for the senior partners.

Staff development & involving staff

Interim report. “It is not rare that the European projects suffer from the cooperation at the individual rather than institutional level. The TULIP project partners have promising ideas for involving other staff and staff development.”

Recommendations at the midterm of TULIP. “Making the preliminary ideas more concrete and carefully implementing them will bring good results both for the dissemination of the project and the partner institutions.”

Estimation at the end of the project. In addition to the most typical forms of staff development, TULIP partners involved their colleagues in the fulfilment of the tasks of the project. Although this happened mostly at the junior, student or administrative level, it is a good sign of making concrete the principles of work-based learning.

Involving networks & promoting discussion

Interim report. “It is obvious that the partnership has the necessary connections to some essential networks. Some partners also have useful starting points for the involvement of their key stakeholders. Still, the general picture is not as determined as e.g. in the staff involvement.”

Recommendations at the midterm of TULIP. “The project plan and the enquiry answers include practical elements of how to involve relevant networks and to promote discussion. Not unnaturally, the importance of these will grow towards the end of the project. The Coordinator and partners could have a focussed discussion about the possibilities to carry the message for wider audiences. The TU/HEI partnerships are at the core of the TULIP project and the fruits of the pilot work should be disseminated effectively.”

Estimation at the end of the project. The TULIP partners were rather successful in linking their work to the external stakeholders. Some of the answers describe somewhat simple and not-very-well-developed practices, whereas others have more sophisticated approaches. Again, we have to remember that the starting points in different countries were very different. Even minor steps in the construction of networks can be very fundamental in countries that lack the tradition.

This is also the case with the promotion of discussion. In TULIP ‘learning by doing’ found a parallel in ‘promoting

discussion by doing'. The address by some partners was a concrete activity that produced an interesting topic.

Dissemination & life after TULIP

Interim report. "Even at the early phases of the project, the partners have preliminary ideas and elements for dissemination. They are also able to consider possibilities for the future enhancement of cooperation after the project itself has come to an end. It is promising that the partners do not only think about the project continuation, but also the chances of mainstreaming the activities and procedures in their home organisations."

Recommendations at the midterm of TULIP. "Even with a good start for the consideration of the dissemination and continuation of the activities, it is important that the Coordinator will remind the partners to implement the ideas in the short time frame of the project. The project outcomes and the events of the latter part of the project will be the core of these activities."

Estimation at the end of the project. The TULIP project could organize a well-thought-out set of dissemination activities as an inherent part of the project itself. In addition to this, individual partners organized dissemination at the regional or national level. I would also like to emphasize the relevance of the project effects in the partner organizations that function in a networked context. Finally, the last management group meeting was able to lay ground for the future steps of cooperation that will probably widen the participation.

3.2. PARTNER EXPERIENCE

All the information collected during the project and especially the answers to the second enquiry as well as my participation into the final management group meeting gave evidence of a most successful project. The partners reported that they had found a chance to learn, to network and to develop their expertise and institutions. It is most valuable that each of them could use TULIP as a learning environment that fitted into their special needs.

The most important key to success can be summarized into a well-thought-out-project plan that could be implemented with a partnership that was most committed to enhance the cooperation between the universities and trade unions. Behind the practical project implementation laid the shared cultural assumptions; both the university and trade union partners shared the mission to work for the good of the trade union members.

The concrete implementation of the project was organized in a practical way that supported flexible participation. All the partners were very satisfied with the working practices and the leadership of the coordinator. The partners were also successful in bringing the benefits into their own organizations.

One concrete indicator of the success of the project is the active involvement into the planning of the next phase of university trade union cooperation. At the point of writing the final evaluation report, the plans for the future have reached a certain level of concreteness, but there was still a need to sharpen the focus of the next step. As a side effect it is important to note that some trade union partners have remarkable interest for cooperation at international level outside TULIP.

From the evaluator's professional point of view it showed to be a good decision to take the responsibility to evaluate another European project. Changing the viewpoint to the partner role in international projects seemed to support the participation of the partners and it also found good feedback in the enquiries. I plan to make use of the evaluation framework in my home organization.

3.3. FOR THE FUTURE

I would like to conclude my evaluation with a quote from an answer by one of the senior partners of the project. In a balanced way, it summarizes the necessary elements for successful cooperation between universities and trade unions.

"In order to succeed in ULL - TU cooperation it is not enough to be good in one of the necessary elements but you must have in balance the following:

- 1. TU organisations must understand the importance of LLL and promote it to members.*
- 2. Organisations/Firms must have the learning organisation culture that favours LLL.*
- 3. Universities must have LLL strategies which allow the combination of formal and informal learning.*
- 4. Government policies must support LLL possibilities at all levels of education."*



APPENDIX: TULIP EVALUATION, FIRST ENQUIRY

YOU

- 1) Your name
- 2) Your employer
- 3) Your role in the organisation

A. TULIP FOR YOU

- 4) Why did you join the TULIP project?
- 5) How do you plan to benefit from the TULIP project professionally?
- 6) What do you plan to learn in the TULIP project?
- 7) How do you plan to learn in the TULIP project?

B. YOU FOR TULIP

- 8) What is your special expertise that the TULIP project and partners can benefit from?
- 9) What are your key networks that you plan to make use of in the TULIP project?
- 10) Are you involved in other projects (in your institution, national or international) that could support TULIP?

C. TULIP FOR YOUR ORGANISATION

- 11) What are the activities or features of your institution that you want to develop with the help of the TULIP project?
- 12) How do you plan to make use of the results of the TULIP project in your university/trade union?
- 13) How do you plan to use TULIP as a tool for staff development?

D TULIP FOR THE NETWORKS

- 14) How do you plan to involve colleagues in your university/trade union into the TULIP project?
- 15) How do you plan to involve colleagues in the partner institution (trade union/university)?
- 16) What are the concrete links outside the university/trade union that you want to strengthen with the support of TULIP?
- 17) How do you plan to promote discussion on trade union - university cooperation?
- 18) How do you plan to disseminate the products of the TULIP project?

LIFE AFTER TULIP

19) How do you plan to continue the cooperation between the universities and the trade unions after the TULIP project?

20) How could the TULIP project continue its work?

QUESTIONS FOR THE END OF THE PROJECT

You shall be asked to answer these questions close to the end of TULIP project. Have a look at them, but there is no need to try to answer now!

TULIP outcomes

21) Which of the TULIP products and outcomes do you find most useful?

22) Which of the TULIP products and outcomes do you not find so useful?

20) What tools are you missing?

21) Did TULIP produce some outcomes that you did not expect?

TULIP activities

22) What were the most useful and innovative methods and working practices in TULIP?

23) Which methods and practices did you not find so useful?



APPENDIX: TULIP EVALUATION, SECOND ENQUIRY

YOU

- 1) Your name
- 2) Your employer
- 3) Your role in the organisation

A. TULIP FOR YOU

- 4) Why did you join the TULIP project?
- 5) How did you benefit from the TULIP project professionally?
- 6) What did you learn in the TULIP project?
- 7) How did you learn in the TULIP project?

B. YOU FOR TULIP

- 8) What elements of your special expertise did you use in the TULIP project?
- 9) Which previous networks did you make use of in the TULIP project?
- 10) Which other projects (in your institution, national or international) supported TULIP during the project?

C. TULIP FOR YOUR ORGANISATION

- 11) What were the activities or features of your institution that you developed with the help of the TULIP project?
- 12) How have you used the findings of the TULIP project in your university/trade union?
- 13) How did you use TULIP as a tool for staff development?

D TULIP FOR THE NETWORKS

- 14) How did you involve colleagues in your university/trade union in the TULIP project?
- 15) How did you involve colleagues in the partner institution (trade union/university)?
- 16) What were the concrete links outside the university/trade union that you strengthened with the support of TULIP?
- 17) How did you promote discussion on trade union - university cooperation?
- 18) How have you disseminated the products of the TULIP project?

E. TULIP OUTCOMES

- 19) Which of the TULIP resources and outcomes do you find most useful?
- 20) Which of the TULIP resources and outcomes do you not find so useful?
- 21) What would have been useful that was not produced?
- 22) Did TULIP produce some outcomes that you did not expect?

F. TULIP EXPERIENCE

- 23) What were the most useful and innovative methods and working practices in TULIP?
- 24) Which methods and practices did you not find so useful?

G. LIFE AFTER TULIP

- 25) How do you plan to continue the cooperation between the universities and the trade unions after the TULIP project?
- 26) How could the TULIP project continue its work?