

What have we done wrong and why?

Towards documenting bad practices
or a discussion of mistakes made by
providers, NAs and participants
while implementing KA1 projects.



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Why are bad practices important?

Bad practice points to mistakes.
Mistakes can help us learn!

but

People don't like losing face
and
are very good at justifying any action.

Objective

Collect a bank of bad practices in order to learn from our mistakes

Rules for this session

No disagreement, only asking for specification!
No trying to justify one's actions!
No criticism at the stage of sharing, just encouragement!

We will discuss here if we have the time
(Or share with colleagues for them to deal with it
in a safe environment!)

Proposed structure

Each of us speaks in turn and shares at least one mistake!

Your name, country and role

Description of your mistake
what you wanted at the time / your objectives
what you did / your activities
which problem you faced / your result

Keep to 2 min per mistake max

Mistake No. 1. Course providers

- *Objective:* provide for higher income
- *Activity:* accept all applicants
- *Result:* having a group that is not good for quality learning

(our case: too many participants for our content, 30 is just too much!)

Mistake No. 2. Schools

(apologies for assuming a role but it's based on experience)

- *Objective:* give all teachers a possibility to choose what they prefer
- *Activity:* asking teachers to browse the catalogue and choose a course they want
- *Result:* having a hugely eclectic project that is not really a project but a loosely connected list of courses and using writing skills of the authors in order to sell it to the NA

Mistake No. 3. National Agencies

(apologies for assuming a role but it's based on experience)

- *Objective:* ensure that more schools can benefit from the EU support
- *Activity:* limit participation to one teacher per course (and hoping for cascade practice)
- *Result:* very low impact of courses as one teacher cannot bring about a change and cascading hardly ever works in reality

Share your experience!

Mistake No.4. Schools (Participant's example)

- *Objective:* give a chance to everyone in school to attend a course
- *Activity:* accept every teacher who wishes to attend and meets the selection criteria
- *Result:* the teacher leaves school and the competencies are gone to another school

Mistake No.5. Schools (Participant's example)

- *Objective:* choose a course provider that meets our requirements according to the school plan
- *Activity:* use the catalogue and choose according to the topic (no other criteria)
- *Result:* the provider cancels the course at the last moment and it is very difficult to find an alternative course at such a short notice
- *Solution:* collect more information about the course provider (from other colleagues, etc.)

Mistake No.6. National Agencies (Participant's example)

- *Objective:* help schools choose better (similar) courses in a situation when many courses get cancelled
- *Activity:* allow school to submit a request for a change in the list courses they planned
- *Result:* lots of additional paper work for everyone, lots of changes and as a result a completely different project if compared to the original application
- Additional comment (another problem area?): we receive too many emails saying that providers have cancelled their course and asking what they could do

Mistake No.7. National Agencies (Participant's example)

- *Objective:* be flexible and allow as many participants as possible to benefit from Erasmus+ opportunities
- *Activity:* date for leaving Sweden before the first day of the training and return after the last day of training
- *Result:* couldn't fill in the mobility tool correctly
- Recognised their mistake and made a note for the participants in the reporting system

Mistake No.8. National Agencies (Participant's example)

- *Objective:* save money
- *Activity:* used NA staff for project evaluation instead of external experts (quite a few applications)
- *Result:* the person was tired and at some point she gave lower scores. She didn't notice that 3 applications were basically the same. One of them got funded and two didn't. The latter ones filed a complaint. In the end, we had to fund these two other ones as well and it was rather embarrassing.

Mistake No.9. National Agencies (Participant's example)

- *Objective:* not to have too many people from one school at the same course to ensure that there's more internationalisation
- *Activity:* reduce the grant for those who wanted to send 5 people to one course.
- *Result:* some people didn't say how many and their budgets were not reduced. So, in the end the honest ones were punished.
- *Solution:* a clear recommendation from the NA that they shouldn't send more than 3 participants to the same course.

Mistake No.10. National Agencies (Participant's example)

- *Objective:* want schools to do quality work based on their own needs
- *Activity:* assumed that schools understood the new programme and gave them too much freedom
- *Result:* realised that there are many things the schools didn't comply with as they had neither the people nor the knowledge of the new programme.
- *Solution:* strict email based formative monitoring system to help schools implement their projects better.
- *Comment:* a completely different approach to training for evaluators and choice of those who understand what is happening in the project life cycle.

Mistake No.11. Commission (Participant's example)

- *Objective:* administer the money in an effective way / respect the rules (higher level)
- *Activity:* implement the programme
- *Result:* some procedures (eg application forms) may contain flaws
- *Comment:* if you want sth from the Commission, be persistent.

Mistake No.12. Course provider (Participant's example)

- *Objective:* provide for higher income?
- *Activity:* accept all applicants, didn't pay enough attention to the process of communication before the course.
- *Result:* very mixed levels of English, couldn't really keep the pace and had to introduce changes. One person was unhappy with the speed of the course.
- *Solution:* midterm evaluation

Other potential problem areas

Project evaluation: selection of evaluators and their approach to the job

Course planning & implementation (providers): all effort on making the participants happy here and now

Course planning & implementation (schools): thinking at the level of separate courses (Comenius) rather than project (Erasmus+)

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Further steps

- In a safe environment do the following:
- extend the list of problems
 - pay special attention to the problems you can't resolve yet
 - find out if a solution exists elsewhere (adapt) or it's a possible learning area for the whole group (share!)

Document the process and share during
Cologne V!

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Thanks for your participation!

Let's look for problems and recognise mistakes: it's essential for learning!

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