Abstract

Innovative and Integrated New Solutions for Sustainable Employability (INTENSE) project aims at improving youth employment in Europe. It is focused on a sub-group so-called NEETs (not in education, employment and training) which is not reached (compare Eurofound 2012, Eurofound 2015) by usual means of employment centred initiatives for educationally deprived youth with psychosocial, mental, multifactorial problems, problematic lifestyles, disabilities, etc.

Eurofound 2015, identifies a europe-wide need of this target group to be addressed. They also include the call for the development of holistic approaches in order to achieve sustainability. The above-mentioned need provides the stimulus for the consortium to develop (1st part of the project) and test (2nd part of the project) a client-centered educational concept.

In essence, the following 3 dimensions are taken into account:

1st dimension - Compensation. The compensatory aspect concerns the assignment of a Transition Coach who works systemically and enables the clients to recognise their own educational needs, to ask for the coach's support on their own initiative, to develop their own goals and work on the achievement of the latter in an independent manner.

2nd dimension - prevention. The studies which identified the need for a holistic approach, define the requirement of national support systems to act in a preventive manner in order to produce as few NEETs as possible and, if applicable, start the holistic approach at an early stage.

3rd dimension - Structure and Cooperation. The issue going hand in hand with the points mentioned above is the explanation of structural aspects with regards to the success of integrated approaches. By involving the stakeholders at an early stage and throughout the entire project, a solid basis for achieving cross-sectoral cooperation is created.

The role of the University of Malaga is to ensure the evaluation of the project development (1st part of the project) and implementation (2nd part of the project) using modern, and scientific methods. For this purpose, the university will apply the Stufflebeam Model during the development phase and evaluates the implementation phase according to effectiveness and efficiency by applying the Contribution Analysis (Mayne 2008).

Keywords: Sustainable employability, not in education or employment and training people, European project.

1 INTRODUCTION

INTENSE is the acronym of Innovative and Integrated New Solutions for Sustainable Employability. This project was born to help giving new solutions to people without any training or job.

In this sense, INTENSE means:

- ‘INnovative approach’ as new and different ways from the usual approaches are suggested.
- ‘InTEgrated' meaning that everyone in the proximity of the client is part of the project.
- ‘New solutions’ for integration to labour market of people without job and training.
- ‘Sustainable’ solutions along time.
- ‘Employability’ as final aim.

INTENSE project is cofounded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union, and it begun to run in 2016. Eight partners, among private and public institutions, participate to the project. They are from Netherland, Germany, Turkey, Cyprus and Spain (see below).
INTENSE project is in line with the Eurofound policies. Eurofound is an European commitment to ensure that young people (up to the age of 30) can receive the following, at the most, within four mouths from the moment in which they become unemployed or leave formal education system:

- A good quality offer of employment.
- Continued education.
- An apprenticeship or a traineeship.

INTENSE project started one year ago. So up to now, there are no results from the projects, but only the first developing stage. Then, because we don't have any result and because the point is about an intervention program and its evaluation, and not about a research, this paper has an unusual structure: introduction, the project description, the evaluation of project description and conclusions.

In this paper several aspects and basic elements of INTENSE project are explained, in particular we will talk about the project’s goals. Other aspects that we will take into consideration are the projects three dimensions, namely COMPENSATION, PREVENTION and STRUCTURE.

Finally we will comment the different elements of the evaluation process. This is not the final stage of the project, but it goes along every phase.

2 THE PROJECT DESCRIPTION

As reported in the INTENSE roadmap, the project focuses on effective initiatives promoting the transition from school-to-work of young people belonging to the Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) category: the project focuses on young people / students who are not in education, employment or training by approaching them client-focused from a holistic vision in a structured environment in which autonomy and self-responsibility is written in capitals. The accompanying coach is prepared for this task and new approach through intensive training. The project is always evaluated on a scientific basis and the results of the first two years are implemented in the third year and tested for usability and effectiveness. To make a change possible stakeholders in the participating countries are intensively involved [1]

Eight different institutions, public and private, are developing the project. They are:

- SBH Südost GmbH (Leipzig - Germany).
- Mesleki ve Teknik Anadolu Lisesi (Izmir – Turkey).
- LCEducational LTD (Limassol – Cyprus).
- Ekwadraat (Sint Pancras – The Netherlands).
- Saksa Technoloogiakool (Pärnu – Estonia).
- Universidad de Malaga (Malaga – Spain).

The project develops along three years. The first part of the project starts 2016 and should end in 2018. This stage includes three objectives:

- O1: The development of an educational concept, consisting of a client-centred and holistic approach.
- O2: The development of a methodology in regard to the central idea of transition management.
- O3: The development of a training programme for the transition coach.

The second part will start in 2018 and end in 2019. This stage focuses on one single objective which is: the implementation and evaluation of the client centred, integral approach (O4).

The dimensions that are taken into consideration in order to achieve the aims are:

- Compensation.
  Compensation means developing a client-centred, systematic and integral educational concept. It is important to highlight the fact that the client must recognise his own need for support and coaching and must develop his own goals and work on these goals with the support of a professional. This approach is focused on the following indicators that need to be improved:
  - Qualifications
• Social skills
• Personal skills
• Methodical skills
• Social stability
• Prevention
• Structure

• Prevention:
  Preventive work is basic in order to prevent exclusion and too many costs. In this sense, we assume that a coaching process has positive effects on this population group. These effects include personal effects, social effects, but also financial effects. So prevention is part of a training program for coaches. The most important aspects are:
  o Raising awareness.
  o Early recognition.
  o Methods.
  o Parenting.
  o Involvement of social support systems.

• Structure:
  An early involvement of stakeholders provides the basis towards an overall cooperation, with a focus on formal and legislative structures of national support systems in Europe.

3 THE PROJECT EVALUATION

An important stage in the project is the evaluation. The evaluation cannot be closed only in a part but along all the project. From this point of view, a combination of methodological strategies is recommended. So, as a whole, INTENSE project evaluation is a combination of CIPP model [2] and Contribution Analysis [3].

3.1 The CIPP Model

As Stufflebeam says, “The CIPP model is a comprehensive framework for guiding formative and summative evaluations of projects, programs, personnel, products, institutions, and systems” [2, p.2]. Although there are several version of CIPP model, in this case, the well-known four components model is developed:

− Context evaluation: beneficiaries, needs, resources, problems, background, environment, etc.
− Input evaluation: stakeholders, strategies, budget, coverage, research, etc.
− Products: impacts, effectiveness, transportability, sustainability, adjustment, etc.
− Process: develop, implement, monitor, feedback, etc.

3.2 Contribution analysis

The contribution analysis, following the Social Science Methods Series documents [4] is understood as an approach to assessing the performance of programmes towards outcomes. It attempts to address this head on by focusing on questions of “contribution”, specifically to what extent observed results are the consequences of the programme or service activity. It does not attempt to prove that one factor (programme) caused the desired outcome, but rather to explore the contribution a programme is making to observed results.

3.3 How those models are developed in the project

Briefly, the CIPP model is used as a guide in order to organise (in stages) the evaluator activities and the evaluation process. In the other hand, the Contribution Analysis (CA) model is very useful for:

− Building and giving credible evidence to support a programme "performance story".
− It is, developing its “theory of change”, and
"demonstrating" the links between the programme and outcomes. The CA model utility is in its ability to elaborate a "theory of change". That is, elaborating a dynamic explanation about how and why the observed changes are made.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Because the project is starting at this moment, it's impossible to give a conclusion, even partial conclusions. But, we can indicate several expectations, aside from the consecution of goals, among others:

- About INTENSE project, the project staff hope to open new ways to encourage the NEET problem. In this sense, the perspective centred on the client, a global conceptualization of situation, and the effort for a sustainability beyond the process would be factors in order to boost ways to reach the Eurofound aims.

- About evaluation process:

  In order to have a guarantee about the validity (at least internal validity) of an intervention program, the evaluation needs to be part of the project itself. So, evaluation starts with first phases and ends after the program has ended, and as in the majority of big programs, years after the program ended.

In the other hand, it is very difficult to develop evaluation based in quasi-experimental design. In fact, it is almost impossible to find factual and contrafactual groups to be compared. So, we need to explore and develop alternative strategies. In this sense, CA in combination to other more classics models offers a way that is worthy exploring.

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REFERENCES


