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Language Rich Europe

We achieve unity through diversity

Final Evaluation Report

Project information

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I. Introduction

This report is prepared as internal evaluation report of WP6 Quality Assurance Work package led by Foundation Institute for Quality in Education. Its aim is to focus on expectations, outcomes and lessons learned for the publication and website, the events and dissemination of results, the media coverage, the transnational cooperation and the impact achieved.

II. Project Description

1 What is Language Rich Europe?

Language Rich Europe is a project which promotes knowledge sharing about good policy and practice in language learning and teaching across Europe, and encourages Europeans to learn more languages at all stages of their lives. It is a networking project which brings together over 1200 policy makers and practitioners from 24 countries and regions to discuss and develop better policies and practices. Network members are drawn from the fields of education, business, public services and the media.

2 What does it do?

LRE provides a commentary on language policies and practices in participating countries/regions and gives stakeholders the opportunity to get together to share good practice. Research and Analysis: Through our network of experts and partners we have conducted an analysis of language policies and practices in Europe, comparing them against selected European Commission and Council of Europe recommendations. The results of this research have been published as drafts for consultation at regional, country and European level. Consultation: With this initial research as our basis, our cross-sector network is now coming together in a series of over 80 interactive events across Europe to share knowledge and good practice. This will result in concrete recommendations for policy makers at regional, country and European level.

3 Who is involved?

The project is co-financed by the European Commission under its Lifelong Learning Programme. It is managed by the British Council, with

supervision from a steering group made up of representatives of our partner organizations. Over 30 partners across Europe are involved in the project, contributing both funding and expertise. The research has been led by the Babylon Centre for Studies of the Multicultural Society at Tilburg University, and the data collected has been complemented by research partners in each country, who have provided their own analysis of the findings, supported by examples of good practice and promising initiatives.

4 What countries/regions were surveyed?

The survey covers 15 EU member states: Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, United Kingdom – plus Bosnia and Herzegovina, Switzerland and Ukraine. In Spain additional research was done for Catalonia and the Basque Country. In the UK, research was done separately for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In the Netherlands additional research was done in Friesland.

5 What is covered in the research?

The research explores policies and practices for the national language, foreign languages, regional or minority languages and immigrant languages in the following domains:

- Official documents and databases
- Pre-primary education
- Primary education
- Secondary education
- Further and Higher Education
- Audio-visual media and press
- Public services and spaces
- Business

Sample used for domains across Europe

- Further and higher education: 69 VET institutions and 65 universities
- Public services and spaces: 63 cities
- Business: 484 companies in 4 sectors: banks, hotels, supermarkets and construction

6 What are the stages of the project?

- November 2010 – April 2011: Design and piloting of questionnaire
- April 2011 – September 2011: Research conducted in 24 countries/regions
- September 2011 – April 2012: Analysis and writing up of data, and translation into languages of participating countries

- May – June 2012: Publication of “draft for consultation” document and initial discussion with stakeholders
- September – November 2012: Follow-up national workshops with stakeholders to discuss findings of survey
- December 2012: First international conference in London and publication of project findings and good practice
- January 2013: National workshops to develop recommendations at national and European level
- March 2013: Final conference in Brussels to present recommendations to EU institutions

III. The aim and scope of the internal evaluation

The main purpose of the internal evaluation is to examine long-term project sustainability as well as to document lessons learnt and provide constructive recommendations for follow-up actions. The evaluation focuses on expectations, outcomes and lessons learned for the publication and website, the events and dissemination of results, the media coverage, the transnational cooperation and the impact achieved.

1. Evaluation criteria and methodology

The aim of the analysis is to evaluate selected elements of the projects taking into account relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, impact, coherence and community value added.

a. Relevance

This evaluation criterion examines whether the final product and methods used during the project correspond with project participants and stakeholders needs.

The overall objectives of the LRE project were:

- a. to promote European cooperation in developing language policies and practices across several education sectors and throughout broader society;
- b. to raise awareness of the EU and Council of Europe recommendations for promoting language learning and linguistic diversity across Europe;
- c. to facilitate the exchange of good practice in promoting intercultural dialogue and social inclusion through language teaching and learning.

The main objectives were realized and the final product i.e. the LRE publication “Language Rich Europe framework for language policies and

practices”, LRE online network accompanied by web site have been accomplished. The needs of project participants as well as stakeholders have been fulfilled during three workshops and two conferences. Moreover, the use of LRE online network created a possibility for on-going contacts within all countries involved in LRE project.

The methodology used in the project was based on a very deep analysis in order to assure achievement of all objectives with all project partners.

Primarily the project methodology concentrated on conducting survey on EU documents as a point of reference for further research. The three overall objectives were achieved by the following methods:

- **Objective: to promote European cooperation in developing language policies and practices across several education sectors and throughout broader society;**
 - Method: a network of 60 stakeholders from all project countries was created. The selection of stakeholders was very precise as they represented all domains involved in the research i.e. education, business, media and city authorities. The stakeholders met at least during 1 launch, 3 workshops and 2 conferences. Moreover, there was a possibility to extend the list of stakeholders and to be in touch with them via mails and web page. The local contacts were expanded to international one thanks to two conferences in London and Brussels.

- **Objective: to raise awareness of the EU and Council of Europe recommendations for promoting language learning and linguistic diversity across Europe;**
 - Method: All project partners presented a final list of national recommendations which then were carefully selected and discussed on the project level. The final paper LRE Review and recommendations is based on conclusions from national recommendations and discussions during London Conference (December 2012). There are 10 recommendations which were proposed during conference in Brussels (March 2013). (see *Appendix*).

- **Objective: to facilitate the exchange of good practice in promoting intercultural dialogue and social inclusion through language teaching and learning.**

- Method: the examples of good practices were included in the country essays of project partners. Moreover, the research data showed the best examples within selected domains. Intercultural dialogues were described by plurilingualism in
 - different education stages: bilingual kindergarten, CLIL in primary, secondary and higher education;
 - business domain: focus on intercultural courses, soft skills and negotiation preparation in multicultural environment;
 - public services and spaces: modern languages to be used in city guides, maps and signs.

Exchange of good practices has been implemented by stakeholders during conferences (in London and Brussels) as well as via networking database.

b. Effectiveness

This evaluation criterion examines the extent to which the objectives were achieved.

LRE project aimed at achieving the main objectives focusing mainly on project partners and stakeholders. Their role in the project was crucial in many ways.

Firstly they were to exchange knowledge about language policies and practices on national and European level.

Secondly, their role aimed at persuading decision makers to implement new solutions or improve the existed ones in order to develop and expand the multilingualism in a given country and Europe. This was accomplished via workshops, seminars and meetings in partners' countries.

Finally, the presented country profiles highlighted many new ideas and initiatives in Europe. These profiles, based on a country survey, collected a lot of information in all researched domains. Special attention had been given to piloting projects and promising initiatives at European or national level.

c. Sustainability

LRE project is a unique European project. Its unique character and special meaning is based on some elements:

- LRE Field Manual and Questionnaire: enables researches to conduct research both gathering data from education domain and gathering primary data in 4 domains (Adult Education, Media, Business and Cities);
- LRE framework for language policies and practices: can be used by potential country users in order to analyse policies and practices in the given domains. It is a practical self- evaluation tool with a lot of information which can form a basis for further developments and changes in 4 domains.
- LRE framework is a tool for European countries which can start discussion on European level focusing on such topics as national and regional language policy, multilingualism and plurilingualism in Europe, changes of attitudes towards intercultural awareness and understanding.
- Country profiles are important point of reference focusing on present and future language situation in a given country. National, regional, minority, foreign, immigrant languages are described with some recommendations for the future.
- Country essays present a deep analysis not only on contemporary situation but they also underline important local piloting initiatives and key activities. Essays are point of reference for future new initiatives and actions on local level including government, organization and association cooperation.
- LRE project sustainability is seen in the partners' commitment during local launches and workshops. The 60 stakeholders, selected from each country, is a group of people who can influence language policies and practices on local levels. There is a possibility they will continue to use the survey data as well provide more information on particular domains.
- LRE project sustainability on European level is understood as actions taken by applying for *Accompanying Measures Bid* in order to continue LRE project recommendation implementation.
- LRE project partners will benefit locally and independently because of the clear, concise and understood survey data and final achievements resulting from the project. There is a big space for national actions to be taken by LRE project partners independently together with policy makers and educational organizations at regional and country level.
- LRE project partners will benefit by national support they can get from national ministries as well as regional government through a set of planned activities and actions after the LRE project is finished.

- LRE project partners will benefit from web page information as well as possibility of networking in long-term setting. This is a mutual platform for sharing the expertise starting from local up to European level.
- LRE project partners will benefit on European level through a new clusters or groups which share the same problems or want to implement the similar recommendations on national level. Further potential cooperation was discussed during the Brussels conference.
- LRE project partners were given a clear and concise way to continue and use the results after the project ends. The proper use of effective dissemination and exploitation results were to ensure the project sustainability and continuing long-term benefits.

d. Impact

The overall impact of LRE project is:

- Better understanding of good practices in language teaching and learning for social inclusion and intercultural dialogue
- Enhanced cooperation and commitment to improving language policies and practices
- Increased awareness of EU recommendations and how countries perform against them
- A sustainable European benchmarking tool to evaluate policies and practices.

e. Coherence

The LRE project's objectives were realized by particular countries through a set of recommendations on European and national level. All participating countries decided to implement recommendations on national and regional levels. This is to be achieved through further workshops and seminars as well as conferences. Moreover, special meetings are organized with representatives of different associations which can help disseminating the project. Finally, some of the partners decided to continue cooperation after the LRE project finishes through different set of activities.

The partners' country policies complemented the LRE project overall policy.

f. Community value added

The LRE project's benefits can be divided into two groups.

The first group aims at different activities on European level. After the LRE project finishes one action has been already taken i.e. Accompanying Measures Bid. Moreover, there is a plan to form new action groups (clusters from project partners) who will cooperate on European level in the nearest future.

The second benefit concerns local and regional level. Stakeholders from a given country together with project partners start new initiatives on local and regional levels. The recommendations are to be implemented through local and regional agencies, ministry or different associations.

In both cases the LRE website as well as LRE Experts' Network on Multilingualism creates a possibility of continuous sharing knowledge.

IV. LRE Project Analysis

The LRE project consisted of 6 WP. They were realized according to LRE project plan and agenda focusing on aims and targets. The project network of over 30 partners was formed in order to exchange information about the situation in the partners' countries. The index results are available in 23 languages: 17 national, 4 regional (Catalan, Basque, Welsh, Frisian) and 2 immigrant languages (Arabic and Turkish).

The LRE project included one launch event and three workshops organized in the project partner countries. The aim of the meetings was to attract stakeholders (60) from each country and to prepare recommendations and future actions on both European and a national level. Every country organized the planned launches and workshops (Appendix Launch, workshops, attendance lists). The final recommendations from every country are listed as future action in 4 domains. After every meeting an evaluation questionnaire was given. The results are included in the tables of a given country (see Appendix)

1. SGC meetings/ Partners' meetings

Steering Group meetings were organized throughout the project. Their aim was to focus on past as well as future stages of the project. The main topics connected with work packages were discussed and then distributed to project participants. The final partners meeting took place in Brussels. Its aim was firstly to finalize the achievements from European recommendations to local plans for actions and workshop reports. Secondly, to present and identify concrete actions for sustainability of

project outcomes at European and local level. Finally, to clarify specific aspects of project finance, reporting procedures and project evaluation.

2. LRE Conferences

Two main conferences were organized during the LRE project: one in London and the final one in Brussels. The aim of the London conference was to meet stakeholders from every country (6 participants) in order to discuss project efficiency and sustainability. Moreover, the conference was a meeting place for launching publishing of research data in English presenting all findings and country reports.

The aims of the Brussels LRE closing conference was firstly to present project achievements along with European recommendations. Then institutional responses to project recommendations were presented by speakers Doris Pack, Head of Culture Committee, Kristina Cunningham, Head of Sector, Multilingualism policy, European Commission, Sju Bergan, Head of Education Department, CE. Special address by Androulla Vassiliou, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth proofed LRE project achievements mainly that languages are essential elements of contemporary world.

3. LRE website/ blog/ twitter

The LRE website is a platform of contacts and sharing knowledge of all activities performed within the project. The website along with the LRE Blog are two user-friendly ways of attracting national and European stakeholders. They are platforms of communication during LRE project and after it is finished. LRE Blog accompanied by articles, news, events, publications as well as videos and pictures from many local events is the evidence for LRE project sustainability.

4. Complementary Country Essays

The complementary Country Essays have been written by the research partners and put the quantitative analysis in the Country Profile into context, explaining the reasons behind the research findings, suggesting areas for improvement and also highlighting good practice case-studies and promising initiatives. They presented the area of possible modifications as well as key initiatives in the area of multilingualism.

5. Collection of Essays

The collection of essays “Towards a Language Rich Europe: Multilingual Essays on Language Policies and Practices”, published in Berlin by the British Council in July 2011 was the first of a number of initiatives under the British

Council LRE project. The essays provided an overview of the language environment in a selection of European countries ahead of the LRE research, setting out some of the national contexts against which language policies and practices are working and highlighting many key challenges. They were written by colleagues from the LRE network of partner organisations, and the insights they share are relevant not only for their own context, but for stakeholders across the continent. These have also been used as a marketing tool to generate interest as well as setting context.

6. Media dissemination

In all LRE project countries media played a very important role. Articles and journals and newspapers as well as research findings were published.

7. Publication

LRE project publication presents all findings and data about LRE project countries. The publication was printed in English and then translated into LRE partners' languages. It includes information about 4 domains of LRE project research as well as very detailed analysis of all partners' countries.

V. Final Remarks and Recommendations

The LRE project aimed:

- a. to promote European cooperation in developing language policies and practices across several education sectors and throughout broader society;
- b. to raise awareness of the EU and Council of Europe recommendations for promoting language learning and linguistic diversity across Europe;
- c. to facilitate the exchange of good practice in promoting intercultural dialogue and social inclusion through language teaching and learning.

The objectives were realized by actions described in the report. The list of recommendations both on European and local levels is an evidence for project sustainability as well as project outcomes on both levels. The final conference in Brussels ensured the continuity of the LRE project

- on local and regional levels
- in groups of project partners with similar recommendations and actions to be taken in the future

- through Accompanying Measures bid
- via web page and networking as constant stakeholders communication and exchange of best practice.

The LRE project aims were realized thanks to all partners involved, strategies implemented as well as final LRE products. Discussions during the final LRE conference in Brussels were the best evidence for considering the following final opinions:

- Europe is a continent of language and cultural diversity,
- Language and cultural diversity becomes European strength and a potential way of further developing,
- Partners involved in LRE research should concentrate on local and regional as well as European follow-up of the LRE project findings,
- Multilingualism and plurilingualism are two key concepts aiming at sharing common and underlying individual differences among European countries,
- LRE project finding form a feedback for long-term cross-sectoral cooperation focusing on empathy and tolerance towards different languages spoken in Europe.

VI. Appendix

- 1. Launch Evaluation questionnaires with data (Launch)**
- 2. Workshop Evaluation questionnaires with data (Workshops)**
- 3. Conference Evaluation questionnaires with data**
 - a. London (London)**
 - b. Brussels (Brussels)**
- 4. LRE recommendations (LRE Rec)**
- 5. Attendance List (Attendance List)**