

European Commission DEAR Programme CLUSTER MEETINGS with EC grant funded DEAR projects (2011-12 CfP) Brussels, 18th to 21st April 2015



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Report written by
Sandra Oliveira, Harm-Jan Fricke, Caroline Vilos

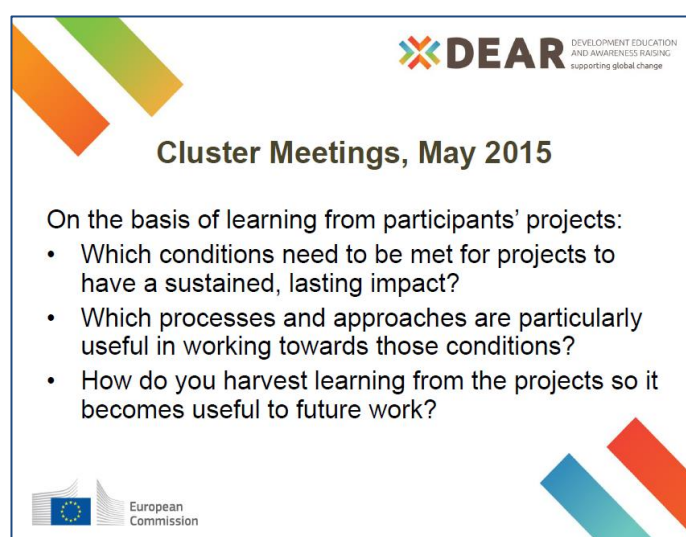
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Introduction: the programme and the context of the Cluster meetings

These three separate meetings brought together representatives of 51 European Commission **co-funded DEAR projects**. All represented projects had been awarded a grant as a result of the 2011 and 2012 NSA and LA Calls for Proposals. In addition different DG DevCo B2 DEAR task managers took part in the meetings, usually involving 4 to 6 participants in each of the three meetings.

The meetings were the first time in which different EC co-funded projects had been brought together in a process of joint learning. With inputs provided by DG DevCo B2 DEAR Programme staff, the DEAR Support Team facilitated the events which addressed the following questions:



In addition, the meetings aimed to enable networking amongst participants working in similar fields, focussing on the same EC supported DEAR approach. Each day was set aside for projects concerned with a similar DEAR approach:

- Evening of 18th and daytime of 19th May:
Projects concerned with **Global Learning in formal education**: *“aiming at enhancing the competences of the target groups in addressing issues of global development; using learner-centred, participatory, dialogue-oriented and experiential methodologies to develop such competences; focussing primarily on development education in the formal education system (such as curriculum development, teacher training, development education programmes in school, work with parent-teacher associations, etc.)”*;
- Evening of 19th and daytime of 20th May:
Projects concerned with **Global Learning in non-formal education**: *“aiming at enhancing the competences of the target groups in addressing issues of global development; using learner-centred, participatory, dialogue-oriented and experiential methodologies to develop such competences; focussing primarily on actions outside of the formal education system (such as youth groups, adult education, informal education, etc.)”*
- Evening of 20th and daytime of 21st May:
Projects **focussed on Advocacy-Campaigning**: *“aiming at concrete changes in behaviour at individual and collective levels, or in institutional/corporate policies; using results-oriented strategies; facilitating and supporting informed citizen engagement and advocacy for more just and sustainable policies, political/economic structures and individual practices; producing results*

at European level, and involving coordinated action and a coherent approach in various Member States”

Each of the three days followed, with some slight variations, a similar programme:

- The evening sessions provided an introduction to the Cluster Meeting, outlined the programme and the role of the DEAR Support Team, and enabled participants to outline the key characteristics of their project, and to network with fellow participants.
- The sessions on the following morning focussed on two questions:
 - Which conditions need to be met for projects to have a sustained, lasting impact?
 - Which processes, approaches, activities, ‘tools’ are particularly useful in working towards those conditions?
- The morning ended with participants sharing their project's specific activities or tools they consider to have good impact and quality – and endured a short group dynamic addressing also the opposite question:
 - “what does *not* work on DEAR projects?”
- The afternoon sessions concentrated on addressing 3 questions on how to capitalise knowledge from DEAR projects:
 - How do you harvest learning from the projects to inform future work?
 - How do you turn the harvested knowledge into improvements for future projects?
 - How do you communicate the learnings and the achievements to make them visible and more replicable?

The output from the three meetings provides an input into further work to be done by the DEAR Support Team, i.e. On-site Cluster Meetings (to be organised at the location of a project focussed on a particular theme or audience, and also involving similar projects), and Studies and Reports - for instance on the effectiveness and results of EC supported projects.

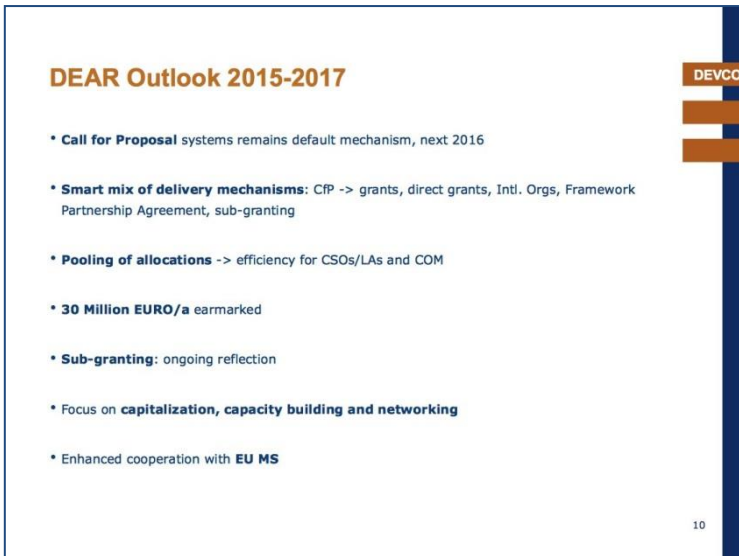
The context of the EC’s DEAR Programme

The Head of the Commission DG DevCo B2 DEAR sector, **Valentina Auricchio** (and **Jan Matyas**, B2 Task Manager, on the subsequent days) outlined the results of the 2013 DEAR Call for Proposals:

DEAR 2013/2014 Call for Proposals (CfP): Background	
Lots	5 lots: Lot 1: <i>All NSA</i> , Global learning within formal education system Lot 2: <i>All NSA</i> , Global Learning outside formal education system Lot 3: <i>All NSA</i> , Campaigning and Advocacy Lot 4 (20% of NSA funds): EU12+Croatia NSA <i>ONLY</i> Lot 5: <i>all LA</i>
Project size	Lot 1,2,3: €3-5 million Lot 4,5: €1-5 million
Co-financing	Lots 1,2,3: 85% all NSA Lot 4: 95% (EU12+Croatia NSA only) Lot 5: 85% EU15 LA ; 95% EU12+Croatia LA
Minimum number of countries covered	Lot 1,2,3: 10 countries Lot 4,5: 6 countries
Priorities	2015 European Year of Development + "Decent Life for All "major themes

B2 staff provided a further context for the Cluster Meetings:

- outlining future plans for the programme that are currently in development as part of the EC's 2015 – 2017 Multi-Annual Plan, and highlighting the intentions behind the changed conditions which the recent Call for Proposals had introduced to the DEAR programme in order to stimulate a greater reach of DEAR amongst the EU public;
- introducing the main points of the discussion within the Commission regarding the 2015 – 2017 Multi-annual programming for DEAR:



DEAR Outlook 2015-2017

- **Call for Proposal** systems remains default mechanism, next 2016
- **Smart mix of delivery mechanisms:** CFP -> grants, direct grants, Intl. Orgs, Framework Partnership Agreement, sub-granting
- **Pooling of allocations** -> efficiency for CSOs/LAs and COM
- **30 Million EURO/a** earmarked
- **Sub-granting:** ongoing reflection
- Focus on **capitalization, capacity building and networking**
- Enhanced cooperation with **EU MS**

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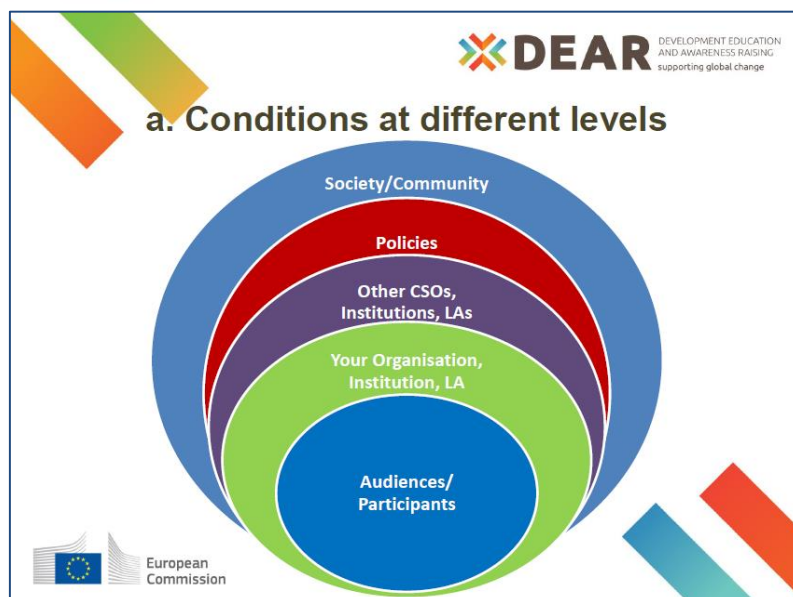
B2 staff reiterated that the Cluster Meetings are part of a series of events taking place until 2018 and organised with assistance from B2's DEAR Support Team. The purpose of this investment is to support EC grant receivers in building more global awareness amongst European citizens and improved sustainable outcomes of ongoing and future co-funded projects.

Making use of project experiences: conditions and approaches to support lasting effect

During this groupwork session participants were asked to consider the following two questions in particular:

- On the basis of learning from participants' projects:
 - Which conditions need to be met for projects to have a sustained, lasting impact?
 - Which processes, approaches, activities, 'tools', are particularly useful in working towards those conditions?

The focus in the exercise was on the second question, aiming to draw out and reflect on learning from projects. Participants were asked to address the issues by looking at different 'levels' or 'aspects' where sustained, lasting impact might be seen:



Annex 2 provides an overview of the answers that participants suggested were particularly relevant to those involved in, respectively, formal education, non-formal education, and advocacy-campaigning.

Although the different conditions faced by participants in each of the three meetings gave somewhat different suggestions to what participants saw as useful approaches, there are some that were shared across all three groups:

Post-project: towards lasting, sustained impact ...	
... amongst project audiences/ participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the project has had, and will continue to have, local relevance • As part of the project's implementation process, develop the audience's/participants' skills for self-sustained action beyond and outside of the project • Ensure that 'tools'/ideas developed during the project continue to be accessible in the post-project period
... within the project's own organisation or authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relate project results to the organisation's/authority's long term plans and strategies • Explicitly identify how project learning can feed into future organisational planning
... amongst other organisations, institutions, authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the project's implementation process develop and apply a framework for building networks: to share project learning etc. and to build multi-stakeholder collaborations for the future • Build contacts with other organisations, institutions, authorities based on development of mutual trust and shared recognition of different expertise: e.g. time for joint critical reflection on learning and experiences from a range of related projects or work
... within the policy arena	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop contacts (while the project is going on) with decision makers (ministries, parliamentarians, etc.) and policy influencers (e.g. media): keep them informed of the project, its achievements and next (post-project) plans
... within wider society and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support wider society/ community to act in response to the issues raised by the project (this may be a policy action, education action, community practice action, or personal behavioural action; at a minimum it will require continued access to relevant project tools and approaches) • During the project's implementation process, train multipliers: with skills to use beyond the project itself and within their own communities and societies



Capitalisation: learning from projects

The afternoon session concentrated on groupwork to address the 3 central questions on how to capitalise and share knowledge from DEAR projects. In the annexes a comprehensive summary of the plenary sharing of each of the 3 clusters is provided. Although the main recommendations and best practices gave somewhat different suggestions from each of the groups, a number of commonalities can be identified:

1. How do you harvest learning from the projects to inform future work?

- Plan for good monitoring and evaluation: collate M&E methodologies, make use of peer to peer learning amongst project partners and agree on common indicators; include time to monitor/analyse evaluation data (with an eye to the future development of the project and beyond it); make use of an external evaluator throughout the project's lifetime and use him/her as an independent critical friend; Make ex-post evaluation (eg. 6 months after conclusion of project)
- Harvest knowledge periodically (using reports, focus groups, informal moments) from all team/partners/beneficiaries and after major activities. Regularly give attention to particular core aspects of the project (e.g. an approach or a theme covered throughout the project with, for example, each partner facilitating review of a particular aspect during project team Skype calls;
- Create a lessons log or a learning journal that collates lessons and perspectives from the range of stakeholders (i.e. project staff, partners, participants, audiences, other beneficiaries). This can be a useful source of evidence to use during evaluation;
- Develop/implement learning cultures – depersonalise criticism (for instance allow for anonymous evaluation/reporting from stakeholders and team)
- Don't forget face-to-face meetings (with staff, partners, beneficiaries) and harvest knowledge and perspectives from the 'ground'

2. How do you turn this knowledge into improvements for future projects?

- Amalgamate all findings into guidelines/templates/checklists for future use in the project/other projects (for example handover notes, 'key things you wished you'd known at the start')
- Keep in mind when developing partnerships: different partners need different levels of support/communication/capacity building/context adaptations
- Keep databases updated (e.g. of participants, CSOs, journalists)
- Invest and plan time for learning (at the start establish agreements amongst partners (including on which points you 'agree to disagree'), midterm has to review the course, and end of project prepares the future)
- Keep evaluation accessible, keep communication lines open after project, develop a process that enables project participants, partners and other stakeholders to be engaged in your future work

3. How do you communicate the learnings and the

- Tailor communications to specific target groups: keep in mind why, to whom and when from the beginning of the project
- Use real storytelling (audiences tell their story) + perspectives on

achievements to make them visible and more replicable?

baselines vs. achievements / before & after stories.

- Where available involve communication experts in your organisation from the start
- Share and communicate with 'strange bed fellows', keep networking
- Have final event to gather all info/stakeholders + celebrate achievements + prepare for the future
- Be transparent and keep communication flowing (internal/external)

This session concluded with a short presentation of a methodology created within the software development area and now also used within other areas of knowledge and project management: [‘Project Retrospectives’](#) provide an approach to bring closure to a project, strengthen partnerships, draw out learning and prepare for future work – for details see the PPP in the annexes.

Networking & sharing: elevator pitch, project fair, 'cabinet of curiosities'

Apart from learning from projects the Cluster Meetings also aimed to encourage networking and sharing between the participants.

The informal evening meeting introduced participants to each other and to each other's projects, including by means of each providing an [‘Elevator Pitch’](#) for their project.

The following day's meeting had a morning closure and an afternoon opening with two moments of more relaxed sharing of knowledge:

- a 'fair' of project 'best of' activities or tools, which the participants chose to share with fellow participants because of the quality, originality or good results obtained;
- a group dynamic on the pitfalls of DEAR work – 'cabinet of curiosities' - where participants were asked to imagine (or remember!) an activity or project that would definitely not work and which "you should not try this at home".



Reporting on project learning

During the final session of each meeting B2 staff discussed with participants their expectations regarding DEAR project reporting, as well what are the main problems and the characteristics of a good report.

Valentina Auricchio, Jan Matyas, Michel Laloge, Christine Lamarque, Joseph Schermesser, Paolo Barabesi, Efterpi Verigaki and Markus Pirchner, gave an overview of good, not so good and bad narrative reporting.

The point was stressed that reporting should focus in the intended project results and outcomes and how particular planned and executed activities contribute to such results and outcomes (or, if they haven't, why this had not been the case). In B2's experience, poor project reporting tended to focus on listing the activities that were carried out (or not carried out as the case may be) but this did not give an impression of the actual achievements of a project. The data should be presented aggregated - not several descriptions of results for each country – allowing an overview of the project.

Conclusions and participants' evaluation

This first version of the Cluster Meetings was considered a stimulating moment for both the B2/DEVCO staff and for the EC funded DEAR project staff present. Good networking among participants, good contact between projects and B2/DEVCO, led to an evaluation that is largely (very) positive.

From the participants' feedback scores, based on 47 to 51 responses (not all feedback addressed all the questions):

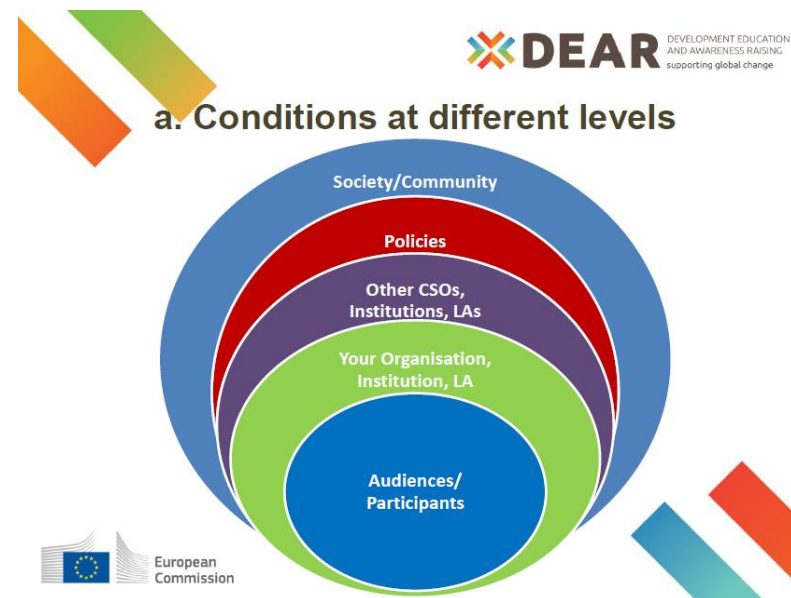
- Achievement of participants' expectations: 7.8 (out of 10)
- Achievement of Meeting objectives: 8.1
- Relevance to participants' work: 8.1
- Facilitation by DEAR ST staff: 8.9
- Logistics support: 8.7
- Overall success: 8.2

The participants highlighted the good atmosphere of working in such small groups and with participatory methodologies, as opposed to previous EC initiated events which focussed on work in and with large groups of participants. Suggestions for future Cluster Meetings included:

- a thematic approach (rather than the methodological approach of these Meetings);
- involving a mix of recently started projects and projects that had been further developed and implemented;
- inclusion of attention to learning from unsuccessful approaches and to overcoming challenges and difficulties;
- more time for project staff to meet with their respective B2 Task managers.

Annex: Approaches that support a sustained, lasting impact of projects

Participants were asked to address the issues by looking at different 'levels' or 'aspects' where sustained, lasting impact might be seen:



The information provided here gives an overview of suggestions given by participants of the three Cluster Meetings. Those suggestions were given in response to the following:

- On the basis of learning from participants' projects:
 - Which conditions need to be met for projects to have a sustained, lasting impact?
 - Which processes, approaches, activities, 'tools', are particularly useful in working towards those conditions?

The overview provided on the following pages focuses on the second question (as did most of the discussions during the Cluster Meetings).

Towards lasting, sustained impact amongst project participants/audiences

	19 th May: Global Learning in formal education	20 th May: Global Learning in non-formal education	21 st May: Advocacy-Campaigning
	Useful approaches, etc.	Useful approaches, etc.	Useful approaches, etc.
<i>Towards lasting, sustained impact amongst project participants/audiences</i>	Do not offer DE as an add-on: instead offer it as part of e.g. long term professional development of teachers, or as approach to delivering curriculum requirements. (However, huge diversity in teacher/curriculum needs will require different strategies)	Use the project as a means to (further) develop a network of 'ambassadors'/change makers for DE (to motivate others): offering practical 'tools' and resources for the network to continue post-project	End project by having 'tools' that can continued to be used (by participants and others): freely available on sites
	Support from leadership in educational institutions	Develop (as part of the project) audience/participant skills for self-sustained action	Ensure project has local relevance: this requires 'on the ground' research
	Encourage and enable audiences to upload their own work on the project's and/or other relevant websites	Make sure project is relevant to audience/participants needs, interests and circumstances	During the campaign: ensure ongoing two-way communication using DE approaches
	Build up database of project contacts and their interests and actions (and use in future work)	Provide formal validation of skills participants have gained during the project (as well as a formal 'thank you' for contributing to the project)	Ensure availability of post-project work that builds on participants' gained experiences
	Embedding project outputs in organisational (and not just project) websites	Ensure information about related work/other projects/relevant themes and approaches is available to participants to follow up on after the project	Have ongoing ability to react to 'today's' issues: enabling rapid response on those issues that relate to the past project/campaign

Towards lasting, sustained impact within the project's own organisation or authority

	19 th May: Global Learning in formal education	20 th May: Global Learning in non-formal education	21 st May: Advocacy-Campaigning
	Useful approaches, etc.	Useful approaches, etc.	Useful approaches, etc.
<i>Towards lasting, sustained impact within the project's own organisation</i>	Relating the contacts developed through a project to the broader network/contacts of the organisation	Relate the project – and its outcomes – to the broader organisational strategy/aims: specify results achieved	Make sure project results relate to, build on and contribute to the organisation's long term strategic plan and vision: Use the project results as a means to develop cross-organisational ownership of achievements
	Providing financial/resource security to follow-up on project work done	Share learning from the project across the organisation: project design; project processes and methods; project outputs and outcomes	During project implementation give explicit thought to how learning and achievements can be built on in future work in the organisation
	Develop explicit learning from the project – including feeding in that learning to other organisational work	Build learning from the project into strategic development of the organisation	Use intra-organisational meetings and events to build capacity across the organisation to learn from project experiences
	Organisational ability and flexibility to adapt to new learning and to changing (educational) circumstances	Near end of project develop capacity building tools and activities that help other staff and volunteers in the organisation to make use of the project/of project learning in their own work	

Towards lasting, sustained impact amongst other organisations, institutions, authorities

	19 th May: Global Learning in formal education	20 th May: Global Learning in non-formal education	21 st May: Advocacy-Campaigning
	Useful approaches, etc.	Useful approaches, etc.	Useful approaches, etc.
<i>Towards lasting, sustained impact amongst other organisations, institutions, authorities</i>	Develop networks between your project/ organisation and other networks based on dialogue and shared values >>> exploring new collaborations	Within project find and develop a framework for building networks: to share project learning etc. and to build multi-stakeholder collaborations for the future	Develop networks between your project/ organisation and other networks based on dialogue and shared values >>> exploring new collaborations
	Identify and engage influential allies in other CSOs/Institutions/LAs	Develop and implement explicit dissemination strategy – incl. at EU level: to inform/communicate, build capacity, highlight added value of the project –making experiences available for others to use and build on in their work	As a result of work done, develop joint position papers with other CSOs, authorities, networks
	Capacity building of teachers (during the project cycle) so they can influence the organisations, etc. they are involved in	Develop the ‘ownership’ of the project not only amongst project staff but also amongst leaders in other organisations: so they own what has happened in the project and continue the work post-project	To do the above build contacts based on development of mutual trust and shared recognition of different expertise: e.g. time for joint critical reflection on learning and experiences
	Relating the DE and project perspective and experience to strategies and policies of other organisations/institutions: providing a new perspective on what others are doing	Share understanding of pitfalls as well as achievements with other organisations in a process of mutual learning	
	Be clear of your unique selling point in discussions with others: what have you got that they don’t (and that they need)?	Share project methodologies with other organisations and networks	

Towards lasting, sustained impact within the policy arena

	19 th May: Global Learning in formal education	20 th May: Global Learning in non-formal education	21 st May: Advocacy-Campaigning
Conditions	Useful approaches, etc.	Useful approaches, etc.	Useful approaches, etc.
<i>Towards lasting, sustained impact within the policy arena</i>	Develop contacts (while the project is going on) with decision makers (ministries, parliamentarians, etc.): putting DE on the agenda	Promote continuity of quality actions: make funders aware that an emphasis on the need for innovation is not always required or even useful: the application of good practice (from a previous project) in new circumstances/with new audiences is often more effective	During the project build up contacts and trust within the policy arena: with policy makers and decision makers
	DE on the agenda of more than one government department (financially and in policy terms)	Engage range of potential 'outside' advocates in the project so they can speak up for it in their own networks, including at EU level e.g. Committee of the Regions, GENE (Member state policy makers)	Use project/campaign experience to inform work on development of policy coherence within EU and between EU and member states
	At EU level be aware of EU competences v. national competences – and relate to both	Provide bridge between practice and policy during the project: in order to develop (self-sustaining) networks beyond the project's lifetime	Advocate availability of 'continuation grants' that enable further (relatively short-term) funded work on particular positive results of a project
	Link to existing or establish networks of policy decision makers	Make others in CSO/LA networks aware of the project, its experiences, outputs and outcomes: share information – and encourage them to use their influencing routes to continue to make the case for you/your project and its achievements	
	Use agreement about DEAR at EU level to leverage support at national levels where such support is currently lacking		
	Use the project to provide/enable a bridge between education practitioners and policy makers		

Towards lasting, sustained impact in wider society & community

	19 th May: Global Learning in formal education	20 th May: Global Learning in non-formal education	21 st May: Advocacy-Campaigning
Conditions	Useful approaches, etc.	Useful approaches, etc.	Useful approaches, etc.
<i>Towards lasting, sustained impact in wider society & community</i>	Ensure (project) work done is context specific: meets the needs and circumstances of the wider society/community	Develop and promote behaviours (amongst participants/audiences) that last beyond the project (e.g. relating to lifestyle choices)	Enable the project contacts and supporters to become part of a wider societal movement for change
	The project supporting the development of a questioning approach (e.g. regarding current development, local and global situation, education and its purpose)	During the project train multipliers: with skills to use beyond the project itself	During the project build up contacts with influencers, e.g. media and other opinion makers, to highlight the project's effects and relevance to wider society
	Continue to support wider society/ community to act in response to the issues raised by the project (this may be a policy action, education action, community practice action, or personal behavioural action; at a minimum it will require continued access to relevant project tools and approaches)	Engage influencers in society/community during the project to speak up for DE beyond the project itself	Use learning from the project/campaign to make contact with non-usual suspects, i.e. organisations, networks that are stakeholders in the project's theme but have not been involved in it (e.g. businesses, trade unions, media etc.). Get out of your comfort zone by taking your learning to those who are not necessarily on your 'wavelength'
		Use media approaches during the project to create broader (beyond project) awareness and interest	Organise and use public consultations to gain and inform ideas and opinions
		Maintain video/interactive tools beyond the lifetime of the project	