EVALUATING SL EXPERIENCES

UNAEUROPA

Una Europa is an alliance of eight European universities.

Freie Universität Berlin

Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna

University of Edinburgh

Helsingin yliopisto/ Helsingfors universitet

Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie

KU Leuven

Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

The Unaeuropa manifesto for a university created by and for society

THE UNAEUROPA SEED FUND PROJECT

The aim of the seed funding initiative is to support the initiation of long-term collaborative activities between the partner universities. The idea is to "plant a seed" that can eventually attract external funding.

OUR UNAEUROPA SEEDFUND PROJECT

The UNAEUROPA SL network in the short term could:

- foster mobility of academics and staff interested in SL within the UNAEUROPA SL network;

- establish relationships with National, European and International organizations aimed at promoting SL;

- participate in Erasmus+ programs and COST actions to further develop networking, collaboration and training.

OUR UNAEUROPA SEEDFUND PROJECT

The UNAEUROPA SL network in the long term could:

- formalize high-quality standards for SL courses implementation, based on the evidence collected through agreed research within the UNAEUROPA SL network;

- facilitate students mobility within the UNAEUROPA SL network, based on the common understanding of quality standard and best practices for SL courses implementation;

- support the implementation of SL courses within UNAEUROPA alliance

- promote the adoption of the quality standard for SL courses implementation,

- within the UNAEUROPA alliance.

OUR UNAEUROPA SEEDFUND PROJECT

- A collaborative UNAEUROPA service-learning network to transform teaching and learning in the European Space of Higher Education

- Founded by Unaeuropa seed fund in 2019

- Challenged by the pandemic

Summer school ➤ **Pandemic** ➤ **Participatory action research**

METHODOLOGY

- We conducted three focus groups (2 Italy, 1 Spain), six interviews (3 Belgium, 3 Spain), four testimonies (Belgium). Focus groups, interviews, and testimonies were collected with FACULTY members, COMMUNITY partners, and STUDENTS.

- Aimed at exploring 5 dimensions of evaluation:
  – Function of evaluation;
  – Relevance, what is important to assess;
  – Typology, what kind of instruments to evaluate;
  – Timing, when to evaluate;
  – Role, who should evaluate.

PARTICIPANTS

FACULTY MEMBERS

Belgium

- 3 faculty members from 3 different university departments:
    – 1 man;
    – 2 women.

Italy

- 10 faculty members from 4 different university departments:
    – 2 men;
    – 8 women.

Spain

- 5 faculty member from Education department:
    – 2 men;
    – 3 women.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Belgium

- 2 site supervisors from 2 different community organizations:
    – 1 man;
    – 1 woman.

Italy

- 11 site supervisors from 10 different community organizations:
    – 1 man;
    – 10 women.

Spain

- 1 site supervisor of a community organization:
    – 1 woman

FUNCTION OF EVALUATION

UNIVERSITY

- A means to provide feedback to students;
- A way to recognize students' work;
- A tool to value the experience (what works and what doesn't);
- A tool to gather evidence of students' learning and personal development .

COMMUNITY

- A tool to start the reflection on the experience (pros and cons);
- A way to provide evidence of the work accomplished to the local stakeholders;
- A way to collect data about the impact of the SL experience on the community.

Scholars are more student-centered, while community partners are more interested in understanding the impact of the experience on the community.

RELEVANCE: WHAT TO ASSESS

UNIVERSITY

- Students' competencies (less relevant);
- Students' academic learning;
- Impact of the experiences (more relevant):

"We evaluate the impact. I think it's not related to students' evaluation, but to the work and the impact the experience had on the community context"

COMMUNITY

- Students' knowledge of the community organizations;
- Developed professional competencies;
- The impact of students' service on the organizations;
- The partnership between campus and community.

Scholars are more concerned to understand the impact of the experience, while community partners are also interested in understanding the students' acquirement of professional competencies

TIMING: WHEN TO EVALUATE

UNIVERSITY

- Pre/post evaluation - usually quantitative;
- In itinere -ongoing- evaluation of the process (perceived as more relevant);
- Possibility to include a follow up moment.

COMMUNITY

- Pre/post evaluation;
- In itinere –ongoing;
- At the end.

Scholars and community partners agree on the timing of the evaluation. Some participants already implemented evaluation strategies that include pre, post, and ongoing evaluation.

TYPE: WHAT KIND OF INSTRUMENTS

UNIVERSITY

- Qualitative instruments to collect students' perspectives of the experience (interviews, field notes);

- Quantitative instruments to testify change produced by the experience –mainly competencies (survey).

COMMUNITY

- Informal reflexive sessions to gather students' initial and final expectations;

- Informal moments with colleagues and faculty SL team to reflect on the experience.

- Formal feedback session(s) with students on the output/project related to their service

Scholars use more structured instruments and dedicated moments to evaluate the experience, while community partners use more informal strategies to reflect on the experience and discuss about it with students

ROLE: WHO SHOULD EVALUATE

UNIVERSITY

- University staff;
- Students (more control over their learning when participating in the evaluation process);
- Community partners.

"In Service-Learning, I think we should have a cooperative methodology to evaluate the experience together"

COMMUNITY

- Students;
- University staff;
- Community partners (just informal evaluation that does not overburden the organizations with administrative duties).

Scholars and community partners considerations seem to converge. Nevertheless, community partners remark that their role in evaluation should be more informal and not systematic.

MAIN CHALLENGES OF EVALUATION

UNIVERSITY

- To go beyond results and pay attention to the learning process;
- To let students understand that their evaluation is not referred to the effort but to the actual learning and level of participation;
- To find common terms and share measures across experiences;
- To include the civic competencies dimension;
- To implement longitudinal data collection and follow-up;
- Evaluating students with the grades logic:

"we evaluate students because we have to, we are forced to align innovative education with the university individual and numeric frame"

COMMUNITY

- To be formal evaluator of students' experience:

"It would not be appropriate to add official evaluation tools here [in the organization], i*t would be invasive. Besides, we would probably detect the same information that the university already collects. It would be more interesting to share information than to collect more. The relationship we establish with students is equal and informal. Asking to administer a questionnaire would be excessive."*