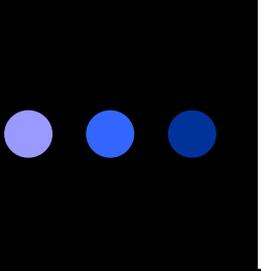




**The joy of
networking?**

**New challenges
and perspectives
for the TTnet**

Rocío Lardinois, Thessaloniki, 25th February 2009



Networks... versus projects

1. Pooling strategic knowledge
2. Process orientation
3. Strategic impact on the field
4. Multiple and complex objectives
5. Separate strands of activity with high degree of autonomy
6. Multiple target groups
7. Partnership includes key players representing the field
8. Enlargement strategy of partnership
9. Sustainable fabric of relations

1. Generating concrete innovation
2. Product-orientation
3. Development of products and services
4. Few and concrete objectives
5. Interlinked work packages contributing to the main outputs
6. Clearly defined target groups
7. Partnership of practitioners with complementary expertise
8. Closed partnership with possible associated partners
9. Temporary cooperation structure

Why joining a network?



- Networks are most effective if those participating and their institutions receive “benefits” (mostly non-monetary but should be explicitly identified).
- They may include:
 - Peer learning
 - Regular reception of most up-to-date information
 - New ideas for improving the range of training offers, advice on particular challenges
 - Joint development of resources
 - Legitimacy to defend policy issues and mainstreaming European developments
 - Contacts and ideas for project making...
- The more relevant the expected “benefits”, the more intense is the commitment and involvement in the network.

Possible missions



- Providing a common platform, forum or reference point for discussion and reflection on key issues and policy (debate function)
- Disseminate innovation and best practice (dissemination function)
- Provide an overview of the thematic field (research function)
- Identify present, emergent and future needs of stakeholders and potential areas for cooperation at European level (forecasting function)
- Develop, test, disseminate tools, principles and other support materials (support function for practitioners and key stakeholders)
- Promote the implementation of European principles and make recommendations to policy makers (advocacy function)

Networking is about...



- Networking
- Learning
- Sharing & shaping policies and practices
- And....
 - informal cross-linked ties and interactions of actors
 - cooperating in a target-oriented manner (peer learning activities and small-scale projects).



What kind of player do we want to be... (2000)

- The network defines itself as a Community forum for communication, cooperation and expertise in the training of teachers and trainers of vocational education.
- TTnet calls for national networks to be set up and brought into operation with the aim of forming a “network of networks”. Each of them is intended to bring together the main nationally representative organisations and players in the field of teachers & trainers training.

What kind of player do we want to be... (2000)

- TTnet is also based on the organisation of common activities (thematic workshops and research) designed to encourage the sharing of experiences and knowledge and the creation of common references for players in the field.



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What kind of player do we want to be...(2006)

- TTnet is a pan-European forum for key players and decision-makers in the training and professional development of VET teachers and trainers
- TTnet's aims are to:
 - Foster cooperation between key national actors in VET teacher training;
 - Produce recommendations, guidance and tools for VET professionals, through studies and practice-sharing;
 - Contribute to implementing EU priorities for VET teachers and trainers.



What kind of player do we want to be... (2006)

- The founding groups of national networks meet regularly: they decide the national network's annual objectives, organise its activities and ensure coordination with Cedefop.
- Cedefop coordinates the overall network; it proposes the work plan and timetable and steers and monitors the network's activities.



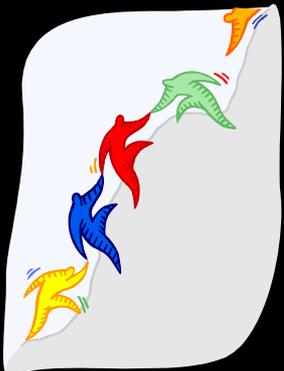
Mutual interests and benefits

- A network can be seen as a win-win situation, which can only be achieved if network members gain their desired benefits (personal, institutional). Win-win situations need to be perceived as such.
- Participation in a network can run from core partners, who might lead work packages to occasional collaborators who might be only marginally involved in one or two stages.

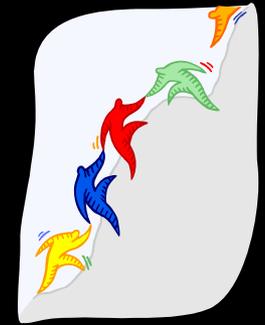


Challenges and opportunities

- We should be realistic about what we can achieve, given our limited resources
- Identify core competences (members and institutions), main interests and contributions we are able and willing to put into the network
- Define our core businesses and identify strategies to pursue key activities.



Sharing tasks



- Since Cedefop is mainly supporting, activities at European level....
- What is reasonable to expect from TTnet's members?
- What contributions are we able and willing to bring into the network (hosting a peer learning, writing a paper...cooperating in a target-oriented manner...)?
- We do not need to have all the same level of involvement... The annual meeting, an opportunity to “experience the network”
- How to increase synergies....?

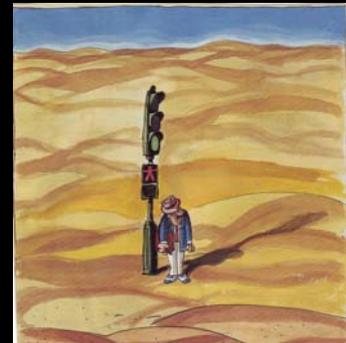
Reflecting on new perspectives...

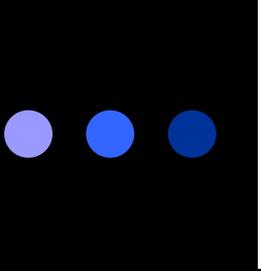
- How to bring forward the achievements of “Defining VET professions”?
- How to supporting communities of practice (thematic working groups)?
- What are the key themes we should address in the future ?
- What kind of synergies could we develop with other networks, Cedefop projects...?
- How to get the best of the Study Visits Program? How to take advantage of the LdV projects in which you are already involved?



Challenges and opportunities

- Cedefop needs to fill knowledge gaps related to VET teachers and trainers in areas that are closely linked to policy making (comparative analyses, case studies...).
- How to take advantage of the wealth of experiences of TTnet? How could TTnet be involved? What will its role be in these analyses? Will it play a validation role? How to enrich the reflections of TTnet through Cedefop studies?





New opportunities

- How to organise thematic working groups? On what topics? With what objectives and expected outcomes?
- How can we use our meetings and workshops as a foundation for small-scale projects?
- How can we increase synergies between activities of TTnet members (including EU projects in which you are involved) and the network as a whole?



Questions for reflection

Clarifying interests and “benefits”



- What do you expect from your participation in the TTnet?
- What is TTnet bringing to you and to your institution?
- How to increase the added value of the network for institutions and individual members?

Questions for reflection

Clarifying TTnet's mandate



- What should our main goals be? How should we achieve them?
- What should our priority fields of activity be?
- How can we reinforce our role in these areas? What will be needed?
- What are our strengths? What could be improved?

Questions for reflection

Cooperating in a target oriented manner

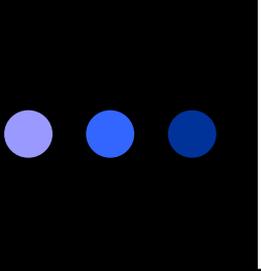


- What should the objectives of the working groups be?
- On what themes?
- What kind of “projects” & activities could be developed?
- What kind of outcomes could be expected?
- How can we use our thematic workshops to build up small scale projects?



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References

- Holger Bienzle, The Art of Networking, DieBerater, 2007

If you have any suggestions for our future activities...

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