BeyondScale

Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo

Guidelines on Peer-Learning

Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo

**GUIDELINE ON PEER-LEARNING
OUTBOUND ACTIVITY**

Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo (IPVC)

BeyondScale - Developing the Organisational Capacity of Higher Education Institutions using the HEInnovate platform to facilitate peer-learning and a pan-European community of practice

Take-aways from peer-learning experiences

Peer-learning is a way for partners to learn from each other effectively. At a time when the university resources are limited and demands upon the staff are increasing, it can be beneficial internal as well as external stakeholders of an HEI to learn from each other.

For peer-learning to take place it is important to know who the "peers or buddies" are. For peer-learning to be achieved within the BeyondScale project a buddy system was created. The buddy system included internal HEI partners for the inbound projects, external for the outbound projects, and a system that involved project partners, associate partners as well as mentors. The internal partners were university management, heads of departments, heads of degree programs, experts in service units, and selected lecturers. On the other side external partners were public sector/policy-oriented organisations along with enterprise support organizations/incubators/start-ups, micro firms and relevant actors in the industry.

The internal HEI partners in the activities – the project team, administrative, academic, and other staff as well as students - benefited from the documentation of the activities of BeyondScale, the capacity building seminars and webinars organized at the higher education institutions. External stakeholders also benefited from the augmented capacity at the higher education institutions they collaborate with.

While COVID-19 made things more complicated, the design of the system allowed all partners to interact on multiple levels and with a variety of partners from the inside and the outside of their network. The result was the co-design and the implementation of inbound and outbound activities.

The following roadmap provides an overview of the peer-learning activities developed during the BeyondScale project. Further information is available at www.beyondscale.eu or you can contact us at: office@wpz-research.com

The BeyondScale roadmap on peer learning included the following steps:

1. Think about what contribution you expect or what you want to learn
2. Think about your own contribution and whether your partner can use this contribution
3. Define together the goals of the exchange
4. Agree on the way of communication
5. Define future meetings or possibilities of exchange
6. Reflect on the value of the exchange
7. Think about further joint activities

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1 |

An example of a peer learning activity.

HEInnovate dimension: Knowledge Exchange & Collaboration

Description of the activity: The activity aims to expand IPVCs´ social entrepreneurship ecosystem, collaboration, and knowledge exchange with NGOs. The activity also intends to identify the partners needs in order to promote the development of service-learning projects with teachers and students.

Our participants represented:

- Public Sector/Policy oriented organisations
- Non-Profit Sector/Third Sector
- SMEs
- Teachers, course coordinators, inclusive school coordinators, school directors and IPVC presidency

Involvement, contributions and future benefits of the partners

External participants/ Partners	Involved in	Contribution	Future (mutual) benefit
Company Manager	• Local projects	• Expertise in Social Entrepreneurship	• Better collaboration between the university and the company
Head of a public authority	• Local projects with different NGOs	• Institutional support	• Being a link and promoter between NGOs • Possible contribution for the future implementation of the projects • Community Recognition • Increase of engagement with HEIS´s
Head of Non Profit Sector (NGO)	• Service Learning projects • Co-creation	• Presentation of the NGO • Explanation of the local context	• Social needs diagnosis and possible solutions • Increase of community engagement with HEIS.
Representative from an Inclusive High School	• Inclusive school project management	• Presentation of their inclusion strategy	• Corporate social responsibility • Increase of teachers' engagement
Representative of the Teachers of the region	• Inclusive School Projects	• Technical expertise	• Entrepreneurial teaching methodologies • Knowledge sharing with community • New services and technical solutions provided to NGOs (apps, websites, videos, logos, digital models...)

Why was peer learning important for your activity?

- Peer learning is very important in this case because it allows external stakeholders to find support from HEIs in their own social projects.
- It also allows for knowledge sharing between external stakeholders and HEIs.

What have you learnt during the peer-learning process of your Outbound activity?

- In our outbound activity the peer-learning process helped us to develop social diagnosis needs in order to begin the co-creation of social projects between Higher Education Institutions (HEI) and the community.
- The knowledge exchanged and mutual engagement between Higher Education Institutions and NGOs was very important to start the development of the common social projects.

Would you recommend the peer-learning buddy system to another HEI and why? What could other HEIs learn from it?

- Yes, we totally recommend peer-learning buddy system to another HEI because it allows to share knowledge between external stakeholders and our internal stakeholders.
- The peer-learning buddy system allows to develop engagement, mutual gains and opportunities.
- It´s very important to use peer learning to share common needs, best practices and mutual solutions that can be integrated in their own community.

What were the common objectives?

- The development of new entrepreneurial educational methodologies from the IPVC professors in accordance with the regional social needs as explained by the external stakeholders.

What were the outcomes?

- The creation of a network within IPVC that promotes social innovation and follows an entrepreneurial methodology in their teaching.

What were the possible barriers and challenges?

- The economic recession.
- The limited time to contact the stakeholders.
- Teachers' work overload.
- Understanding the complexity of problems.
- Receiving information in time from the NGOs.

What were the possible opportunities?

- New applied methods for teaching
- Active participation of the stakeholders and promotion of the third mission of IPVC.
- The possibility to develop networking and cocreation among different stakeholders.