

BOCR Evidence - Euclid Network

- Civil Society professionals
- Main donor is the EU due to the diverse composition of membership in the network
- Offers a lot of vocational training and is a beneficiary of Erasmus (social entrepreneurs)
- Works on innovation and policy/advocacy
- Worked on a campaign on EU funding – Euclid is a beneficiary and so are members.

Q: We have heard generally that EU funding and programmes are beneficial but bureaucratic and difficult to access – does Euclid have this experience too?

A: Euclid was a partner of civil society organisations for youth – tried to do several activities, run few events to explain how to access EU funding, how EU policy works, and training sessions.

- Since 2008 – Euclid have worked on a campaign on financial regulation
- Have received funding from the EU commission
- Supported EDG to launch a consultation on how to access EU funds – afterwards decided to create a group inside the EU structural group to work on simplifying EU funding. Worked to involve parliament and the specific MEP in charge of this file. In the end, Euclid tried to engage with the Council and Member States, working with DFID and FCO. However tried several times but still difficult. Accessed the simplified grants and tried smaller things to improve but they were not successful. Currently working with the Commission on the next EDG in 2015.

Q: What benefits do you see in the EU being involved in this area?

- Very beneficial – Erasmus young entrepreneurs for example see it as a good match and afterward being involved many have decided to open up a new company or business.
- Another project was also funded by the EU in Serbia (attached report from 2007-08 has a dedicated section to different countries and a page on the UK specifically).

Q: One of the main purposes of the programmes is mobility?

A: One of the benefits of the programmes is staying in another country – improves language skills.

Q: Do you see any benefits to these programmes being run by EU or can they be run by national governments?

A: They can be run by national governments but the EU provides a different opportunity

Q: How about the programmes – any improvements needed?

A: Bureaucracy – need to submit a lot of paper and the reporting part is onerous. Funding needs to be quicker to pay salaries in time.

Q: Does the reporting fall on you or others in organisation?

A: Both depending on when. Last instalment was paid after the report sent, which is understandable but makes it difficult to pay all the partners so leads to cascading delays. But demand is high!

Q: If the bureaucracy was removed – would the take up be higher?

A: Yes

Q: Have you noticed a greater involvement by the commission lately in Education and Training?

A: Yes a little but not a big increase, programmes have moved around etc but it was a smart move to rename everything under Erasmus+

Q: How effective is the EU or EC at evaluating its programmes?

A: Not that effective - sometimes programmes are evaluated by external consultants - resources spent on it are not matched up to the value of what the consultants produce. There should be a quality check and it would also be good to see more assessments. E.g. Erasmus after 5 years but also after next 2 years would be good.

Q: Sometimes there can be a pressure from the Commissioner or Commission to come out with new tools and initiatives so sometimes they do not wait for the existing tools to be used or evaluated.

A: Yes completely agree. Euclid work with more than 10 DGs and try to inform what other Departments are doing. They have appreciated this very much and have asked Euclid what they think is best.

Q: You mentioned that your organisation is involved in providing vocational training – any changes since the recognised common qualifications across Europe?

A: Yes many. It is good there are some standards set at European level, and there should be more, but not necessarily through certification. Focus on certain skills that go beyond - if something is done related to that then sector would be happy.

Q: It is largely the case that the Commission does not get involved in specifying training - would there be value of it being more prescriptive in order to harmonise training across the EU?

A: Would be good if the Commission and national governments did things related to capacity building and training (like organisations trying to find solutions to

challenges). Perhaps programmes for 8 weeks and then have a mentorship programme attached to a training programme rather than just the usual traditional programme.

Q: So should the EU just recognise or develop it?

A: Both would be useful

Q: Have you perceived an increase in policy coordination in education?

A: No, not informed on this but there have been more structural dialogues and Euclid has been involved. Could see Euclid as the beneficiaries of these activities and it would be good to have more of these to discuss relevant topics.

Q: Are you familiar with CSRs?

A: No, but what do you mean by the policy side?

Q: E.g. benchmarking and areas like early school leaving - etc how effective is that process in prompting changes in national systems?

A: No informed – Euclid work with OECD but not in education. Not sure how effective other institutions are in relation to policy – OECD is a very good think tank but less like a national institution. Euclid mainly work with EU on social innovation and social enterprise projects.

- Communication is a problem – lots of programmes available but people do not know about them – need to raise awareness. The EU is not good at that so helpful if it could externalise or do training.

Q: Are the young entrepreneurs participants in university or not?

A: Both as long they are running a business for less than 3 years

Q: How useful are the programmes to UK participants as opposed to other countries? The UK term time and the length of Erasmus experiences do not align so UK students do not benefit as much as others?

A: Yes but Euclid does not follow term time so it does not affect them. On one project for example they were just one of two intermediate organisations, so many could not benefit from this.

- Another project – young people do not know much about the EU and EU Parliament especially in the UK. But they feel they are European so there is a bit of a disconnection. Young people have said that they should be taught at school about politics and the EU.