



Activity 1: SWOT analysis

Rationale: “During the second year of the Network it is the objective to deepen the understanding of the relation and influences of hindering factors in ULLL research and professional practice. Which role can local/regional/national/international networks [and other actors] play [in overcoming identified barriers and constraints to practitioner-researcher-cooperation]? How do they and how could they influence mechanisms and dynamics of the respective LLL-research and practice agenda towards a real culture of DIALOGUE and collaboration? “

Aim of the exercises

- To identify hindering factors and coping strategies in the cooperation between LLL researchers and practitioners based on the produced case studies and national state-of-play documents
- To generalise findings at regional/national level
- To explore how key actors and networks could help overcoming identified barriers and constraints

Description/Tip

- While the exercise 1 (the SWOT) will be done on your case study, exercises 2-5 work with your generalised findings at regional and/or national level. Therefore, we would recommend filling in these exercises in cooperation with your institutional partner.
- We would recommend doing exercise 5 of this activity after activities 2 and 3 (network analysis) have been done as this exercise refers to the actors identified in the network templates.
- The overall findings of this activity should then be discussed with identified key actors.

1. SWOT on (cooperation between) ULLL research and professional practice, based on the case studies

Please fill in the SWOT template below based on your case study.

Description/Tip

- The level of the analysis is determined by your case study (so it is very likely that the SWOT will be done for the level of your unit or your institutional level)
- While strengths and weaknesses address internal factors or origins, opportunities and threats address external factors or origins
- We included some examples of topics for the 4 levels of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

| | |
|---|---|
| Topic assessed: Case Study: Widening possibilities to study university degree-oriented studies in the Open University of UEF 2007-2009 | |
| Helpful in achieving the objective | Harmful in achieving the objective |
| Strengths | Weaknesses |
| <p>Examples of factors considered under strengths include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Researcher was at the same time one of the practitioners - Close relations between researcher and other practitioners - Researcher and practitioners had partly the same intention: to find out how the suitable guidance is to be organised, how network is working and how does distance education work - Cooperation with different kind of institutions | <p>Examples of factors considered under weaknesses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Researcher was making her Master Thesis so the starting point for research was not wide and deep enough - No funding - Because of the nature of the research it was not planned deeply enough together with other practitioners - Not very interesting research questions taking into account that this widening the possibilities to study law studies was something quite new in Finland, there could have been possibility to adopt a better theoretical framework and do many different and largely interesting measurements (e.g. motivation) - Findings were not very productive - Master Thesis is not really research it is practising research; lack of professionalism - No clear preliminary view of the importance of this project as a whole |
| Opportunities | Threats |
| <p>Examples of factors considered under opportunities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If ministry of Education and Culture had been wise there should have been real properly funded research process or at least developmental evaluation supporting this kind of development work - Better planning of the project could have brought into the publicity the lack of educational opportunities and further adults possibilities to participate in ULLL - ULLL research could produce good information for researchers to develop theory of equal access to education and administrators information how to develop adults possibilities to get into ULLL | <p>Examples of factors under threats include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - politicians are not very interested in ULLL questions because there are other things which are more interesting - ministry of education do not give enough value on ULLL - there is constant lack of research funding and to get good researchers presupposes good funding |

2. Can the hindering factors (weaknesses and threats) be generalised and applied at national level? Which other hindering factors can be identified?

Generalisation could be: when Ministry and some other authority grant money to a developmental project this should always follow some kind of research or at least research based developmental evaluation work. Development work without resources for evaluation or research is wasting money. The other Finnish Case study (Noste) shows how development project should be organised. The only way to collect enough information of this kind of developmental projects is to research these processes and report them. The other possibility is do close developmental evaluation together with the practitioners. This should be done by university researchers and it should be reported. Without proper reporting the experiences in the development projects go wasted.

Research is expensive.

In many cases researchers are not enough networked with practitioners.

3. Once you have identified the general hindering factors, please try to analyse their reasons to find out how these factors are embedded in your respective learning and research culture.

- Insufficient networking
- Different backgrounds (theoretical vs. practical) interests differ
- Organisation of work (no funding no time)
- Funding

4. Actions that could be carried out to overcome these identified reasons for barriers and hindering factors to cooperation between ULLL researchers and practitioners or solutions

Please identify and explain possible solutions for the identified reasons of barriers.

- **Insufficient networking** has to be overcome by widening possibilities to discuss and meet between practitioners and researchers; at universities ULLL units and ULLL researchers (and also faculties and other institutes who work in ULLL) should have meetings and discuss about relevant research topics and roles of practitioners and researchers
- **Different backgrounds** (theoretical vs. practical) different interests make the discussion often not very interesting; the interests are so wide apart; common meetings could bridge this gap
- **Organisation of work (no funding no time) and funding** more and more faculty people as well practitioners concentrate their efforts on things which are important from the point of view the money or profitable. Research and practice together could be profitable in many ways and every organisation has to do development work; cooperation between practice and research and practitioners and researchers should be seen profitable development work

5. Actors which (could) play a role in carrying out these actions (based on the network analysis of activity 2 and 3) and reason:

Please reflect on how the identified actors of the network analysis could help to overcome identified barriers and constraints.



| Actors | Reason |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| ULLL units at the universities | insufficient networking and background differences |
| Research units at the universities | insufficient networking and background differences; organisation of work |
| Research Associations | insufficient networking and background differences |
| Ministry of Education and Culture | Funding |
| ULLL and Adult Education Periodicals | informing of ULLL research |
| National ULLL organisations | informing, networking, |