SMART

Second Chance Schools Working with Systematic Measurement of Outcomes

TEACHERS' HANDBOOK

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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
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Table of contents

Introduction

This chapter explains the background and the purpose of the SMART project, the teacher-training module and the teachers' handbook.

A rapidly changing global economy and concerns about the EU ability to create a competitive workforce have focused attention on Member State's education and training systems, highlighting their role to perform better in preparing all learners to meet educational and training requirements and prepare young people for the workplace. Policy reforms have focused on improving the quality and accountability of education and training. The establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Education and Training provided a significant steppingstone in paving the road towards quality assurance in Education and Training.

The shift from defining standards based on teaching inputs to learning outcomes has a significant impact on quality assurance policies and practices. As more responsibility is devolved to providers for curricula, methodologies and assessment, there is a greater onus on them to demonstrate effectiveness. This is particularly pertinent for providers of compensatory education such as second chance education and youth schemes, aimed at reducing early school leaving (ESL) but where the use of informal and non-formal learning makes success factors less easy to measure.

In 2012 DGEAC commissioned research into good practices in second chance education and its success factors with a view to identifying transferability to initial education and training. The theoretical base of the study was to examine whether compensatory measures could provide a source of evidence for prevention and possibly intervention measures also. The study found that there was "strong potential" for initial education and training to learn lessons from second chance provision but that there are gaps in qualitative and quantitative measures of success to evidence the long-term effectiveness of provision designed to reduce ESL.
It recommended the development of a quality framework to underpin the active transfer of good practices from second chance education and to

build the evidence base of long-term impacts and outcomes of second chance education.

Introducing the SMART project

The SMART project aims to develop a quality framework, for use by providers of second chance education that will address the gaps identified by DGEAC and enable providers to evidence their success factors, enhancing the quality and relevance of learning offers in education, training and youth work. Raising awareness of second chance methodology and validation of second chance learning can only be achieved through the establishment of a common framework of quality criteria, indicators and benchmarks that measures qualitative and quantitative data. SMART brings together good practices in quality monitoring and measuring including examples from existing second chance schemes/programmes that already self-evaluate and adapts them to meet the needs of second chance education thus ensuring recognition, parity of esteem and value of informal and non formal methods that are characteristics of second chance education.

What is the role of the teacher and the purpose of this teacher-training module?

SMART fosters stakeholder involvement in a culture of quality improvement and accountability at all levels through a “bottom up” approach to developing a self-evaluation system. Thus all stakeholders will have ownership of systematic measuring of success factors, mapping work that already happens, rather than having an “imposed” model. Teachers and trainers have an important role in sharing best practice in self-evaluation and self-monitoring, bringing their knowledge and competence of quality assurance to build a system that is relevant and accessible for second chance education providers or indeed other providers of informal and non-formal learning. The training programme targets teachers/trainers and professionals working in second chance education and those using informal learning methods and focuses

on developing an understanding of accountability and how informal learning can be evidenced and justified through self-monitoring and self-evaluation.

The training programme will address the gaps in knowledge and skills of teachers/trainers and introduce the Logic Model, the E-platform and the collection and use of data, enabling teachers to prepare and implement a Systematic Measurement System (SYSTEMATIC MEASUREMENT SYSTEM) in their own organisations through a step-by-step action-plan, which will be developed throughout the training seminar.

What is the purpose of this handbook?

The handbook is a guide for teachers to enable them to implement self-monitoring and self-evaluation of their practice. It should be used as support guidelines during the training process but also as a reference "bible" after training. It complements the training module but can also be used as a standalone guide for teachers. The handbook provides the rational for monitoring and evaluation, guidelines for implementing the process, good practice examples, example templates and tools. The teachers' handbook compliments the two handbooks developed as guidelines for policy makers and organisations to implement a self-evaluation process.

Making and using a systematic measurement system

This chapter is about how to develop a systematic measurement system and how to use it.

A systematic measurement system sets out the processes and procedures for ongoing cyclical self-monitoring and self-evaluation of an organisation.

A systematic measurement system will often consist of measurements at different levels and of different kinds of indicators. However, the focus of the SMART project is especially on how to measure the progression of the students' social and personal skills. For this purpose the school must use systematic measurement of outcomes and this is what is explained in details in this chapter.

Facts

Systematic measurement of outcomes gives an organisation continuous knowledge about the outcomes of the work that the organisation does.

It is a tool that can be applied to continuously develop the organisation and thus ensure that the organisation achieves the best possible outcomes for its target group.

At the same time, it is a tool that can be used to document the outcomes internally as well as externally.

When an organisation wants to measure the outcomes of an effort, it has to start by defining the outcomes it wants to accomplish and how it wants to accomplish them. Then the organisation must develop a measurement system which enables it to keep track of the success of the intended outcomes. Later, the outcomes can be used for continued development of the organisation and/or as documentation of the efforts.

The systematic measurement of outcomes is thus comprised of three elements:

A. Clarification of objectives and efforts
   Finding out what knowledge you need
B. Measuring outcomes
   Collecting the knowledge
C. Application of measurements
   Using the knowledge, you have gained

A. Clarification of objectives and efforts in a Logic Model

Objectives and efforts can be clarified by designing a logic model.

Fact

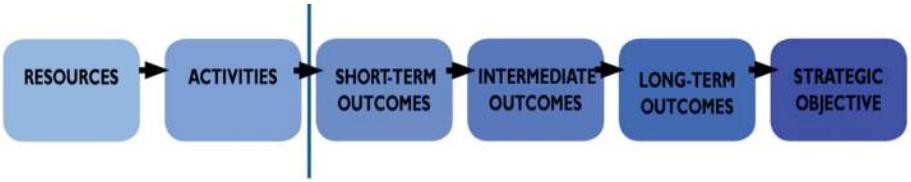
A logic model describes how an organisation tries to achieve the intended impacts and changes of a selected target group.

In other words, a logic model describes the outcomes a school or an organisation wants to bring about for the students and what activities the school undertakes in order to achieve the intended impacts and changes (outcomes). Thus, a logic model describes the relationship between theory and practice.

It describes;

- the purpose of the school (the strategic objectives/impact)
- the school's intended outcomes for the target group (short-term, intermediate and long-term outcomes)
- the practice of the school (activities and methods (efforts)

This can be illustrated in the model below:



On the left of the line are the things that can be planned and monitored, and which can be adjusted or changed directly: this concerns **resources** and **activities**. Resources cover human, financial and organisational resources[1]. Activities constitute everything the organisation does with the resources: these are approaches, methods and activities that are initiated in order to create the intended results.

On the right of the line are the intended outcomes of the activities, which can only be adjusted or changed indirectly, as they are the outcomes that an organisation hopes to achieve by the means of certain activities: These are **short-term, intermediate,** and **long-term outcomes** as well as the overall **strategic objective(s)** of the organisation.

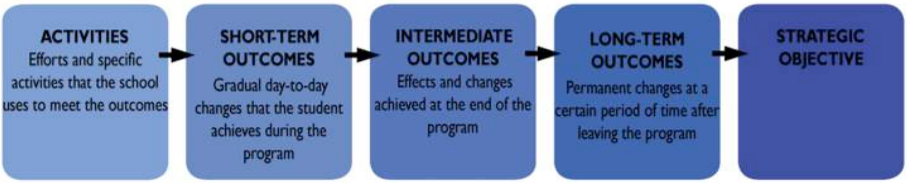
It is all about mapping

When making a logic model for an organisation, the organisation clarifies its ideas of the correlation between the activities it sets in motion and the intended outcomes and results of the activities.

Fact

Making a logic model is about mapping and describing what you already do and on what grounds you do it.

A logic model of a school looks like this:



When making a logic model one uses the strategic objective(s) as a starting point: what is/are the overall goal(s) that we want to achieve? Hereafter, you work your way backwards in the model, from right to left.

1 In the following, a mapping of resources is not included, but it is an element which an organisation may consider to look at if the outcomes do not match the intended results in certain areas.

Next, the organisation looks at the partial goals that have to be met in order to meet the overall goal(s), that is; the long-term, intermediate and short-term outcomes.

Lastly, the organisation describes the specific efforts the school applies in order to achieve the short-term outcomes, that is; the activities.

By doing so, the organisation can design logical outcome chains from the overall objectives to the employees day-to-day tasks, with a description of the different partial goals/outcomes along the way.

To show what a logic model may look like, we have inserted a section of a logic model from one of the schools in the SMART project:

It should be kept in mind that a logic model is a simplification of reality. It cannot provide causal explanations of whether the outcomes can be attributed only to the efforts, but it can be used as an indication of this. It is also important to keep in mind that a logic model and systematic measurement of outcomes cannot stand alone nor replace the experiences and professionalism of the employees.

The benefits of making a logic model

The purpose of making a logic model in this context is that it can form the basis of an assessment system, but making a logic model may create development and strengthen an organisation in itself:

- Joint and focused overview
  The logic model will provide an overview of the organisation's work towards a common goal. By illustrating the work and strategy of the organisation, correlations are systemized and implicit understandings are clarified.

- Reflection and improvement
  The logic model provides a common language and a common starting point for reflection and improvement. Working with the logic model gives rise for systematic discussions and clear communication regarding one's own practice.

It is important to reassess the logic model regularly, so that it sums up the essence of the organisation's common objective and work, the step-by-step outcomes, and the applied activities in the organisation.

Having made a logic model:

- The organisation has clarified the difference between efforts/activities and outcomes for the students.
- The organisation has clarified the things that can be controlled directly (the efforts) and the things that can only be controlled indirectly (the outcomes) in the organisation.

B. Measuring outcomes

Once the logic model is made and it is clear what the organisation wants to achieve and how, it is time to decide how to measure whether or not the intended outcomes has been achieved.

Fact

By measuring outcomes, an organisation gets knowledge about whether or not its assumptions are verified – if the organisation is actually achieving its intended results.

While the logic model is a mapping of the work of the school, systematic measurement of outcomes is part of the documentation.

All outcomes can be measured, both short-term, intermediate and long-term outcomes can be measured, but the model introduced in this handbook only measures the short-term outcomes. The reason for focusing on the short-term outcomes is that it enhances the opportunity for the organisation to adjust approaches, methods or activities along the way - while the students still attend the school/programme, if the desired or expected outcomes do not occur. Also, other sources of data in the quality framework of the school will often provide knowledge about the long-term outcomes. It could be e.g. statistics of how many students complete a youth education after having finished a programme.

Areas of measurements

The first step in this part of the process deals with deciding which of the short-term outcomes you want to measure and monitor. These are what are called the quality indicators.

Fact

Quality indicators are the desired outcomes that the organisation finds it important to measure.

It is not necessary and often not possible to measure every short-term outcome. The organisation should select what areas to measure on the grounds of an order of priority in the organisation.

What does management want to know? What do the teachers want to gain more knowledge about?

Furthermore, in the selection, it is important to take into account the data which is already available through other sources and that you choose outcomes that are actually measurable.

There are numerous possible areas to look at when wanting to monitor and measure the students' development. This could be areas such as academic skills, level of drug abuse, attendance or progression into further education or securing a job. Which areas the school chooses to measure depends on the areas the school is working with and also on which of these areas that are actually measurable for the individual school. When choosing the areas to work with, it is important to choose those which the school is prepared to work with and change if necessary, on the basis of the measurements. Thereby the measurements and the gathered information have the best chances of being used and making a difference.

The schools in the SMART project already had knowledge about students' academic progress through grading systems and other sources, but all lacked knowledge about the development of the student's social and personal skills while being enrolled at the school. That is why the measurement system that was developed focuses on monitoring the students' development within these areas.

Measurement indicators

Some of the indicators may be so specific that it is possible to measure them directly, e.g. attendance. However, other indicators may prove to be difficult to assess, especially when wanting to measure social and personal competences. With these indicators, you need to find measurement indicators.

Fact

Measurement indicators are conditions, circumstances, attitudes or behaviours that are observable signs of an intended outcome.

Identifying measurement indicators is about clarifying what the organisation would like to see happen.

Here is an example:
Quality indicator: The student can cooperate.

Measurement indicators that shows to what extent the student can cooperate could be: the student contributes to the group work. The student can take up different roles in the group work. The student takes responsibility for the group, the process, and the result. The student can submit to others.

By identifying measurement indicators, more words are put to the meaning of the chosen quality indicator, which thus become unambiguous and specific. This will make it easier for the organisation to tell if the desired outcome - the quality indicator - has been achieved. At the same time the organisation will develop a common language and understanding of the areas that it has chosen to measure and work with.

To help your organisation on its way in choosing its measurement indicators, SMART has developed a menu of pre-set quality indicators and measurement indicators.

Once the organisation has identified its measurement indicators, it has made:

- A logic model for the organisation, which describes and maps expectations of results and what the organisation does to achieve the results.
- A list of the quality indicators that the organisation want to include in its systematic measurement of outcomes.
- The measurement indicators, which are the organisations definitions of its quality indicators and what to look for.

Collection of data

When you want to measure development and want to be able to document your work, you need data. By making an assessment of the skills in question, you transform your knowledge into data.

This means that you go from having personal and implicit knowledge about the students to having explicit data (the measurements), that can be shared and the development can be monitored.

This means that after the organisation has determined what it wants to measure by means of the logic model, it needs to make decisions about the collection of data: It needs to determine how it will do the measuring, how often the measuring is done, who will be responsible for the measurements and how the collected data is summarised.

Measurement method - using a questionnaire

The SMART project has chosen questionnaires as a way to collect quantitative data about the development of the student's personal and social skills. This tool has been chosen because it provides standardised data. Thus it can be used as a way to effectively benchmark and show progression from one measurement to the next – evidencing the learning that has taken place.

As mentioned above, in order to help the organisation in the process the SMART project has developed a menu of pre-set quality indicators and measurement indicators and put them into an e-platform. The organisation can use the platform to make its own questionnaire. The questionnaire is made by choosing between different categories of qualitative indicators. Each qualitative indicator has a number of related questions (the measurement indicators) that the organisation can choose from. The e-platform is found here: http://52.38.131.123:8080/smstool/login

Who fills in the questionnaire? Choosing respondents

The data in the questionnaire can be collected in many different ways, depending on the type of evidence the organisation is looking for and how it want to use it. This should be considered when deciding who is to assess the learning that has taken place – that is; to fill in the questionnaire. The respondents included in the data collecting will influence the kind of data the organisation gets and how the results can be used.

When wanting to assess a students' development of social and personal skills, it can be argued that it is relevant to include an assessment not only by primary teachers, but e.g. also by all staff around the student, the parents and/or the students' assessment of him- or herself. This is partly because the competences in question (personal and social skills) not only show in situations at school, but become apparent in a variety of ways and situations. There is no right way to do the assessments; the important thing is that the selected data collection method generates the kind of data the organisation is looking for. The SMART project does not recommend one group of respondents over another, but keep in mind that it is paramount that the data collection method stays the same each time the measuring is done over a school period.

Facts

It is very important that the data collecting method is the same from one measurement to the next.

This is to ensure standardisation of the data collection in order to be able to compare data and show progress from one measurement to the next.

It means that if you have chosen that the primary teacher makes the assessment the first time, it should also be the primary teacher making the subsequent assessments, based on the same questionnaire each time.

Frequency and reporting

The SMART project suggests that the school measure the students' development at least three times during a school period, because it will make it possible to measure the small steps in the students' development. The same questions are asked every time in order to monitor the progress of the students.

It is recommended to carry out a pre -, intermediate -, and post measurement:

- The first measurement takes place when the students have been enrolled in the programme for about a month. This measurement functions as a pre-measurement and provides evidence about the characteristics of the students and possible areas of focus.
- The second measurement takes place halfway through the programme. This measurement functions as an intermediate measurement, which shows the students' progression from the start of the program too halfway into the programme.
- The third measurement takes place when the programme is about to finish. This measurement functions as a post-measurement, and with the pre-measurement, it provides evidence about the students' progress during the entire programme.

Larger schools or organisations may benefit from doing reports for different levels of the organisation: student-, class- and school-level.

Now the organisation has developed:

- A logic model for the organisation, which describes and maps expectations of results and what the organisation does to achieve the results.
- A list of the quality indicators that the organisation want to include in its systematic measurement of outcomes.
- The measurement indicators, which are the organisations definitions of its quality indicators and what to look for.
- A system for the collection of data.

C. Application of measurements

This chapter is about how the collected data is put into use.

The organisation must plan how and when, and by whom, the collected knowledge is put into use.

Facts

Application of measurement means that the organisation uses the information that is obtained through the measurements.

This is a very important part of the process: the work that was done to collect data will only be worth the effort if it is put to use.

The measurements provide an evidence-based benchmark for a continued educational improvement of the programmes and an enhanced opportunity of adapting to the needs of the target group.

If a goal is to enhance the students' ability to cooperate, what will the organisation then need to adjust in order to make that happen if the measurements show that the students do not progress the way the organisation assumed they would? Do they have to have more group work? Is something within the framework opposing co-operation? It is useful to go back to the logic model and look at the activities and assumptions about the correlations between the desired outcomes and the chosen activities.

The measurements can be used as a tool for dialogue, both between management, and the teachers and other employees, internally in the different departments/teams as well as between the teams, and between teachers and students. They can also be used as a dialogue - and documentation tool by decision-makers and other stakeholders.

It is very important to remember that the results of the measurements are a reflection of a process between the students, the teachers and the organisation as such. The results cannot and shall not be seen as an evaluation of the competences of the students, or of the skills of teachers

or of the organisation. This means that decisions made on the basis of the results should take all levels into account, in a whole organisation approach.

For the purpose of organisational development the following steps can be used:

On the basis of the pre-measurement, the organisation draws up success criteria. The success criteria reflect the schools ambition within a specific quality indicator. Success criteria are typically quantitative in a questionnaire, either expressed as totals (e.g. 80 % must be good at co-operation) or as progress (e.g. 80 % must have improved their co-operative skills).

On the basis of the intermediate measurement, the organisation will be able to assess if it is on the right track when it comes to the success criteria, or if it needs to initiate efforts or changes in terms of the activities that support the quality indicators.

On the basis of the post measurement, the organisation determines if it has achieved the success criteria or if it needs to initiate efforts or changes in terms of the activities that support the quality indicators. If the gap between the results and the success criteria is too big, the school may want to revise its logic model. If this is the case, consider whether the applied activities and methods may not have the desired effects or if external factors may have influenced the process.

Having made decisions on how to put the obtained knowledge into use, the organisation has made:

- A logic model for the organisation, which describes the outcomes it wants to accomplish and how it wants to accomplish.
- A list of the quality indicators that the organisation want to include in its systematic measurement of outcomes.
- The measurement indicators, which are the organisations definitions of its quality indicators and what to look for.
- A system for the collection of data.

- A system for the use of the data.

When the organisation has made all of these steps, it has a complete system for the systematic measurement of outcomes concerning the development of the students' personal and social skills.

As previously mentioned, these measurements can be advantageously used in conjunction with other information sources (such as academic measurements) in a combined quality framework.

Implementation

This chapter is about the role of the organisation, planning the implementation and changing a culture.

The role of the organisation

It is primordial for an organisation to set time aside for staff to do the assessments, and choosing the relevant criteria on which the evaluation should be based. Once the assessments have been made, the collected data needs to be analysed and discussed by an organisation team, and the results need to be integrated in the day-to-day work of the staff members.

Most schools and organisations already have some kind of a quality framework collecting different kinds of data providing knowledge about the function of the organisation and the students' development. However, many organisations and schools do not have access to data sources, which provide systematic information about the soft skill development of the students during enrolment. The use of a systematic measurement system concerning the progression of social and personal skills can supplement the existing sources of information about the students, i.e. academic grades and attendance protocols. If all of the information is collected and applied systematically, it will then form a fact-based quality management system.

Before you start setting up a systematic measurement system, it is important to prepare the organisation and the management for the upcoming changes. It is essential to get management actively engaged in the decision-making, development and implementation of the system. This does not only apply for top management, but also for example head of departments as well as employees in general.

Thus, top management and head of departments must agree to devote time and resources to:

- Make a logic model.
- Develop, implement and adopt a systematic measurement system.
- Monitor and continuously adapt the model.
- Implement and use the data that the systematic measurement system will provide.
- Involve employees in the different phases.

Planning

It is advisable to choose a project coordinator and possibly a working group who can plan the process, keep an overview and who are responsible for the implementation of the different parts and phases. This applies when making the logic model, when developing and implementing the systematic measurement system, when making the assessments and when using the results. The project coordinator and the working group will ensure that the systematic measurement system becomes an active part of the schools/organisations quality framework and is integrated in the work of the school/organisation. It is advisable that the working group consist of staff from different levels and departments of the school/organisation.

The systematic measurement system is a tool, which cannot be implemented in a school year that has already started. It is up to the organisation to make the necessary preparations before the beginning of the school year. Remember, the measurements of soft skills should not become an “add-on” for staff members, it should be integrated in tasks that the staff already does.

Changing a culture

It is primordial to remember that a school/organisation is defined by different verbalised and non-verbalised conditions; an organisational structure, a management system, traditions, values and non-verbalised

behavioral patterns, just to mention some. When implementing a new system, and thereby changing a culture, one must be aware of the contributing and challenging conditions in the organisation.
Changing a culture and behaviours may be difficult. This is why there is a need for all levels in the school/organisation to work together in the implementation process. The systematic measurement system has to be known and understood by those involved in the implementation. Awareness, learning, and practice are keys elements to a successful implementation process.

Theories of change

It is important to bear in mind that changing current practices might be perceived negatively in the organisation. It may be very valuable to identify change agents, which are individuals who will support the implementation of the systematic measurement system and work with it positively in the staff group. The change agents within the organisation are the people that are supportive of soft skill measurement and the systematic measurement system, and who are willing to engage in the implementation of the system.

Bringing a change in an already functioning school/organisation may propose challenges, and certain procedures needs to be followed. First; start with an analysis of the context and issues: what needs to be changed and implemented, and what are the possible obstacles to these changes? Once the context has been identified, procedural changes can take place.

This process will be divided in 4 stages:

- **An analysis** of the management and evaluation systems that the project is seeking to supplement or alter, and an identification of the individuals that will facilitate the change in the school.
- **A written statement** expressing the long-term change that will come with the implementation of the systematic measurement system.

- **A timeframe and step-by-step action plan** for the implementation of the systematic measurement system, as well as a workshop for teachers and other staff members in order for them to be presented to the system.
- **A feedback session** that will consist of a discussion and exchange of reflections on the changes implied by the implementation of the systematic measurement system, the benefits it could bring to the school/organisation and its limitations.

The systematic measurement system will give a more complete picture of the students' development, showing both their soft skill development and their academic development. That way, the teachers and the organisation will be able to adapt the learning process to the students. As for the students, they will be aware of their soft skill development during enrollment.

Pilot projects

It is recommended to do at least one pilot project before a full implementation of the systematic measurement system. This is because it is of the utter most importance that the feedback given by teachers and other staff members is taking into account when doing a full implementation of the system.

Please remember that the implementation process has to be supported by the use of the logic model. The logic model founds the basis for the measurements of students' soft skill development.

Facts:

The term "soft skills" might not be known by all. A first introduction about what soft skills are and how they are used might be needed.

The logic model is a "must-do" task before measuring students. A logic model founds the basis for the measurements.

Resistance to change is natural. It can be valuable to identify change agents

in order to create a positive view on measuring students' soft skill development among the staff members.

Reflection tool

Working with a systematic measurement system is different at every school/organisation. Many considerations and choices have to be made along the way. After each part in the handbook and each session in the training we will ask you reflect and make notes answering questions about how your new knowledge can be used in your own school/organisation.

Introduction

How can you organisation benefit from measuring students soft skills development?

Reflective Practice

How does you organisation work with students soft skills? Are the teachers aware of their work with the development of students' soft skills? How does this reflect in you practice?

Logic model

Who should be involved in the development of the logic model and at what point (step in the logic model)? Why is it crucial to use the logic model for deciding what to measure?

Collection of data

How would you suggest that your organisation should assess the students? Who should be the respondent(s)? What pros and cons are there with choosing this constellation of respondents? What does the respondents assessment reflect?

E-platform

How is the e-platform going to be introduced to the users in your organisation?

Username:

Password:

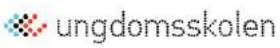
Use of data

What work do you already do in your organisation where the assessment and results can be supportive? What can your organisation do to make sure that the knowledge gained from the measurement is put into use? In what ways do you imagine that the knowledge can be used in your organisation?

Implementation

What could be the main obstacles when implementing the systematic measurement system at your school/organisation? And how can they be overcome? Who could be motivated and who would be resourceful when implementing the systematic measurement system at you school/organisation (key persons/change agents)? What measurement do you do at the school/organisation and how can the soft skills assessments be integrated in these? Is you school/organisation ready for full scale implementation or would you benefit from starting with a pilot project including only a part of the school/school?

SMART Project Partner Information



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