

PILOTING AND PEER LEARNING VISIT #1: DRESDEN

Tuesday 14th – Wednesday 15th May 2019
Technische Universität Dresden, Germany

Meeting minutes

MEETING ORGANISERS



PROJECT FUNDING

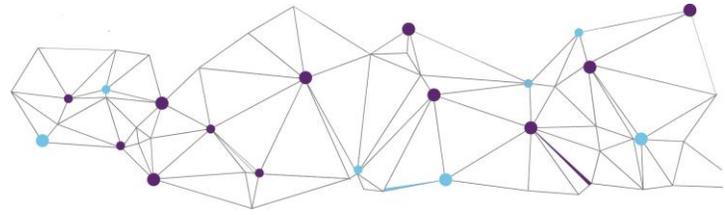


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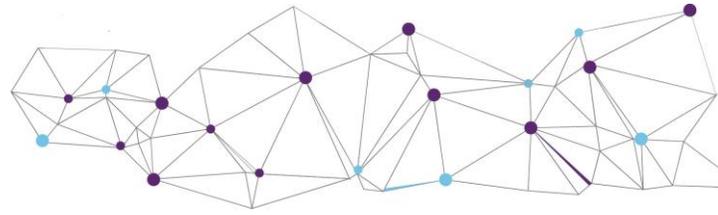
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Summary: Dresden piloting conclusions

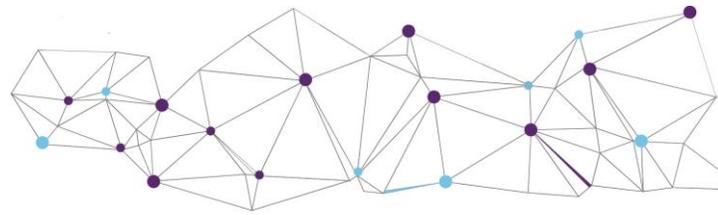
Reflections and conclusions of TEFCE project manager Thomas Farnell based on Dresden piloting

The objective of the TEFCE piloting and peer learning visit in Dresden was to pilot the TEFCE Toolbox for community engagement in higher education. Specifically, the meeting focused on testing the following stages of the Toolbox (“mapping”):

- a. processing/coding of collected community-engaged practices according the TEFCE project’s given framework of dimensions and sub-dimensions
- b. defining conclusions regarding the level of community engagement based on the scale of level descriptors provided by the TEFCE Toolbox

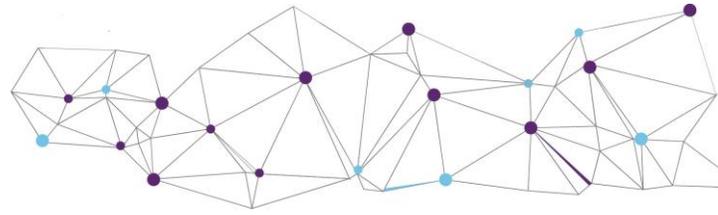
The overall conclusion of the Dresden piloting meeting were that the TEFCE Toolbox **works in practice** and specific conclusions were also reached about different aspects of the Toolbox:

- **Evidence-collection:** The collection of community-engaged practices was successful and resulted in 27 diverse practices that allowed the TEFCE team to reach conclusions about the level of community engagement of TU Dresden. There were, however, gaps in evidence for certain sub-dimensions of the TEFCE Toolbox, so the Dresden piloting team will carry out a second round of data evidence-collection to fill those gaps. There were also other recommendations on how to improve the process (noted below).
- **Mapping / coding:** The TEFCE team divided into four groups to test whether the processing of practices and the interpretation of results was convergent or divergent between different groups. The conclusion is that the Toolbox discussions led to convergence about the overall conclusions. But the process that led to this convergence is worth explaining in more detail:
 - A first crucial conclusion is that a single practice should, in principle, be able to fit into several different sub-dimensions in parallel. For example, a community-based teaching practice could relate to several sub-dimensions related to teaching and learning, service/knowledge-exchange, students, management (partnerships and procedures) and peer support.
 - At the same time, none of the groups came to *identical* conclusions regarding how to interpret and code each practice, and how to assess them. However, there was clear convergence about the “big picture”, i.e. the overall pattern and conclusions.



- In this sense, an interesting conclusion for the TEFCE project is that the Toolbox (as was originally intended) needs to be applied with significant *flexibility*. There are no right or wrong answers regarding how to fit practices into neat, fixed categories, or about how to reach a precise score based on available evidence. Although this seems to imply that the process is imprecise, the discussions that accompany the findings in groups always reached similar conclusions based on the available evidence – hence confirming the value of the Toolbox.
- One important conclusion is that there would be little value in writing a “codebook” explaining in detail how to process different practices and a guidebook on how to score different sub-dimensions. At the same time, however, another conclusion is that the Toolbox must be applied using group-based discussions and moderated by experts on community engagement who can clarify key concepts and guide the groups through the process.
- **Conceptual issues:** The process was at times challenging due to the persistence of multiple interpretations of the key terms of ‘community’, ‘engagement’ and ‘societal needs’. At a more detailed level, there were also challenges in interpreting specific sub-dimensions and level descriptors, particularly when referring to terms such as ‘impact’, ‘capacity building’, ‘support structure’, ‘student initiatives’ etc. The TEFCE Expert Team and consortium will need to consider how to provide further guidance to clarify such key terms and reduce multiple and diverse interpretations.
- **‘What’s in it for me?’** As already noted at previous TEFCE consortium and Expert Team meetings – a challenge encountered by TU Dresden when trying to mobilise academics, administrative staff and students in participating in the evidence collection was that the individuals who were invited to participate often did not do so due to the unclear benefits of investing their time into such an exercise. The TEFCE consortium will need to further consider how to “pitch” the Toolbox to users in a clearer and more compelling way.
- **Overall reflections by participants:** Based on the final session of the workshop, the conclusion is that the piloting visit helped all participants to understand how the Toolbox works in practice and to understand the value that it brings in providing a ‘big picture’ of how community-engaged the institution is. This is a significant achievement and confirmation of the potential of the TEFCE Toolbox: in the words of one participant, the fact that such a clear big picture was able to emerge from a two-day workshop was ‘remarkable’.

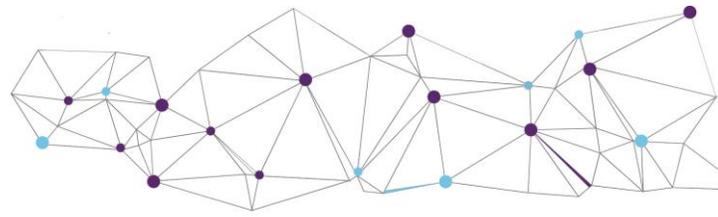




Evidence-collection: lessons learnt

The TU Dresden team presented their approach to planning and implementing the evidence-collection (see presentation available here: <http://bit.ly/2MnPQdW>). Through discussions between the piloting visit participants and The TU Dresden, the following challenges and possible solutions were identified for evidence-collection:

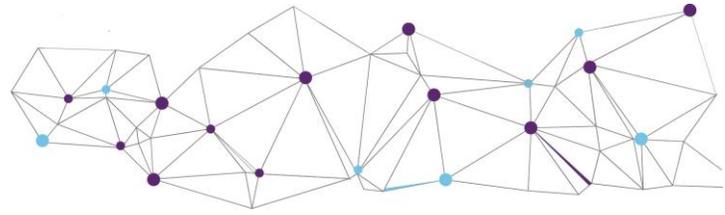
Conclusions and/or challenges	Follow-up items for TEFCE project
The piloting team was not completely satisfied with the quantity and quality of the first round of evidence-collection and believed that more practices could be collected	A second round of evidence-collection will take place to “fill the gaps”
There was some confusion from respondents about the meaning of the key concepts terms such as “community engagement” and “societal needs” and how they related to concrete practices within the university.	The TEFCE Expert Team will consider how to further clarify core concepts through the Toolbox
There were certain aspects of the evidence-collection questionnaire that could be further clarified	Improvements will be made to the evidence-collection template for the next piloting visit in Twente. Changes may include rewording and adding additional prompts to help respondents provide the kind of data that help the piloting teams. If possible, provide illustrative examples of responses to indicate level of detail and style of response.
The quality of evidence was higher when respondents spoke of their practices with the piloting team rather than completing the survey independently.	Take into consideration for future piloting: carry out follow-up interviews or focus groups to complement practices provided via the template form.
It was difficult to convince respondents of the value of participating in the evidence-collection process. The “ <i>what’s in it for me</i> ” question was key.	The TEFCE Expert Team will consider how to further strengthen the “ <i>what’s in it for me</i> ” argument and provide this to piloting teams to use in the work.



Mapping practices: lessons learnt

The first step in piloting workshop was to divide the TEFCE team into 4 groups of 4 participants, and for each group to process of collected practices by fitting them into the defined dimensions and sub-dimensions of the TEFCE framework. The second step was the mapping phase, which involved reflecting on what level of engagement is achieved in every sub-dimension based on the how the identified practices compare with the scale of level descriptors provided for each sub-dimension.

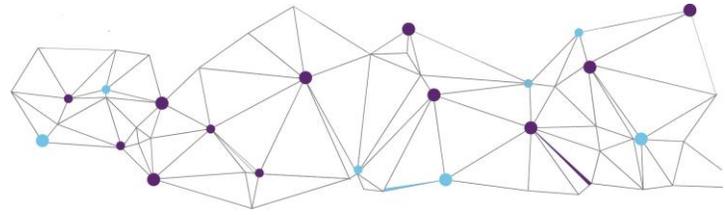
Conclusions and/or challenges	Follow-up items for TEFCE project
The processing of collected practice was quite complex and demanding, time-wise: it required an in-depth understanding of the dimensions/sub-dimensions and took around 10 minutes per practice.	<p>The process will be simplified in further piloting visits by having “pre-sorted” practices through the TEFCE Quick Scan process. In other words, the piloting should begin with finding practices based on the sub-dimensions, rather than collected practices and then connecting them to sub-dimensions.</p> <p>Piloting teams will still need to connect practices to additional sub-dimensions, but this process should be less work intensive than in Dresden.</p>
There were misunderstandings about how to interpret the meaning of different sub-dimensions.	Each sub-dimension could benefit from an additional description or additional prompts to help users interpret them.
During the coding of practices, there was sometimes insufficient differentiation by the workshop groups between practices that were of <i>primary</i> relevance to a given sub-dimension, and those there were of <i>secondary</i> relevance (e.g. a community-based research project might be of primary relevance to Dimension II and Dimension III, but could also be of secondary relevance to Dimensions V, VI and VII).	<p>The TEFCE Expert Team should consider whether to propose guidelines on differentiating primary and secondary practices for the sub-dimensions.</p> <p>At the same time, this issue was ultimately not so problematic, since all groups reached similar conclusions about the overall level of engagement in each sub-dimension.</p>
During the scoring of practices, there were differences in the proposed score, but the overall conclusions were similar (e.g. for Dimension III.3. “Capacity building” to scores varied from 2.5 to 3.5, but the comments were similar: that many initiatives are in place, but they are focused on big engineering projects and on individual initiatives, rather than centrally coordinated/facilitated efforts).	<p>The heterogeneous scores were not identified as a problem by the workshop participants, since the accompanying comments were indeed convergent.</p> <p>In future piloting visits, an additional way of reconciling different interpretations and scores will be an external expert review and consultations with community stakeholders.</p>



Piloting outcomes: assessing the community engagement of TU Dresden

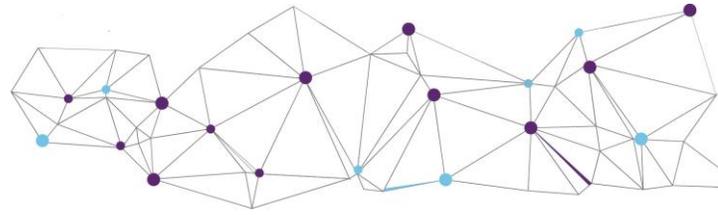
At the end of the workshop, the participants provided the following reflections on the piloting of the TEFCE Toolbox at TU Dresden:

- The **TU Dresden team** noted that, while additional practices may be able to fill certain gaps in the first round of evidence-collection, the overall conclusions formulated for each sub-dimension during the workshops appear to be a fair reflection of how community engagement takes place at TU Dresden. Namely, the university primarily identifies itself as a technical university and primarily prioritises activities related to its status as one of universities excellent universities (the national *Excellenzinitiative*). For now, the community-engaged practices at the university take place primarily based on the intrinsic motivation of academics and students, rather than as a centrally-coordinated and supported initiative.
- The **visiting peer-learning team** noted how the piloting will certainly help them to organise their own piloting at the University of Twente, since it has led them to a better understanding of how the Toolbox works in practice, and what minor improvements can be made to the process. The team also noted how the topic of societal impact is becoming increasingly important in policy discussions (after a predominant emphasis on the economy and entrepreneurship) and that this Toolbox is therefore highly relevant. However, the peer-learning team did not have a response regarding how universities will accept such a Toolbox and make active use of it.
- The **Expert Team members** commented that they were very satisfied with the results of the first piloting of the TEFCE Toolbox: namely that, in two days of work, a group was able to process 27 practices and come to a genuine understanding and clear view of how community engagement takes form at a large university – in the words of one of the experts, this feat in itself is “remarkable”. The exercise also confirmed the TEFCE project’s emphasis on how community engagement is always context-specific and how the process of applying the Toolbox results in a valuable “learning journey”



Next steps: completing the Dresden report

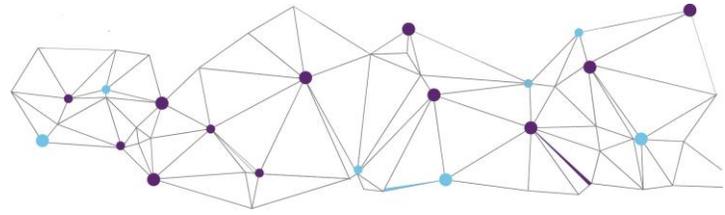
- **Draft Background report:** compile the narratives produced by the four groups at the Dresden workshop and produce a background report (using the TEFCE mapping template).
- **Evidence-collection:** complete a second round of targeted evidence-collection, targeting sub-dimensions where there were few practices (e.g. teaching and learning and research), while also trying to get broader diversity of respondents (e.g. try and target social sciences, arts, humanities and medicine). Another proposal is to make an additional desk research for key words related to community engagement such as: “science shop”, “citizen science”, “*partizipative Forschung/Wissenschaft*”; “service-learning”, etc.
- **Updating background report:** Based on the new evidence collected, the Dresden piloting team can add additional notes to the existing background report, and (if applicable) argue for a different score to the one define during the workshop.
- **Joint reflection by piloting team and Expert Team:** Finally, it was concluded that a brief reflection by the participants of the Dresden piloting meeting could be added to the report, highlighting the key conclusions and possible next steps.
- **Future use of background report:** A final conclusion regarding the next steps to TU Dresden is that the report could be further presented and promoted by the Dresden piloting team during the duration of the project, for example through round table discussions. The purpose of such events could be to both raise awareness of the topic of community engagement, of the existing best practices of community engagement at the university and to open a discussion on how to strengthen such activities in the future achievements. Such activities could take place under WP5 of the TEFCE project (exploitation/sustainability), with the aim of having a broader impact on the university.



Next steps: piloting visiting to Twente

The next piloting visit of the TEFCE project will be held in Twente on 27-28 June 2019. The Twente will focus on the next stage of the TEFCE Toolbox, which is the drafting of the background report by the host piloting team, discussing the report with visiting experts and including of community-engaged practitioners in discussions and in an overall reflection about the level of community engagement of the university. The workshops participants defined the draft agenda of the Twente piloting visit as follows:

	Day 1: Thursday 27 June 2019	Day 2: Friday 28 June 2019
Participants	Twente piloting team * 10 Visiting experts * 8	Core Twente team * 3 Visiting experts * 8 Engagement practitioners *10
Morning session 1	<p>Welcome words Vice-president of UTwente</p> <p>Introduction to piloting; presentation of Twente background report UTwente/RegioTwente piloting team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piloting process • Piloting results • Flagship/best practices (10m max per practice!) 	<p>SLIPDOT analysis World-café discussions with broader team (including practitioners) on the overall community engagement of UTwente using the TEFCE “SLIPDOT” framework: Strengths; Lower Intensity; Potential for Development; Opportunities; Threats.</p> <p>5 thematic tables (1. T&L 2. Service/knowledge exch; 3. Research; 4. Students + Peer support; 5. Management)</p>
Morning session 2	<p>Structured discussion on background report findings</p> <p>Visiting team questions and comments on each of the sub-dimension.</p> <p>Consider an interactive session (group ‘game’ for comparing and discussing the scoring of sub-dimensions)</p>	Brief plenary before lunch to present findings
Afternoon session 1		<p>Conclusions and recommendations Conclusions of overall SLIPDOT analysis (possibly draft a narrative); Defining recommendations</p>
Afternoon session 2	<p>Visiting team reflections</p> <p>Conclusions of Day 1, Plan for Day 2</p>	<p>Planning piloting visits in Rijeka and Dublin</p>



Annexes

List of participants

Surname	Name	Institution
Benneworth	Paul	University of Twente
Cojocar	Irina	TU Dresden
Culum	Bojana	University of Rijeka
De Costa	Kathrin	City of Dresden
Farnell	Thomas	Institute for the Development of Education (IDE)
Gerhardt	Christian	TU Dresden
Jannack	Anja	TU Dresden
Kohl	Stefanie	TU Dresden
Kramer	Regine	City of Dresden
Richter	Christian	TU Dresden
Schmidt	Ines	TU Dresden
Schultz	Ludwig	Dresden-Concept
Scukanec-Schmidt	Ninoslav	Institute for the Development of Education (IDE)
van de Wiel	Edwin	Regio Twente
Veidemane	Anete	University of Twente
Westerheijden	Don	University of Twente

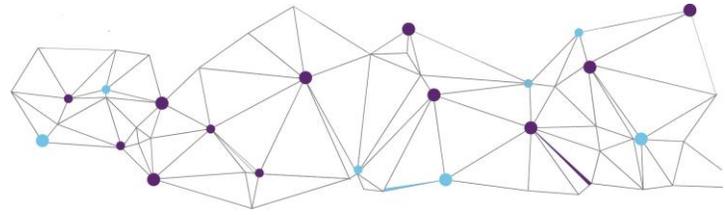


Photo gallery



Photo gallery also available on TEFCE Flickr:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/tefce/albums/72157708838387456>

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