

# PILOTING AND PEER LEARNING VISIT #2: TWENTE

Thursday 27th – Friday 28th June 2019  
University of Twente and Kennispunt Twente  
Enschede, the Netherlands

## Meeting minutes

### MEETING ORGANISERS



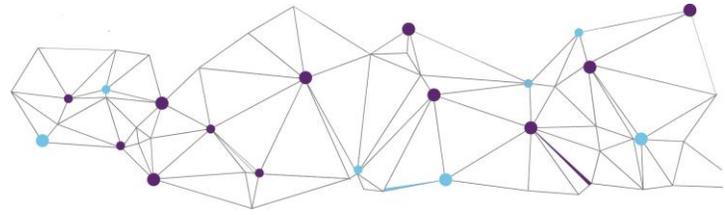
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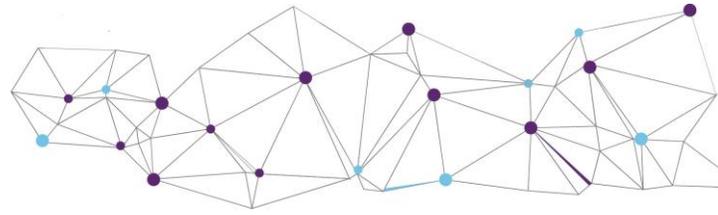
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## Summary: Twente piloting conclusions

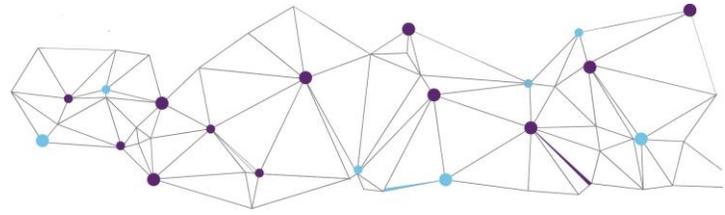
### *Reflections and conclusions of TEFCE project manager Thomas Farnell based on Dresden piloting*

The objective of the TEFCE piloting and peer learning visit in Twente was to further pilot the TEFCE Toolbox for community engagement in higher education, following the applications of lessons learnt at the first piloting in Dresden. Specifically, the meeting focused on:

- a. Defining conclusions regarding the level of community engagement based on the scale of level descriptors provided by the TEFCE Toolbox
- b. Critically reflecting with stakeholders on the mapping results, on areas of strengths, areas for improvements and on the range of factors that could either enable or impede such efforts.

The overall conclusion of the Twente piloting meeting were that the TEFCE Toolbox **works in practice and does provide value to those participating in its application**. Specific conclusions were also reached about different aspects of the Toolbox:

- **Evidence-collection:** The collection of community-engaged practices was, in one sense, very successful since it resulted in almost 30 diverse practices. However, the process is demanding since the TEFCE project's assumption that participants will be intrinsically motivated to provide their practices and contribute to discussions has not materialised in practice: there is reluctance to invest time when the 'what's in it for me' question remains unanswered. The meeting also resulted in additional practices being mapped, meaning that a second round of evidence-collection will be necessary.
- **Mapping:** The meeting participants took part in an interactive and collaborative workshop to compare the participants' interpretation of the mapping results. The conclusion of the workshop is that, while individual participants rarely reached *identical* conclusions regarding how to interpret each practice, group discussions helped the group to reach convergence towards an overall pattern and overall conclusion. This confirms that the Toolbox (as was originally intended) needs to be applied with significant **flexibility** (in the sense that there are no right or wrong answers regarding how to score based on available evidence, as there are in quantitative indicators) and needs to include **group-based discussion or validation**
- **Critical reflection (SLIPDOT framework):** the Twente meeting saw the first piloting of this part of the TEFCE Toolbox. The organisation of a workshop to open a critical discussion on the community engagement of the University of Twente brought immense value to the process and raised important questions and arguments that simply could not arise through the framework of a written report, but could only materialise in an open, collaborative and deliberative setting including a variety of participants. This part of the TEFCE Toolbox was therefore seen as essential.
- **Conceptual issues:** Similarly to the Dresden piloting, the process was at times challenging due to the persistence of multiple interpretations of the key terms of 'community', 'engagement' and



'societal needs'. However, a new solution was proposed by the end of the two-day meeting in the form of a framework that could help identify and map different aspects of the community engaged practices and to address the conceptual dilemmas by using a "heat map" system to differentiate between different communities, societal needs and levels of engagement.

- **Overall reflections by participants:** Based on the final session of each day of the piloting meeting, 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 engagement takes shape at the University of Twente and what opportunities and challenges lie ahead. It is particularly notable that the piloting visit was attended not only by the piloting team and by the international visiting team but also by local practitioners, experts, students and a representative of the University's office for strategy. It was also notable that the exercise was seen as being of particular value at this time, since the University of Twente is planning its new strategy, *Shaping 2030*.
- The meeting also resulted in a range of recommendations in how to further improve the Toolbox and with plans on how to conduct the following piloting visit in Rijeka

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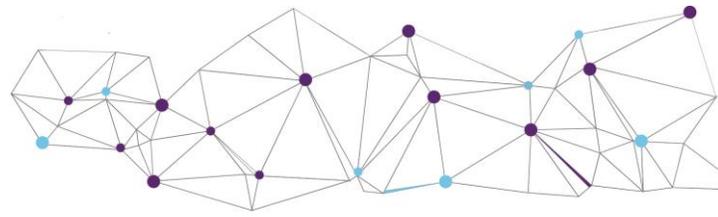


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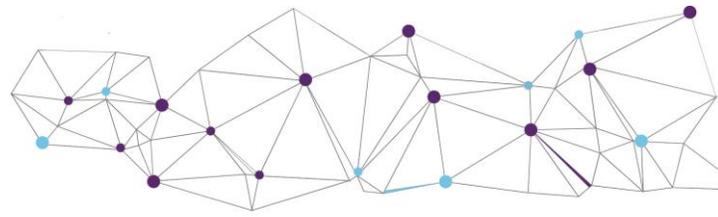
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## Overall coordination of piloting process and evidence-collection: lessons learnt

The first session of the piloting meeting discussed the piloting process itself, identified challenges and formulated potential solutions.

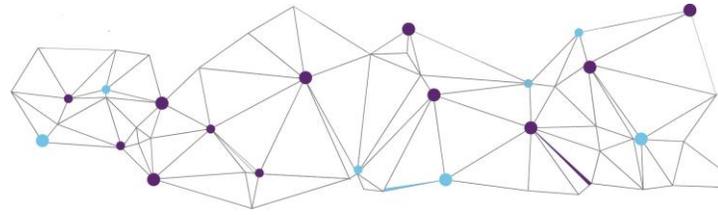
Conclusions and/or challenges	Follow-up items for TEFCE project
<p><b>The coordinating of the entire piloting process cannot be done in a ‘hands-off’ way:</b> the process requires a clearly defined institutional ‘problem-owner’, in the form of an office and/or staff that have an understanding of the topic of community engagement and that are motivated and able to think creatively and connect /network with relevant stakeholders.</p>	<p>This conclusion is important since it implies that applying the TEFCE Toolbox cannot be framed as an administrative, institutional data-collection task that takes place at the central university level.</p> <p>It is instead a combination of an institutional research exercise and a collaborative, deliberative process.</p>
<p>The evidence-collection phase run into several challenges: the first is that it was <b>difficult to convince respondents of the value of participating</b> in the evidence-collection process. The “<i>what’s in it for me</i>” question was key.</p> <p>The second challenge is that for this reason, <b>more time and resources had to be invested by the piloting team than originally planned</b> for writing-up collected practices based on one-on-one interviews, rather than by collecting completed forms.</p> <p>Finally, the piloting team was <b>not completely satisfied with the quantity and quality of the first round of evidence-collection</b> and believed that more practices could be collected</p>	<p>Since the “<i>what’s in it for me</i>” issue keeps on arising (and is not adequately answered by the response ‘<i>because of intrinsic motivation</i>’), The TEFCE Expert Team will consider what other incentives could exist to address this problem. In the meantime, it was concluded that individualised approaches to evidence collection (informal interviews, targeted 1-on-1 communication or even focus groups) were more effective than group emailing.</p> <p>One solution to this problem that was identified at the meeting is to differentiate between ‘practice fiches’ (which include significant details on each practice), and briefer descriptions of practices (requiring less time and resources to collect and write up).</p> <p>A second round of evidence-collection will take place to “fill the gaps”. The meeting also concluded that this scenario of the background report being ‘incomplete’ is likely to happen in most cases, and to therefore approach the report as a draft version until the end of the piloting process (when it is supplemented with new information and becomes a final version).</p>



## Mapping practices: lessons learnt

The second session of the Twente piloting meeting was to discuss the ‘mapping’ carried out by the Twente piloting team as presented in the background report and to levels assigned to different sub-dimensions with other workshop participants (both from the university and from the visiting team).

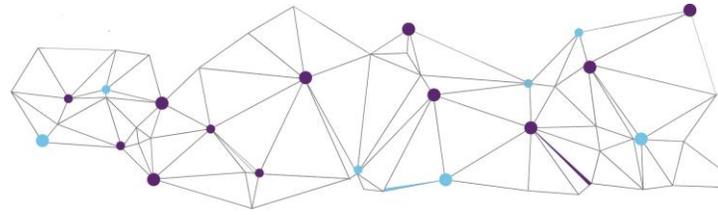
Conclusions and/or challenges	Follow-up items for TEFCE project
<b>During the assigning of levels (the ‘scoring’ session), there were differences in the initially proposed level, but the overall conclusions of discussions were similar and hence led to convergence.</b>	The heterogeneous scores were not identified as a problem by the workshop participants, since the accompanying comments were indeed convergent. This confirms the fact that the TEFCE approach of complementing the background report with discussions with practitioners is critical in verifying that the report reflects the reality on the ground.
<b>There were difficulties with applying the Toolbox levels in some cases due to conceptual difficulties such as how to define the terms ‘community’, ‘societal needs’: e.g. how to differentiate (in terms of scoring) engagement with more or less powerful external partners or engagement on different types of issues (e.g. climate change, social welfare).</b>	<i>This core issue was resolved on Day 2 with a new proposal for applying the Toolbox. See below!</i>  Other small corrections were also noted in order to increase clarity and ensure coherence of the Toolbox.
<b>The guidelines for the background report narrative could be improved to ensure that responses are more streamlined and better connect to the level descriptors.</b> Some responses ‘undersell’ achievements of the university’s community engagement, while others did not connect specifically to the criteria of the level descriptors	The TEFCE project should consider whether to provide a more precise structure for responses (e.g. the STAR format - situation, task, action, result) or to provide an illustrative example of a narrative as a form of guidance. Adding an executive summary to the background report was also proposed to further emphasise key findings.
<b>The background report can be one-sided, seen from a perspective of authors from a social science faculty, with achievements of technical faculties being underrepresented.</b>	It is important to have a mechanism to validate how representative the report is, possibly with the piloting team.
<b>The ‘voting with your feet’ scoring game/method was a highly successful collaborative working method that every person to take a position on the scoring (even if the people did not speak up)</b>	Although this method will be too time consuming for the standardized version of the Toolbox. the principle of giving a voice to <i>each</i> participant should be ensured in future meetings
<b>Overall, there was excellent feedback to the format of the group discussion of the background report (additional practices mapped, critical responses to presented practices, etc.)</b>	The group discussions created a space for open discussions, critical reflections and collaborative learning – hence increasing ownership of the Toolbox as an important internal process (rather than external assessment or evaluation).



## Critical reflections ('SLIPDOT' workshop): lessons learnt

The third session of the Twente piloting meeting was to pilot (for the first time) the critical reflection on the findings of the background report. This took the shape of a workshop focused on a the TEFCE's 'SLIPDOT' framework, as an altered SWOT analysis discussing **S**trengths, areas of **L**ower Intensity, areas with **P**otential for **D**evelopment, and **O**pportunities and **T**hreats. This workshop followed a 'World Café' format and all conclusions were presented to the entire group of workshop participants. The outcomes of the SLIPDOT will be made available to the piloting team and will be eventually included in the TEFCE institutional report for the University of Twente. Below are conclusions regarding the success of the SLIPDOT workshop as a *process* and as a *tool*.

Conclusions and/or challenges	Follow-up items for TEFCE project
<p><b>The critical reflections on the background report in its broader context brought immense value to the process.</b> The challenges, questions and ideas brought up through the SLIPDOT framework could simply not arise through the framework of a written report, but could only materialise in an open, collaborative and deliberative setting including a variety of participants.</p>	<p>Critical reflection must remain a crucial, integral part of the TEFCE Toolbox, which differentiates it from other approaches that are primarily desk-based and based on key performance indicators.</p>
<p><b>The outcome of the SLIPDOT process was seen as providing a fair assessment of the current state of affairs, and therefore as being valuable to the institution.</b> Although the SLIPDOT process did result in some presented views being contested by other participants, the overall outcome was seen by participants as being positive (with even the areas of contestations being a useful indicator of issues that require further discussion at the institution).</p>	
<p><b>The SLIPDOT framework itself was seen as being clear, useful and conducive to targeted discussions. However, questions remained on whether avoiding the term 'weakness' was a good idea or not.</b></p>	<p>The SLIPDOT framework can still be applied at remaining piloting visits in its current form. The TEFCE team, however, should test at the following two visits whether the term 'weakness' is better to include or exclude in the final framework.</p>
<p><b>Technically speaking, SLIPDOT workshops could benefit from advance guidelines to participants to better prepare themselves, and from better spatial arrangements.</b></p>	<p>Participants should receive guidelines before the piloting begins, in order to take 'SLIPDOT' notes prior to the workshop. Groups should work in closer physical proximity and more time should be given. The moderator should facilitate discussion and ensure that all opinions are heard not only those of people likely to speak up more often.</p>



## New developments and ideas for Toolbox improvement

In the final session of the Twente piloting visit, the participants reflected on the entire piloting process in Twente and identified questions that had remained unanswered during the piloting process areas and/or proposed solutions to challenges that had been identified during the visit.

### *Resolving key conceptual issues with the Toolbox: proposal for a new ‘heatmap’ approach*

The following conceptual issues have kept on affecting the discussions with the TEFCE project:

1. Defining what we precisely mean (and don't mean) by the term **“community” / “communities”**
2. Defining the term **“societal needs”**
3. Linking the previous 2 questions: should TEFCE treat different types of community engagement equally, or should we place these on a scale – e.g. **Economic development vs general public benefit vs social inequality**
4. How to balance the assessment of the **authenticity of engagement** (which is the core of the TEFCE Toolbox) with the assessment of the extent to which community engagement is **spread across the institution (or concentrated in pockets)** and to what extent existing initiatives are **peripheral/short-term or embedded/sustainable in the long term?**

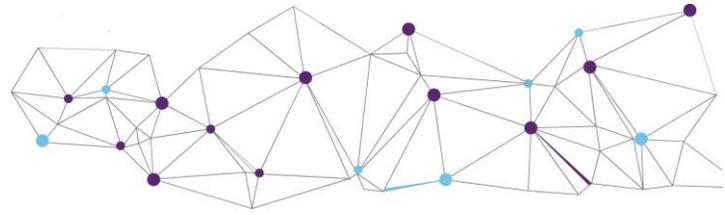
The following proposal was made by the TEFCE project manager in order to address these issues: in addition to the core level-descriptors for each sub-dimension, an additional table could be added to the each sub-dimension to help piloting teams and participants provide a more complete and nuanced assessment taking into account all the other issues mentioned above, using a heatmap approach, as presented below:

	1	2	3	4	5
Authenticity of engagement					
Societal needs addressed					
Communities engaged with					
Institutional spread					
Institutional sustainability					

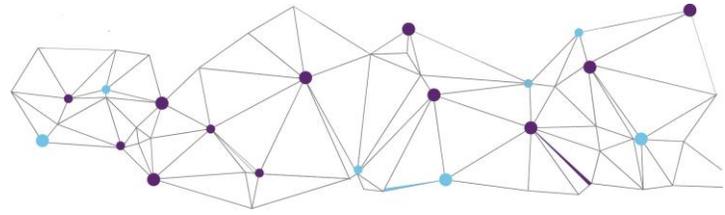
All participants agreed with the proposal and with its testing at the next piloting visit in Rijeka.

### *Other issues that will need further consideration*

- **Scale of engagement:** It was pointed out that the current Toolbox does not explicitly require participating institutions to provide information on the scale of the community engagement activities carried out. For example, a highly engaged practice may only involve a small number



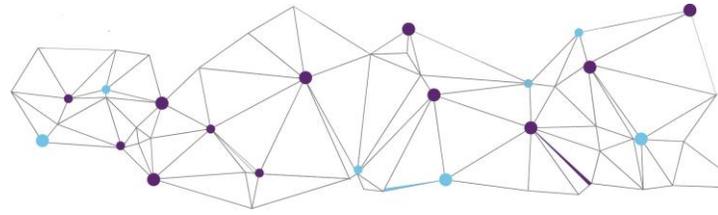
- of students, meaning that its overall significance at the level of the university should not be overblown.
- *The TEFCE team should consider how to better reflect this in the Toolbox or during the critical reflection process.*
  - **Capacity for engagement:** Related to the point above, one weakness of the Toolbox was the fact that it does not explicitly tackle the question of how the institution's *scale* of engagement compares to the university's overall *capacity* for engagement.
    - *While this question may be implicitly covered in the SLIPDOT framework, the TEFCE team should consider how to capacity more explicit in the framework.*
  - **'The missing middle' - deans:** While the Toolbox focuses on both practitioners and on university managers (at the central university level), the discussions in Twente indicated that in order for community engagement to succeed, the support of mid-level decision-makers at the university (deans, heads of departments, etc.) is of equal importance.
    - *The TEFCE team will consider how to better reflect this in the Toolbox or during the critical reflection process.*
  - **The university management dimensions of the Toolbox:** Some dilemmas came up about how to define the university management sub-dimensions of the Toolbox, for example. The most notable question was whether the sub-dimensions should specify the need to have a designated horizontal structure, coordination mechanism or staff member specifically dedicated to community engagement? Or is it equally valuable/important to have smaller structures that might not span across all faculties, but are still strong structures for connecting the university to the community (e.g. science shops, design labs, etc.)?
  - **The risks of scoring:** Several participants noted that assigning scores to different sub-dimensions risked resulting in negative outcomes such as reductive interpretations, simplistic comparisons with other institutions and in decision-makers ignoring the qualitative findings and focusing only on the radar graph scores.



## Next steps: completing the Twente report

The follow up items for the Twente piloting team are the following:

- **Targeted collection of supplementary evidence:** complete a targeted second round of evidence-collection based on inputs from participants at the piloting visit. In particular, the report should include more activities from technical departments.
- **Updating, finalising and validating background report:** Based on the new evidence collected, the Twente 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.
- **Writing-up SLIDPOT workshop conclusions:** IDE will be in charge of writing up the conclusions of this workshop and turning them into a coherent narrative.
- **Drafting full institutional report:** IDE will be in charge of proposing the template for the full institutional report, that will incorporate an introduction, selected good practice, the background report and the critical reflections.
- **Future use of background report at UTwente: the UTwente team** should consider how the background report and/or the full institutional report can contribute to UTwente's Shaping 2030 strategy. The team could also consider whether organising additional internal presentations of the report or round table discussions could positively contribute to the report's impact – in which case such activities could take place using the staff days of UTwente for WP5 of the TEFCE project (exploitation/sustainability), with the aim of having a broader impact on the university.



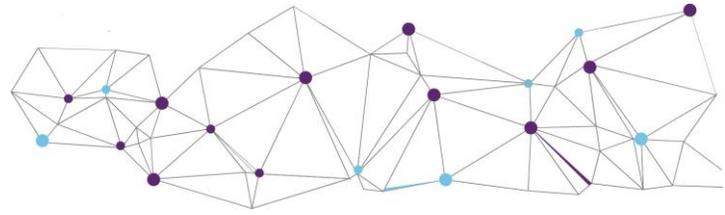
## Next steps: piloting visiting to Rijeka

The next piloting visit of the TEFCE project will be held in Rijeka in September 2019. At the meeting in Twente it was concluded that the next piloting visit would experiment with a slightly different format, taking into consideration some experiences from the first two visits. The main changes would be the following:

- Experimenting with a format of different, thematic-specific focus group discussions
- Focusing on discussions with both internal and *external* stakeholders
- Incorporating both the discussions of individual sub-dimensions and the overall critical reflections (SLIPDOT framework)
- Providing a greater space to the visiting expert team to formulate conclusions and recommendations

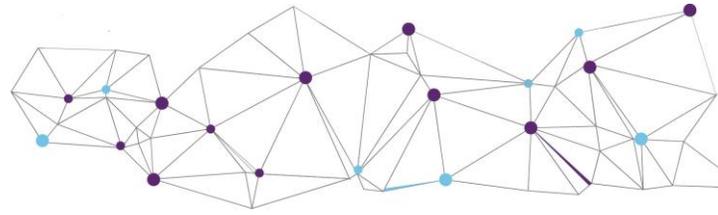
The draft agenda would be structured as follows

	Day 1: Tuesday 24 September 2019	Day 2: Weds. 25 September 2019
Participants	Rijeka piloting team * 10 Visiting experts * 8 Practitioners/guests for each focus group session *	Core Twente team * 3 Visiting experts * 8 Engagement practitioners *10
Morning session 1	<b>Welcome words</b> UNIRI; City of Rijeka  <b>Introduction to piloting; presentation of Twente background report</b> UNIRI/City of Rijeka piloting team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Piloting process</li> <li>• Piloting results</li> <li>• Flagship/best practices *2-3 (10m max per practice!)</li> </ul>	<b>Peer review team assessment (closed session)</b>  <i>Summary findings and assigned levels based on Day 1 (using scores and 'heatmap' framework)</i> <i>SLIPDOT analysis</i> <i>Conclusions and draft recommendations</i>
Morning session 2	<b>Thematic focus group 1: Dimensions 1 and 4 (teaching and learning; students)</b>	<b>Group discussion: Rijeka piloting team and peer review</b> <i>Presentation of review conclusions</i> <i>Discussion of conclusions</i> <i>Evaluation of Toolbox application process</i>
Afternoon session 1	<b>Thematic focus group 2: Dimensions 2 and 3 (research; service and knowledge exchange)</b>	
Afternoon session 2	<b>Thematic focus group 3: Dimensions 5,6 and 7 (university management: partnerships and policies; peer support)</b>	<b>Piloting visit conclusions</b> <b>Planning piloting visit in Dublin and piloting finalisation in 2019</b>



Other advice for the Rijeka piloting team included the following:

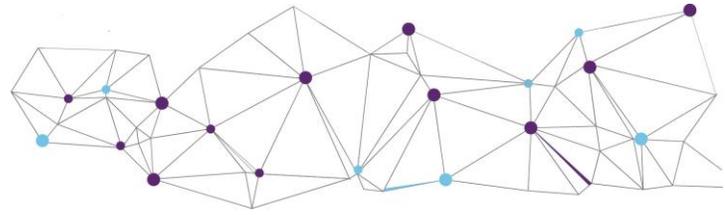
- **Evidence-collection:** consider the advice of Twente to organise separate focus groups with different groups practitioners (for different dimensions) following the initial quick scan phase with the whole piloting team. This provides a better contact with key players than a meeting format and is more effective in getting key information on practices (and in launching the snow-ball effect of collecting additional practices).
- **Mapping process - background report:** generally, the conclusion of the Twente meeting is that we must avoid assuming that the background report can ever provide a final or complete picture of the community engagement of the institution. Instead, the background report should provide a core of practices and proposed levels that still requires:
  - Internal review by engaged practitioners and by other university staff and students
  - Probably additional collection of evidence
  - Critical reflection with internals and externals
  - Final valorisation by the university.
- **Mapping process – validating the background report:** the process of consulting a broader team of stakeholders to validate to background report and to reach convergence in terms of the assigned levels for each of the sub-dimensions is still crucial. The method used however, does not necessarily have to be as work-intensive as the Twente method (which took 4-5 hours) and could be assisted by the use of an app for comparing assigned levels for sub-dimensions. A key principle that should be ensured, however, is that the process involves encouraging all actors to be heard (rather than only focusing on those that are the most prominent, proactive and outspoken).



## Annexes

### List of participants

	Name, Surname	Institution
1	Edwin van de Wiel	Kennispunt Twente
2	Emma O'Brien	TU Dublin
3	Ninoslav Šćukanec Schmidt	Institute for the Development of Education, Zagreb
4	Thomas Farnell	Institute for the Development of Education, Zagreb
5	Victoria Gomez	Association of Catalan Public Universities ACUP
6	Irma Budginaite-Mackine	PPMI/NESET
7	Bojana Culum Ilic	University of Rijeka
8	Bruce Phillips	Dublin City Council
9	Anete Veidemane	University of Twente, CHEPS
10	Don Westerheijden	University of Twente, CHEPS
11	Paul Benneworth	University of Twente, CHEPS
12	Pieter Boerman, P.L.J.	University of Twente, Pre-U
13	Egbert van Hattem	University of Twente, NovelIT
14	Ben Jongbloed	University of Twente, CHEPS/Crossing Borders
15	Oscar Bradley	University of Twente, SUSTAIN
16	Lisa Nieth	Kennispunt Twente
17	Leon van der Neut	University Council Twente
18	Irna van der Molen	University of Twente, Strategy and Policy
19	Inga Bakker	Kennispunt Twente



## Photo gallery



Photo gallery also available on TEFCE Flickr:  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/tefce/albums/72157709405623097>

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