

Trade Unions Anticipating Change in Europe (TRACE)

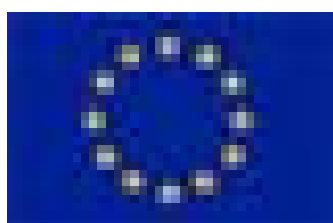
Final Evaluation Report

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Jan 2007



TRACE Evaluation Report Executive Summary

Overview

TRACE has been an important and successful project. The central issue of restructuring is complex and poses challenges to trade unions. TRACE has begun to develop ways of understanding different experiences and vocabularies of restructuring change and developed some novel approaches to responding in areas of networks, communications, learning and case-based approaches. It has also highlighted the need to look at restructuring in terms of different levels: policy, organisational-network, local, regional, sectoral, co-operation strategies, learning and skills. In many ways TRACE now reflects the portfolio of restructuring issues and has begun to envelop them around an action based learning approach. The failure of the TRACE 2 proposal means that an important opportunity to build on this work has been lost. Overall, and despite some localised difficulties, TRACE has delivered on its commitments, frequently to a high standard.

The project has built on and developed further, earlier trade union experiences of transnational networking. Future activities in this area would benefit from a more explicit consideration of organisational learning in trade unions responding to rapid change, and how different forms of educational intervention may support particular aspects of such organisational learning. This will help to develop more explicitly how and what trade unionists understand as 'change' and 'anticipation'.

More specifically, TRACE achievements include:

Partner Key Actions

- Taken as a whole, partners' Key Action (KA) sub-projects exceeded planned outputs in terms of numbers of participants. Two KAs significantly exceed planned outputs, and one KA significantly under performed.
- The project has produced a valuable set of materials many of which can be used to support future activities. These include training materials (such as case study resources, the lack of which to support education activities was identified early in the project) and some innovative outputs (such as the 'crisis matrix' tool for analysing the situation of enterprises).
- At least four formal transnational sectoral or sub-sectoral networks are continuing after the life of the project, in addition to a reinforcing a thickening web of informal and semi-formal links.
- The longer term outcomes of the project are harder to anticipate, but there have clearly been successes already, for example in the networking activities of one KA in relation to the European Services Directive. There is evidence that other KAs are also likely to contribute to significant longer-term outcomes.
- The lack of the follow-on TRACE 2 project will weaken the longer-term impact of TRACE through limiting dissemination and a lack of resources to develop further some of the successes from TRACE.

Central project support activities

- The project management and support mechanisms worked well, ensuring effective delivery of the project. The central project support activities were delivered. The

central programme of Preparation Workshops was rescheduled and partially relocated in response to participant need.

- While some support activities (e.g. support materials, mentoring, technological infrastructure) were not used as widely as anticipated they provided important (in some cases essential) support to some partners.
- The programme of Preparation Workshops worked particularly well as a project management mechanism. They were less effective in providing support to partner Key Actions, though their value as opportunities for peer discussions increased during the project.

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1 Introduction

This report is the final output of the evaluation of the TRACE project. This large-scale project, supported by the European Commission under European Social Fund Article 6 Innovative Measures, aimed to develop the capacity of trade unions in Europe to anticipate and respond to change. The project was led by the European Trade Union Institute Research, Education and Health & Safety (ETUI-REHS) with (see the TRACE Project Report, ETUI-REHS (2006) for an overview of the project activities. The evaluation was carried out over the project's two-year lifetime from November 2004 to November 2006.

The primary audience for this Evaluation Report is the partners in the TRACE project. The evaluation did not aim to cover all of the project activities, but to concentrate on the key areas of innovation. Also, the report does not aim to report on all of the data gathered during the project. Rather it highlights key issues emerging during the projects (with supporting data as appropriate) in a form that is intended to promote discussion and help the planning of future activities in these areas.

The report is organised in the following way: Section 2 outlines the approach taken to the evaluation; Section 3 presents an overview of the main findings, including short précis of the outcomes of each Key Action; Section 4 presents and discusses some of the major issues arising from the evaluation.

2 Evaluation approach

2.1 Evaluation framework

The evaluation has been conducted at two levels:

- the Project level, evaluating the effectiveness and appropriateness of the central project support activities.
- the individual Key Action level, primarily those Key Actions (KAs 4-19) concerned directly with the project objectives (TRACE Project Proposal p2).

The primary focus of the evaluation was an analytic evaluation of the partner Key Actions – particularly those (KA4-KA19) directly concerned with the project objectives (TRACE Project Proposal p2). The emphasis was to identify lessons to be learned in the conduct and outcomes of these actions to inform future activities. The project level evaluation is primarily formative, aiming to support project management and drawing lessons for the future conduct of similar projects. As the planned TRACE 2 proposal project was unsuccessful, this element of the evaluation received less attention from the evaluators in the final months of the project.

2.2 Partner Key Action-level evaluation

The diversity of the Key Actions in TRACE makes applying a simple common evaluation framework to the KAs impossible. Each Key Action has been approached ‘analytically’ - for each Key Action the planned activities, their expected outcomes (the ‘implementation theory’) and the relationships between them have been modelled at two levels. A ‘first level’ model captured the specific project activities; a ‘second level’ model aimed to capture the relationship between the KA and the wider industrial context and trade union objectives (see Appendix A for examples). These had three purposes:

- to allow the evaluation team to test whether these models (derived initially from presentations at the Start-up Workshop and the project proposal) reflect partners’ intentions;
- with partners, to identify evaluation indicators and success criteria for each key action. These varied significantly across the KAs. Indicators and criteria were discussed at Preparation Phase Workshop 1;
- to illustrate the implementation logic - intended linkages between activities within the KA, allowing breakdowns (both in delivery and in the ‘logic’ where an activity was carried out but did not have the intended effect) to be identified.

In addition to the indicators (workshops held, number of workshop participants; outputs produced) set out in the project proposal partners were asked to specify criteria and indicators by which they would judge the success of their own Key Actions.

The process forms the foundation level of the analysis (see Fig 1 below) – identifying whether the activities conducted lead to the planned outputs and whether the outputs support wider outcomes. Analysis of the process here is key for two reasons: firstly, because it forms the foundation layer of the activity without which the higher levels cannot be achieved; and

secondly because many of the longer-term outcomes cannot be directly evaluated within the lifetime of the project itself.

Key Action progress was monitored by: evaluator participation in the central project workshops; review of KA reports (and project co-ordinator reports) to Project Management Committees; baseline and review interviews (telephone and/or face to face) with KA managers; survey of KA participants (although low response rates limited the value of this activity).

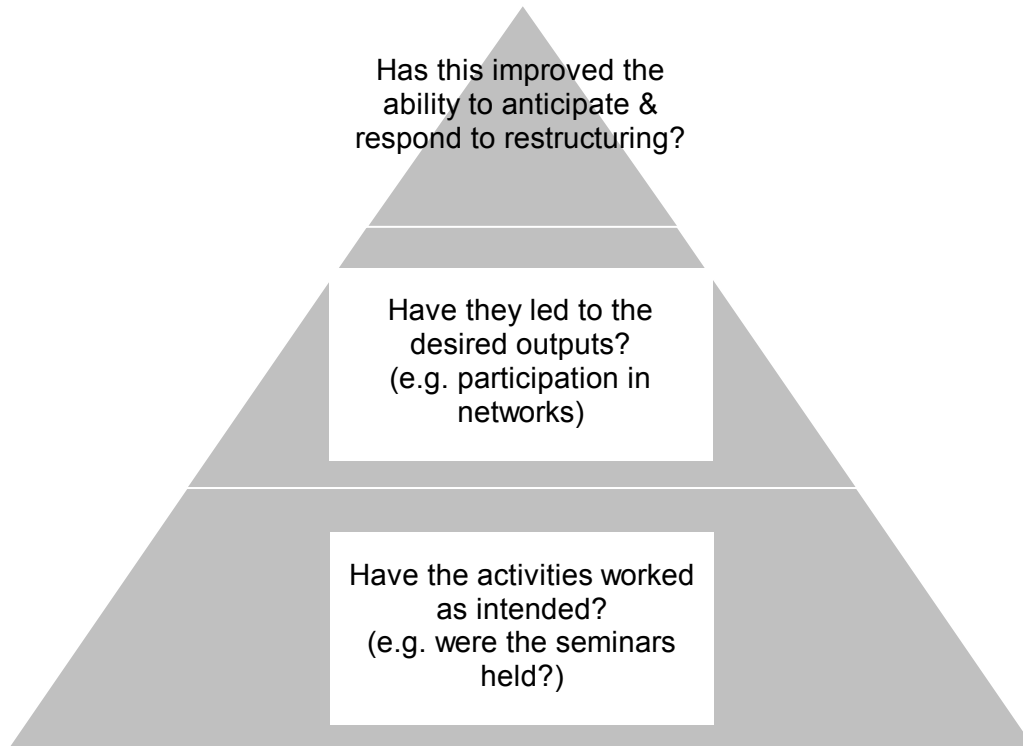


Figure 1: Levels of evaluation

2.3 Cross-Key Action– Introducing the wider framework

Each TRACE Key Action can be thought of as a case study a particular combination of activities (e.g. workshops, courses, networks) operating in a particular context. These contexts are diverse, and activities which work well in one context may work differently, or not work so well (or indeed at all) in others (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). This model described each KA in terms of the type of activities it carried out, features of the context in which they were conducted.

2.3.1 *Activities and mechanisms*

Each Key Action initiated a set of activities within a broad framework of organisational learning. These included:

- Research: these activities took the forms primarily of organised gathering and interpretation of data, for example gathered from national affiliates (in the case of EIF-led KAs);

- Tools: a range of tools, most commonly handbooks or training materials for use within or beyond the TRACE activities;
- Training: primarily through residential workshops, though in some cases elements of online learning were included;
- Online networking: Dialog On, an earlier project led by the then ETUCO (European Trade Union College) developed methods for online support of transnational networks which were further developed in TRACE.

These activities all aimed to invoke one or more mechanisms to fulfil their purposes, as summarised in Table 1 below.

Activity	Purpose	Mechanism(s)
Training	Increase knowledge and/or skills in a target audience.	Peer learning Tutor-led learning Expert-led learning
Research	Generation of new knowledge	Identification of external information sources Conducting or commissioning new research Identification and analysis of existing internal knowledge
Network	Exchange of information Generation of new knowledge Co-ordination of distributed action	Facilitated online communications Spontaneous online communications
Creating tools	Elaborating policy for wider distribution Training materials Handbooks Codifying methods for wider use	Information dissemination Support for future training activities Support for other future activities

2.3.2 Context

The context of each KA varies across a number of rather diverse and inter-related ways. The most immediate difference among the contexts of each KA is *organisational*. KAs were led either by a European Industry Federation (EIF) or by the education department of a national confederation. The two organisational settings had very different perspectives on their work and within TRACE their respective activities were largely supported and co-ordinated separately. The secretariats of EIFs are, in general, rather small, without their own specialist education departments or staff. EIF responsibilities are sectoral and Europe-wide. National confederations, by contrast, are relatively well resourced with dedicated education departments and frequently with their own training centres or colleges. Their responsibilities are geographically limited to nation states (regions of countries) and cross-sectoral, though within TRACE some addressed issues in a single or limited range of industrial sectors.

The diverse *sectoral* context in which KAs operated meant that the nature of restructuring differed. This is primarily evident in the differences in the form restructuring takes. In public sector industries, for example, issues of decentralisation, privatisation and marketisation are prominent; in the private sector prominent issues include outsourcing, de/re-localisation and attempts by enterprises to foster inter-plant competition. Within both public and private sectors restructuring in different industries has its own particular dynamic. In each of these settings, the opportunities for, and constraints on, trade union responses is similarly distinct.

Each KA was conducted in particular spatial *geographical* contexts. This has several dimensions. Firstly, KAs differed in geographic scope: while the EIF KAs were inherently European, the precise meaning of this varied. The political institutions of the EU provide a

context across the project. Some industries, however, are particularly concentrated in a subset of member states, so the spatial significance is not necessarily uniform. All of the KAs, whether led by EIFs or national confederations were inherently transnational in that they involved trade unions from at least two countries. The opportunities and constraints afforded by national political, social and economic and industrial relations environments similarly varied. Also, not all of the KAs organised by national confederations took the nation state as the level of organisation: several explored particular regional dynamics, for example in adjacent cross-border regions or in one case linking the regional organisation of a national confederation with the national level of a smaller country.

While the geographic and sectoral contexts provide the ‘macro’, structural context for each KA, each also operates within a unique ‘micro’ context. This has both an *organisational* dimension, as discussed above, and an *individual* dimension. Of particular interest here is the *historic* aspect of each, in the form of prior experiences. A particular historic aspect here, both for individuals and their organisations, was involvement in prior ETUI-REHS-led projects, and associated knowledge of administrative, technical and organisational routines.

Organisational	Organisational structures and routines; policies
Sectoral	The dynamics of restructuring as experienced in particular industrial sectors (e.g. privatisation, marketisation, market concentration, delocalisation)
Geographic	Geographic aspects of restructuring including national industrial relations systems, and national/regional distribution of industries.
Historic	Previous experiences of organisations and key individuals, for example of particular trade union working methods or the use of ICT.
Individual	Knowledge, experiences and social networks of key individuals

2.3.3 Outputs

The KAs produced varied combinations of materials, procedures and organisations as outputs. Several KAs aimed to establish new working and communication patterns through (internet-mediated) transnational networks. The scope of networks varied in scope across the company, sub-sectoral, industrial and European levels of organisation. The composition similarly varied, including workplace representatives and union officers with either particular industrial or functional responsibilities.

We can distinguish five types of material output depending on their intended use:

- Handbooks (and supporting background materials) for use in the dissemination of policy or project results;
- Training materials: incorporating pedagogical materials for use in subsequent training courses;
- Reports: for use as inputs into subsequent organising or policy initiatives;
- Databases: collections of information, for example on companies in a particular sector intended to be kept up to date over time, serving both as a useful resource and a focus for ongoing work;
- Other tools: intended for use in the workplace, for example in diagnosing the likelihood of reorganisation at the enterprise level.

The relationship between outputs and outcomes can be blurred: for example networks might be established in order to produce a material output. Alternatively, the network itself may be seen as a durable output of the KA, with a life beyond TRACE.

2.3.4 Outcomes

Here, the challenge of evaluation is at its greatest. One can measure the quality of outputs against specific benchmarks or currently available materials but the question of outcomes is more problematic. First, the time frame of evaluation is normally such that the positive outcomes may not emerge for some time after the project has ended. Secondly, outcomes might be implicit within the activities of organisations. It may be assumed that the limiting of negative outcomes or re-orienting of restructuring – as with TRACE – is the purpose of such activities. But outcomes may be complex. The evaluators created a list of outcomes related to the question of restructuring which can be seen below in Table 3. These were arrived at through discussions with the KAs and with observing their work. They were also arrived at by enlisting the knowledge within the literature of organisational change and industrial restructuring more generally. In this respect, the evaluators had to combine the received wisdom on the subject with a grounded approach based on observing expectations and understandings.

Internal Level Outcomes	Fewer jobs lost Improved agreements in terms of scope of content (e.g. retraining)
Internal Level Outcomes	Educational and training outcomes in terms of workforce and local communities
Corporate Level Outcomes	Partnership and joint working with employers
Corporate Level Outcomes	Corporate Social Responsibility and a commitment to a rethinking of corporate values
Economy Level Outcomes	High road (high skill) visions of future changes which are not based on labour cost minimisation or labour exploitation
Political Level Outcomes	Influencing public policy on specific and broader issues of restructuring
Social Level Outcomes	Involving Stakeholders such as customers and the community

We attempted to locate different projects in terms of these outcomes. The results suggested some interesting conclusions but what emerged was the need to try and locate outcomes that were relevant and realistic within the framework of the project. As the projects progressed they tended to move from internal level outcomes to corporate level outcomes, and in some cases to political and social level outcomes, but the time frame could not allow for such outcomes to be significantly mapped.

2.3.5 Problems

Inevitably, KAs encountered problems in achieving their objectives. Understanding these problems is a key objective of evaluation. These difficulties ranged from the unforeseen and locally contingent to the more predictable, and systemic. The purpose of the evaluation is to try to identify regularities in difficulties and the circumstances in which they emerge, as well as activities and mechanisms to limit the consequences.

At a systemic level, language continues to represent an important barrier to online collaboration and various strategies to reduce its effect were explored. As we might expect, however, language is more problematic in some contexts than in others. Some languages, while distinct, are mutually comprehensible to most speakers, as for example with the Nordic languages of Swedish and Danish. In some milieux, such as the higher education unions or some levels of European trade union organisation, English is sufficiently widely understood to serve as a *lingua franca*. In other contexts, though, as for example in workplace networks in the UK and France, lack of a shared language places serious restrictions on what can be achieved outside those residential events where simultaneous translation can be provided, at least for formal sessions.

A range of diverse, contingent difficulties were also encountered. For example, in one binational company-level network, immediately after the residential workshops which established the network, workplace elections removed the local leadership from one country which had the effect of breaking the links and commitment to shared plans established with their peers by the previous leadership. This situation was exacerbated further by systemic language difficulties making it practically impossible to attempt to rebuild links at a distance.

2.4 Project-level evaluation

The project level evaluation addressed formative and summative aspects.

2.4.1 *Formative*

The formative evaluation was, by design, more 'ad hoc' responding to issues as they emerged, and reporting to the project management via the project management committee.

The main elements of the formative evaluation were sessions were conducted at Project Preparation Workshops with KA managers to complement feedback sheets used by the tutors. Several significant issues were identified here for discussion by the tutors and project managers, including the rescheduling and relocation of later workshops, and changes of emphasis in the content of workshops. Other areas examined included the effectiveness of the web site and the translation service.

2.4.2 *Summative*

The summative evaluation comprised:

- measuring overall project performance against agreed (quantitative and qualitative) indicators, primary of materials and numbers of participants in courses and workshops;
- identifying lessons to be learned for the conduct of large trade union education projects of this kind.

The results of these are discussed in the subsequent section.

Data were gathered through participation at PMCs and project spine workshops; specific questions about the nature of the support in baseline and review interviews with KA managers; and evaluation activities in project workshops.

3 Summary of findings

3.1 Introduction

This section reports findings of the three main elements of the project: the central Project Level activities, those activities led by the EIFs and those led by the national confederations. As noted above, the Project Level evaluation concentrated primarily on drawing lessons from the project organisation that may be useful in the planning of future, similar projects. The contexts and objectives of the EIF and the national confederation partners are rather distinct, and the two streams of activity took place increasingly independently during the project, until the Final Conference. Consequently, the EIF and confederation KAs are discussed separately here.

3.2 Project Level

3.2.1 Overview

The project level organisation was in general well thought through. Importantly for a project of this complexity, where significant difficulties or shortcomings emerged the project management, and in particular the tutor team, were responsive to the needs of the project partners. These ensured that the central project workshops ran particularly effectively as a project management tool, and responded to the content requirements of participants as these became clearer. As noted below, some of the specific support activities (in particular language support and tutor mentoring) were rather less widely helpful than originally envisaged. The technology infrastructure was less widely used than anticipated, but where it was used it was critical to the success of the KAs that took advantage of it; the value of the web site grew during the project and is likely to remain a valuable resource for some time after the life of the project. Materials produced centrally by the project have been used by some KAs, though perhaps less widely than anticipated. The KAs have produced a valuable and frequently innovative set of materials which are likely to have value beyond the life of the project. One of the challenges for partners now that the project is complete will be to continue the effective dissemination of these tools.

These issues are covered in more detail below. The achievements of the KAs are given summarised in the follow section.

3.2.2 Support workshops

The programme of project support workshops (Start-Up Workshop; Technical Workshop; Administrative Workshop; 6 Preparation and Support Workshops and 2 Review Workshops) constituted the central 'spine' of the project activities. Three pairs of workshops (one each for EIF & national confederation partners) were originally planned for delivery during the project Preparation Phase, ending in May 2005, before the start of the individual KA actions. In general, these workshops were well attended by appropriate representatives of project partners.

The timing and content of the planned programme were reviewed and changed by the project management in light of participant feedback received at the initial Start-Up Workshop. In response to participant feedback during the earlier workshops, greater emphasis was placed on substantive discussion of restructuring at the later workshops than originally planned. The workshops were rescheduled, and the EIF Review Workshop was relocated to the environs of

Brussels in response to requests from EIF participants to reduce travelling time. The primary issues raised by participant evaluation of the workshops are summarised in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Summary of participant evaluations of workshops

European Industry Federations
<i>Positive contributions of workshops</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workshops provide unique space for informal discussion among officers of different EIFS - Discussions of others' concrete experiences (both methods and substantive content) - Discussions about restructuring - Responsive of workshop organisers to issues raised during the process
<i>Less helpful</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confusion about roles of central project management - Specific sessions (e.g. on network animation) - Level of training not always appropriate to audience - Time spent away from office (location and number of workshops) - Time spent discussing individual Key Actions
Confederations
<i>Positive contributions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussions about restructuring - Informal networking and discussions with other Key Action participants - First Class training - Language support - Good experts - Key Action presentations (particularly in the later workshops – feedback was less positive earlier, when Key Actions had less activity to report) - Value of administrative workshops
<i>Less helpful</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of workshops (though some participants wanted more, and others fewer) - Time spent discussing methodological and administrative issues - Specific sessions (e.g. translation tools; First Class training) - Individual support to Key Actions - Technical workshop

It is worth noting (as was commented by some participants) the high level of responsiveness of the central tutor team and project management to issues raised by workshop participants.

In summary:

- The workshops worked *well* as a mechanism for administering and managing a complex project, though many participants were dissatisfied at the amount of workshop time devoted to these aspects. Nevertheless, the workshops provided an important mechanism for ensuring progress of KAs, and identifying difficulties.
- The workshops worked *less well* as a mechanism for supporting Key Actions' activities. Participants from both EIFs and confederations *valued* the opportunities to discuss substantive issues relating to restructuring. In general, participants *valued less* the time spent discussing administrative and methodological issues (though, particularly for participants from confederations, comments on methodological aspects were mixed). EIF participants found the time and travel demands of workshop participation high. EIFs valued the opportunity for informal discussions with each other, as did participants from confederations, though here the value appeared to increase during project as partners' own activities became more concrete.

Participants from EIFs, in particular, highlighted as a problem the *lack of involvement* in the workshops of *political officers of the ETUC*, given the centrality of the issues being covered.

3.2.3 *Materials*

The TRACE project has provided a range of materials and outputs: they are diverse and they cover the range of issues related to restructuring.

A set of 'topic sheets' covering aspects of restructuring were produced centrally by the project, for use with training materials within the partner KAs. An interim evaluation of these by partners generated a more positive response from the confederation partners than the EIF partners. There is, however, little evidence that the topic sheets have been used as resources within Key Actions, but they will probably be used after the project has terminated.

The partner KAs developed a wealth of materials. Some developed handbooks for European Works Council Representatives in their dealing with changes such as closures and re-location. The confederations in metal and manufacturing (along with those in specific national contexts such as Spain and Portugal) have developed such handbooks. Others provided general documents related to restructuring and change within a sector, cataloguing the extent of change in different contexts. The public sector unions tended towards this model. These are aimed at scoping the de-centralisation, commercialisation and individualisation of change within such services as local administration, education and higher educations.

There is a range of learning materials developed about regional and locally based restructuring: the KAs focused on Denmark and Italy is a case in point. They provided cases of local regional responses to change based on a more strategic and co-operative union approach. There have been materials dealing with the exchange of experiences to issues such as subcontracting and union organisation. These are mainly templates for understanding the experiences and legal context of different trade unions in different national contexts. Their utility lies in their ability to catalogue a dialogue between trade unionists. In some cases, these have cross-referenced with the TRACE website where the KA workshops have been described in detail. In fact, on-line discussion boards have been developed. This will allow trade unionists to look appreciate the challenge of setting up co-ordinated, transnational responses.

Some KAs provided basic scoping and knowledge materials with the aim of addressing the need for an understanding of the terminology of industrial relations processes and institutions. These have been comprehensive. In some cases, the materials are less important: what have emerged are networks and policy groups focused on a particular theme such as organising representatives in a sub-sector across Europe or around an EU policy change. These have used the web-site dimension effectively but the material output is of less significance. In one instance (KA 13), a CD has been developed that allows trade unionists to anticipate change through a form of self-auditing system. This facilitates and assessment of the situation of any one firm and to evaluate the possibilities of different options and management behaviour. This has been seen as a very novel part of the TRACE portfolio.

A trade union activist seeking to scope the way trade unions can respond to restructuring and anticipate it change will have at their disposal a range of materials covering different experiences, response to and understandings of the subject. These materials are normally of a very high standard. The industrial relations expert on the TRACE evaluation project has assessed them individually. Quality and breadth varies, but overall they are solid set of materials. They are clear, transparent and are supported by active website materials and outlines through the TRACE website. However, the sum of the parts are very important and for this reason the experts have not only evaluated and deemed the materials in the main to be good, they have focused on the main two outputs: the project report and the handbook.

The two main outputs capture the experiences of TRACE very well. The project report is a good outline of the different projects and will have a use in providing a history and overview

of TRACE. It is a usable well-produced document. The handbook is very good indeed. The document manages to look at how the KAs address the meaning of restructuring, its anticipation, the strategic aspect, and the preparatory aspects. It is a usable document with a series of key summary points and self-audit sections. It is effective. The issue is how the two main documents are twinned when people wish to access TRACE. The website will have them available as PDF files. However, they are vital entry points into the body of knowledge and experience TRACE has collated and developed. It is vital for the ETUC and the EU that these documents are used as the entry point into the project materials.

Overall, the evaluators were satisfied with the materials and outputs produced.

3.2.4 Mentoring

Each Key Action was allocated a mentor from the core tutors team. In the final round of interviews, partner organisations in general reported making little or no use of the mentors. Among the EIFs, the need for pedagogic mentoring was mixed: in one case, a mentor assisted in the development of teaching materials to accompany a handbook. In other cases, interviewees suggested that the pedagogic skills on offer from mentors didn't match their (identified) needs which were rather more industrial/sectoral than educational. In at least one case, alternative, informal arrangements were made for this mentoring from among affiliates.

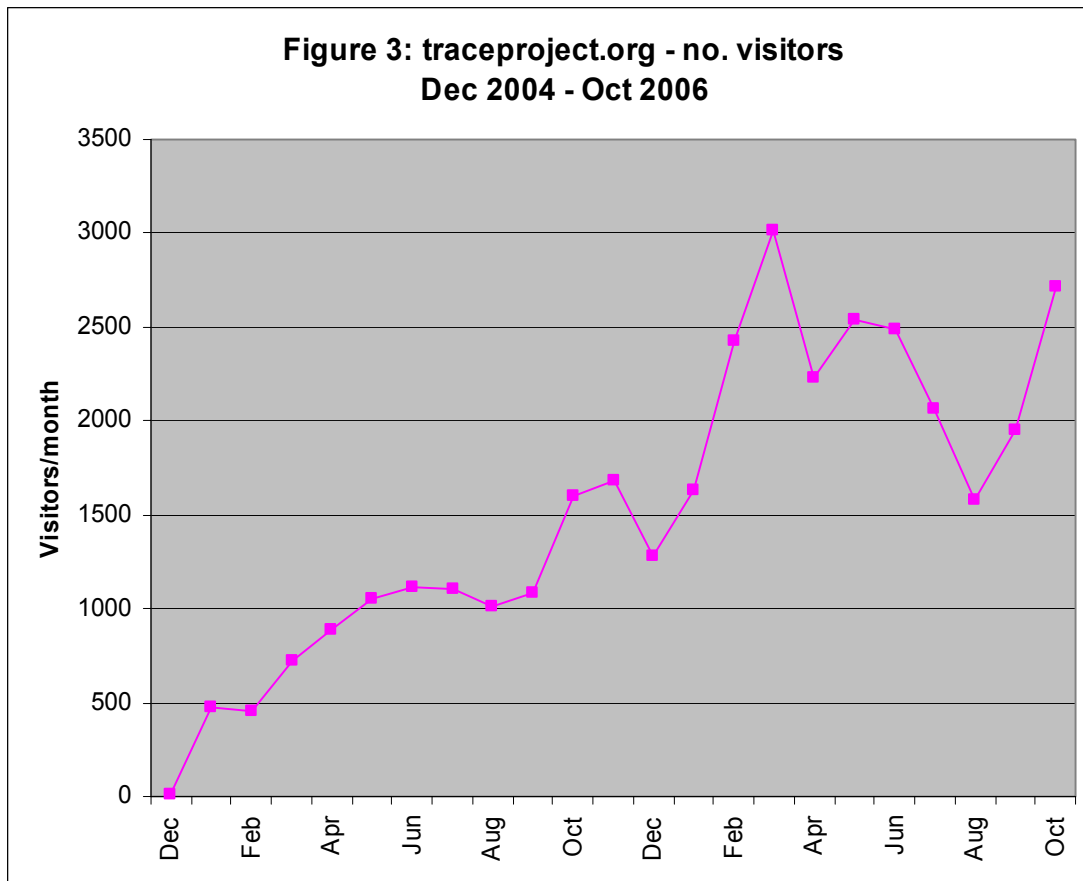
3.2.5 ICT

The Project Management Committee decided early in the project to adopt First Class for internal project communications. In practice, this has not happened outside the core tutor team and partners have instead relied on conventional email for project communications. Individual Key Actions have largely elected to conduct their activities using their own infrastructures, including web sites, email and among confederations, e-learning platforms (First Class and Moodle).

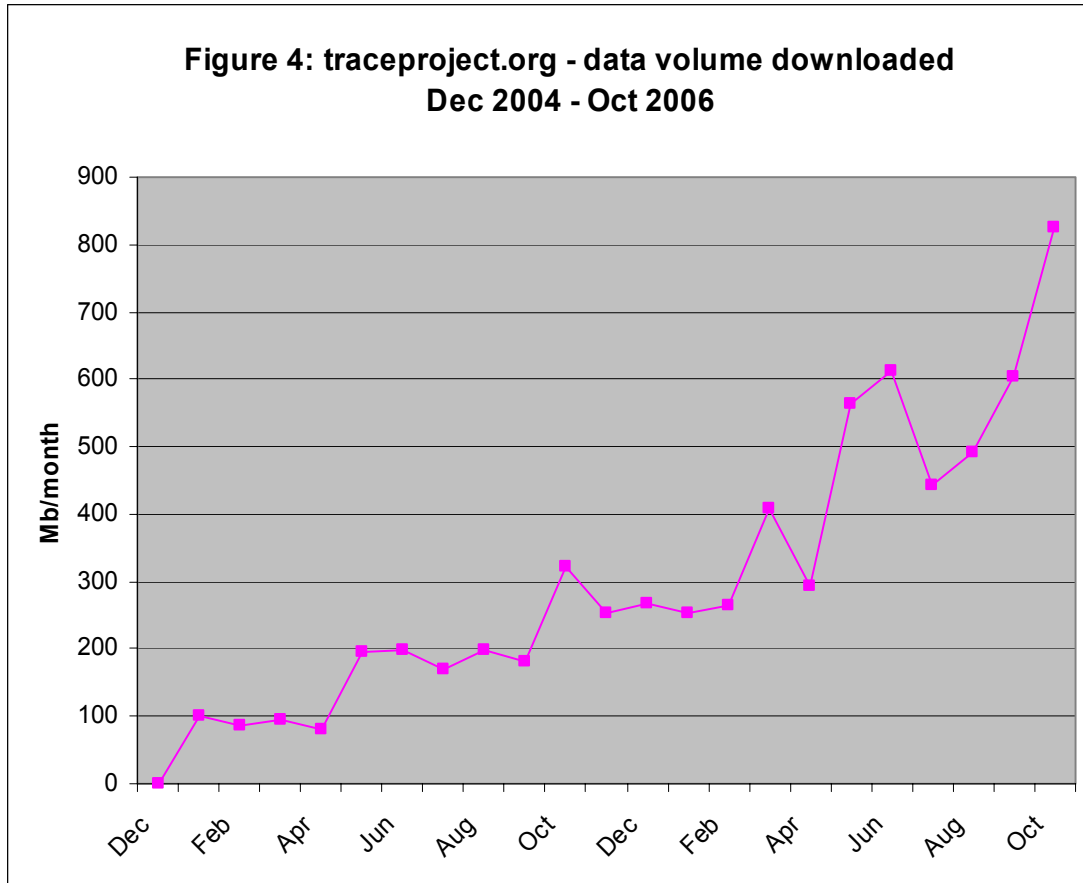
The two major exceptions to this have been the ETUCE's Higher Education and Working Conditions networks, which continue to make extensive use of the central FC server. Here, the availability of the infrastructure has been critical to the success of the networks established by these projects.

3.2.6 Traceproject.org

The web site (<http://www.traceproject.org/>) has grown in significance as an information resource since the start of the project (see Figures 3 & 4 below). At the end of the project in November 2006, the site contained: a database of somewhat over 50 items on aspects of restructuring and change; training materials (primarily methodological); reports on activities of Key Actions and a small number of feature articles on aspects of restructuring.



Usage of the web site grew steadily over the lifetime of the project: in Oct '06, 2,500 visitors viewed 9,500 web pages, totalling 800 Mb of data. In total 7Gb of data have been downloaded from the site. In interviews, few partners reported using the web site systematically in their KAs, though there is some anecdotal evidence, supported by the usage statistics, that the web site is reaching an audience beyond the project. From the experience of previous projects, it is likely that it will remain a valuable resource for some time.



3.3 Partner Key Actions – Overview

Actions

The project as a whole has performed well, measured against the deliverables specified in the project proposal. A total of 41 workshops/residential course sessions were organised by Key Actions against a target of 42 (2 Key Actions held one fewer events than anticipated; one organised an additional event). Overall, the project exceeded the target number of participants in workshops by 11% (831¹ workshop participants, against a target of 750). In most cases KAs achieved their attendance targets – at a global level lower than expected participation in five KAs was more than outweighed by participation exceeding expectations in eight others. In most cases, variation from planned participation was modest in either direction. Two KAs (that led by the SAK and the ETUCE Working Conditions network substantially ‘over-performed’. A single KA (that led by LO Sweden) did not deliver the training activities planned. KA level details are provided below.

Outputs

A large majority of Key Actions were able to demonstrate outputs at the project Review Workshops, many evidently produced to a high standard. Many of the materials may add significant value beyond the context of the KA for which they were originally developed,

¹ In fact this is an underestimate – figures are missing for 4 events known to have taken place: the final figure is probably closer to 880 participants).

primarily variously as innovative tools that might be adapted or replicated as reusable training materials, or as sources of case material (lack of which was identified as a problem by trainers early in the project) for use in training sessions. Several EIFs produced reports based either on new research or synthesising participants' experiences which may form the basis of future organisational responses. TRACE appears to have allowed partners to make significant contributions to their own work by:

- Producing new materials that will be used/reused beyond the project;
- Extending the scope of, or accelerating activities, which had already been planned;
- Supporting the generation of specific new insights/understandings/policies

Outcomes

The outcomes, which represent the real purpose of the Key Actions, in general happen outside the lifetime of the project, and so can not be evaluated directly. A particularly notable exception is that of the UNI Europa Services network's activities which contributed to the changes in the European Union's Services Directive in early 2006. However, there is also evidence of the likelihood of many of the project's activities contributing positively to longer term outcomes, for example, through the establishment of new structures/working methods, the synthesis or generation of new knowledge as the basis for future action. The potential here will be increased by effective dissemination of many of the project's outputs both within and outside the project partnership.

3.4 KA – European Industry Federations

3.4.1 Overview

The achievements of the EIF-led KAs in relation to their originally planned activities and outputs are summarised in Table 5 below. We also provide a brief narrative summary of each KA's objectives, contexts, working methods outputs and, where possible, outcomes. We do not give a detailed account here of each KA: more information on this can be found in the TRACE Project Report and via the project website (<http://www.traceproject.org>).

Table 5: Summary of EIF KA activities and outputs

	Activities		Participation		Outputs	
	Planned	Actual	Plan	Act.	Planned	Actual
4. EMCEF	2 workshops animation	2 workshops	32	31	guidebook network	guidebook in production
5. EMF	2 workshops	2 workshops	70	52	report	report produced, with supplementary training materials
6. EPSU	4 workshops animation	3 workshops	64	54	2 reports network	handbook to be issued Sep, 2006 (Review Workshop)
7. SEKO	2 workshops animation	2 workshops	32	36	report network	report produced network 'active but offline'
8a. ETUCE HERSC	2 workshops animation training	2 workshops animation training	32	71	Report active network	report produced. June 2006
8b. ETUCE Teachers	2 workshops animation	2 workshops animation training	32	75	report active network	report produced June 2006
9a. UNI-E Gravure	2 workshops animation	2 workshops animation	32	38	report network	report outstanding 'Semi-functioning' network
9b. UNI-E Services	2 workshops animation	2 workshops animation	32	132	report network	active network (web, f2f & phone) report – campaigning guidelines – and training materials produced.

3.4.2 KA4 – EMCEF

This KA was led by the EMCEF who had developed a network of EWC councillors. Currently there are 180 EWCs in the sector, though EMCEF estimate that there are a further 260 companies where there should be an EWC, creating significant co-ordination difficulties for the EIF. Restructuring in the chemical sector is characterised by intensifying ongoing mergers and reorganisation within Europe.

The aim of the KA was to establish framework guidelines and a handbook to co-ordinate and underpin EWC strategy in relation to restructuring, addressing the preparation of co-ordinated trade union responses, clarification and definition of the various EWC roles and the EMCEF, procedures for negotiations and agreed standards. The audience for the handbook was the EWC councillors linked to EMCEF affiliates throughout the EU. At the first seminar, 13 representatives and officials from 11 countries reviewed draft guidelines; at the second, these were further elaborated and a draft motion on EWCs was prepared, to be submitted to the EMCEF General Assembly

Changes in project personnel and difficulties of project co-ordination led to delays in starting the KA led to delays, but the project seminars and outputs were successfully produced.

3.4.3 KA5 – EMF

This KA was led by the EMF, which has a long history of trade union co-ordination regarding the question of cross-border restructuring in multinationals. In the metalworking sector, transnational restructuring, changes in ownership, relocation, closures, and new technologies have all contributed to the challenge of making union responses coherent and effective. Within the EMF and its affiliates, there are strong internal sources of experience, which needed to be tapped.

The central activity of the KA was the production of a handbook, which was presented in draft form to two workshops at which trade union officials and EWC members reviewed and revised the content. The handbook covered the background to restructuring, European regulation and directives, legal strategies available to unions, a comparison of employees' representatives' participation, socially responsible restructuring, and a 'best practice' case study of restructuring in GM. The second workshop also examined the significance of international framework agreements (IFA) to trade unions in the metalworking sector. The second workshop also considered preparing training materials to accompany the handbook to improve the effectiveness of its dissemination.

3.4.4 KA6 – EPSU

The KA was led by EPSU. The overarching context to the KA is the decentralisation of public services and local administration. The nature of national and local state administration is such that there was a need for a broader stock-take of the fragmentation of public services and local administrations. The aim of this KA has been to try better to understand the implications of this decentralisation for employment, working conditions, collective bargaining and the quality of service.

The role of EPSU has to be to try to collate usable and effective data on similar issues throughout the country, and a series of three seminars, attended by delegates from national public service unions, was held with the aim of collating a series of cases. The problem of a lack of knowledge by national delegates led to a reformulating of the project around general

developments in terms of decentralisation throughout Europe. The Handbook which was produced appeared to be of diminishing significance because of radically differing experiences on the subject. The final output was a highly usable outline of decentralisation in the form of the 'Trade Union Handbook on Decentralisation: The Changing Role of the State'

Whilst generally an important experience in opening and recording a dialogue on the challenges facing local state employees and administrators, mainly due to the greater than anticipated diversity of national experiences and the lack of an effective European level social partner, the project provided an important landmark in the work of EPSU.

3.4.5 KA7 – SEKO Transport

The KA was led by the Swedish transport workers' union (SEKO) working closely with the ETF. The primary purpose was to understand better the emergence of the global logistics industry in the transport sector and the implications of this for transport unions. Logistics has grown in economic and industrial significance as other industries have turned to outsourcing non-core activities, and effectively defines restructuring in large parts of the transport sector. Logistics is increasingly dominated by multinational companies (e.g. UPS, DHL/Deutsche Post, and Exel).

Since the logistics industry includes all forms of transport (rail, air, maritime, road), it poses a challenge to traditional organisation of transport workers. It also blurs the boundaries between groups of workers traditionally viewed and organised as being in separate sectors. Two workshops were organised to bring together activists and union officers. The workshops were well-attended, though there were some difficulties in recruiting the intended mix of participants. There were some difficulties in recruiting workplace representatives: most participants were trade union officers. This may be because the concept of 'logistics' is itself an abstraction too far for some workplace representatives. The intended online networking between the workshops was not a success, with language being identified as one of the difficulties.

The Kay's report on logistics represents a 'clearing the ground' for a logistics strategy. The workshops helped to generate a better understanding of logistics multinationals' strategies, to clarify some of the diverse understandings of the term 'logistics' among trade unionists, and in identifying possible trade union responses.

3.4.6 KA 8a – ETUCE 8a – HERC

The KA was led by the European Trade Union Committee for Education's Standing Committee for Higher Education and Research (HERC). The primary purpose was to assess consequences for academic staff stemming from developments in the higher education and research sectors stemming from the Bologna Process – an intergovernmental initiative with the aim to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and to promote, on a worldwide basis, the European higher education system, by 2010. This has implications for academic staff, not least with regard to a perceived reduction in time available to spend on research activities.

The KA was aiming to enhance union leadership and the ability to make common policies in addition to increasing understanding of EU legislation and the decisions made by ministers. A mix of people and expertise was encouraged in establishing the participants and included Union leaders and university lecturers. First Class was already a well established means of communication due to a previous history with the Dialog On project. Two face-to-face seminars were organised which were both well attended by participants and by Student Union representatives which in addition aids the desire to extend the network. A questionnaire was

also disseminated to the entire KA network and a high response rate was achieved with the results being articulated in the Final Report.

An unforeseen outcome of the work conducted by the KA is an interest in how the Bologna Process impacts on the labour market. The KA is interested to work in collaboration with other EIFs with a view to enhance cooperation between universities and enterprises.

3.4.7 KA8b – ETUCE 8b – Private Sector Working Methods in Education

This KA was led by the European Trade Union Committee for Education, some contact has been made with EPSU and relationships with employers are currently being established with regard to involving employees in social dialogue and education. The KA was aiming to develop and nurture the network to assist member organisations and officials with problems and ideas as well as acting as an information resource providing quality data and thus supporting the role of the ETUCE. The target audience for the KA was all of the affiliated organisations of the ETUCE representing teachers outside higher education. The network built on the experience of the Chief Negotiators' network established under Dialog On, reconfiguring and reinvigorating it to address the revised objectives.

The primary aim of the KA was to examine the role of pay bargaining and performance related pay currently being implemented by various European governments. Two workshops were held by the KA and were well represented in terms of numbers and representative of the EU member states. A questionnaire was distributed to the network of which: 31 teachers' unions responded. The survey addressed three main areas: pay determination, performance management and performance related pay. Findings indicate that the introduction of private sector working methods is uneven, and is received differently by unions. Where these methods have been introduced, they have led to higher workloads, increased stress, have been used as sanctions rather than as supportive measures and inconsistently applied. A number of novel trade union tactics had been used in response to these changes including short (2-3 day) strikes, political lobbying, hiring consultancy firms to conduct research, and linking up with NGOs. The full results are articulated in the report *The Impact of Private Sector Working Methods in Education*, June 2006.

3.4.8 KA9a UNI Europa Graphical – Gravure

In 2003, the heliogravure (a specialised form of printing) market had an annual turnover of around €8bn, employing 20,000 people. This sub-sector of the print market is centralised, with 60% of the market held by five companies. The market is characterised by overcapacity and growing concentration of ownership through takeovers and mergers as companies struggle to maintain market share. Low prices are translating into pressure to keep labour costs down and more mergers are expected, further threatening jobs.

In this KA, UNI Europa Graphical set up an online network to share information about companies' financial status, restructuring and relocation, collective bargaining and trade union rights, and to co-ordinate activities in order to anticipate better future mergers and takeovers. Two workshops were held to establish the network. The workshops were attended by a mixture of trade union officers and workplace/company-level trade union representatives, including some EWC representatives. The spread of participants reflected the distribution of the sub-sector, though there were some gaps in the first workshop. The first workshop decided to extend the scope of the network to include representatives from the web offset sector, as technological changes had led to convergence in some parts of the market. A common set of data to be shared was agreed and participants agreed to complete it. The second workshop reviewed progress and identified common themes in the sub-sector. Among these, training emerged as a central issue in allowing workers to maintain their skills in a changing environment.

The online work was conducted via email and a shared web forum and an online database of company information established. Pressures on time among UNI Europa Graphical staff limited the extent of active network animation. Despite some difficulties encountered during the project in network participants' sharing of information online, the network will be continued beyond the TRACE project.

3.4.9 KA9b – UNI Europa Services

The KA was led by the Services sector of the Union Network International. The KA has clear links with the graphical sector of the UNI and has developed links with other service federations such as EPSU and ETF. The aim of the KA is to help affiliated unions to become independent regardless of location, this involves establishing a clearer understanding of different working methods, and constructing and strengthening expert, and non-expert, channels of dialogue.

The target audience of the KA is a large network of technical or international affiliates working directly on legislation, with a smaller proportion being directly active. The aim is to collate a series of best and worst practice examples related to requirements and regulations of the network. Two workshops were held surpassing the anticipated number of participants. The network has shown active participation from members achieving the effective political network envisaged. Lobbying, and internal union lobbying, has been very successful.

As a result of the KA an internal structural debate has been established on processes for cross-sectoral policy development. Capacities to respond to legislation and anticipate the effects of legislation on service sector workers have improved. The model developed will be used by the Executive and Management Committees for future issues. In addition more effort is being applied to training affiliates and members about how the EU works and the impact that EU law has on services in the internal market.

3.5 KA – Confederations

3.5.1 Overview

The achievements of the KAs led by the training agencies of national confederations, in relation to their originally planned activities and outputs, are summarised in Table 6 below. We also provide a brief narrative summary of each KA's objectives, contexts, working methods outputs and, where possible, outcomes. We do not give a detailed account here of each KA: more information on this can be found in the TRACE Project Report and via the project website (<http://www.traceproject.org>).

Table 6: Summary of Confederation KA activities and outputs

	Mechanism		Participation			
	Planned	Actual	P.	A.	Planned	Actual
10.CC.OO	2 seminars network animation	✓	32	32	network report/training materials	seminars & online working
11. CFDT	training workshop pilot course	✓	24	31	training materials	✓
12. CGIL	4 seminars (2 national, 2 transnational; distance tutoring)	✓	64	79	training materials	✓
13.CGTP- IN	4 seminars (2 national, 2 TN; distance tutoring)	✓	64	53	analysis matrix; training materials	✓
14. CISL	3 seminars - distance tutoring	✓	48	29	training materials	✓
15. LO-D	2 seminars - distance tutoring	✓	32	32	training materials	✓
16. LO-S	2 seminars - distance tutoring	No seminars held	32	0	training materials	No seminars held; handbook produced
17. OEGB	4 seminars	✓	64	57	training materials & report	✓
18. SAK	1 seminar	2 seminars held	16	59	training materials	✓
19. TUC	2 materials development workshops 3 national train trainers workshops (2 UK, 1 SE) 3 pilot courses (2 UK, 1 SE)	Info on workshop attendance not available	48	18		-

3.5.2 KA10 - CC.OO

CCOO led this KA in partnership with the CGTP-IN: Iberian bilateral cross-border unionism was an implicit feature of this work. The primary aim was to improve EWC co-ordination in the metalworking, banking and chemical sectors particularly in an Iberian context, to enable more effective responses to restructuring situations. The aim was to achieve this through a programme of two seminars and the establishment of a network. The workshop participants were trade unionists from the three sectors, from both Spain and Portugal. The first workshop included teambuilding exercises and discussions on EWCs and international trade unions. The second workshop reviewed the guide to EWC communications produced by the KA, discussions of the various EWC contexts represented, and preparation of action plans to follow the workshop.

There were strong personal links and networks (and positive synergies with KA13). The role of educationalists on either side allowed for an effective dialogue. There was a report/handbook developed. This was a usable document for the purpose of trade union strategy and co-ordination. Initially there were difficulties related to the number of participants and the challenge of not using translators, as it was assumed the two languages had enough in common for no interpretation.

3.5.3 KA 11 – CFDT

This KA was led by the French CFDT, working in partnership with the British TUC at regional level. The KA aimed to address restructuring in a cross-border setting, in particular between trade unionists in Eurotunnel and Orange, companies operating on both sides of the English Channel, in south east England and North West France.

The KA was centred on the organisation and delivery of a 3-day training course for trade union officers with regional and sectoral responsibilities and workplace representatives from the two companies. For course participants, major areas of learning included the different legal contexts and trade union working methods in the two countries. The course examined restructuring in the telecommunications and transport sectors, and course participants produced joint, company-level action plans for further transnational co-operation with the aim of encouraging new forms of European collective bargaining and social dialogue. The course and materials were subsequently presented to CFDT trainers nationally, and the materials will be re-used in future TUC courses, though these will need to be adapted to take account of the specific issues of the industrial sectors and regions/countries involved in future deliveries.

Lessons learned by the KA organisers included the importance of consistency in selecting target groups and perhaps most importantly the need for follow-up working after the workshop to assist participants in developing their action plans: neither of the company networks operated effectively following the workshop. Subsequent workshops which, inter alia, help to develop stronger personal relationships may be needed here. Other contingencies also affect the sustainability of such networks, however: in one the companies, the French workplace leadership which had taken part in the workshop was replaced in subsequent elections.

3.5.4 KA12 – CGIL

The KA was led by the ISF-CGIL (Italian General Confederation of Labour: Institute for Further Education) in collaboration with FESETE and CGTP-IN. The primary aim of the KA was to improve the capacity of trade union officers, at European, national and regional levels,

to anticipate and respond to change, including effective bargaining. Globalisation impacts on the European textile sector as goods are being imported from low wage and working condition countries, this KA will address restructuring processes in Italy and Portugal to improve knowledge, develop experts and improve coordination.

The main target audience was the shop stewards and trade union officers. Two transnational seminars were held, one in Italy and one in Portugal, bringing 12 trade unionists together at each event. The seminars were effective in establishing transnational communication in addition to exchanging and promoting cultural understanding. Training materials have been developed and are available on a CD-ROM.

3.5.5 KA13 – CFTP-IN

This KA was led by the CGTP-IN, in partnership with the CCOO, focussing on restructuring in the textiles sector. The KA built on a strong record of collaboration and co-ordination between the two confederations. Educators from both organisations had previous been involved in the Dialog On project, and Iberian bilateral cross-border unionism was an implicit feature of this work. The context was one of de-industrialisation, relocation of employment in the textiles sector, the challenge of Far Eastern competition, and a general intensification of restructuring. This poses various challenges to trade unions.

This KA in particular addressed the issue of a lack of economic and accounting skills in trade unions. The development of a ‘Crisis Matrix’ – a self-audit tool focussed on helping trade unionists to identify different stages of change and the signals, both at the level of a particular enterprise as well as wider indicators which might indicate the likelihood of imminent restructuring. Two transnational workshops considered the general situation in the global textile industry, and tested the Crisis Matrix. A revised version was evaluated at the second workshop, and plans made for the wider dissemination of the tool/.

The main challenge for the KA was the IT literacy of some of the participants and traditional trade unions.

3.5.6 KA14 – CISL

The KA was led by CISL (Italian Confederation of Trade Unions) in collaboration with LO-Skolen. The primary aim of the KA is to improve restructuring strategies, including incorporate education and training facilities. It was anticipated that Italian and Danish trade unionists would work together, sharing knowledge and case study information, in order to establish an understanding of trends and changes with regard to the introduction of new technologies, de-localisation and global competition.

Three workshops were anticipated, of which two were held, the first in Italy bringing local and national executives together, and the second in Denmark involving 14 trade unionists from the Italian and Danish partner organisations. Training materials and guidelines have been developed on restructuring and union intervention and are available in three languages (English, Italian, Danish) via a CD-ROM. Four case studies were developed as a result of the KA and have proved extremely useful. Distance tutoring has been provided to the Italian participants, but not the Danish due to language problems.

The KA proved to be a great opportunity for upgrading competencies to face restructuring and negotiation. The idea of bringing together Italian and Danish participants to work together was innovative; however, due to language issues the Italians have gained more from the KA than the Danish participants.

3.5.7 KA15 – LO Denmark

This KA is the second, complementary, collaboration between the Danish LO Skolen and the Italian CISL. For the LO Skolen, this represents part of a wider programme of building links, for example through study visits, with unions northern Italy (in this case with the Piemonte region). Outsourcing and the growth in SMEs as a source of employment are both major concerns for Danish unions, and hence there is a particular interest in the Italian unions' experiences of the kind of flexible production networks and clusters found in parts of northern Italy.

This KA was organised around two residential workshops bringing together eight regional officers of the CISL Piemonte region, and 9 trade union officers and workplace representatives from the LO. The workshops addressed trade organisation, industrial relations, social welfare conditions and case studies of companies in both countries (including site visits) as well as wider issues, such as technological change and the emergence of China as a major player in the global economy. There were no activities involving all of the workshop participants between the two events, though the CISL participants took part in some online learning activities. Outputs included case studies at both company and company-cluster levels in Denmark and Italy.

The KA was originally planned to partner a region of Denmark (Jutland) with a region of Italy, but for a number of reasons (including a reorganisation of the LO's regional structure and falling levels of shop steward participation in trade union organisation), Danish unions were involved in the KA nationally, rather than regionally. The composition of the course made it difficult to establish workplace-level cross-border links, which is becoming stronger focus for the LO Skolen. Given the concerns with innovative SME networks, from the LO's perspective the partnership with Piemonte was not ideal, given the dominance of the regional economy by Fiat. Perhaps as a result of this, as well as language difficulties among participants, there were no concrete plans made for ongoing partnerships among participants following TRACE.

3.5.8 KA16 – LO Sweden

This KA, led by the Swedish LO aimed to examine restructuring in the auto industry in Sweden and Germany, in partnership with the Swedish Metal Workers' Union and IG Metall. In particular the KA sought to develop strategies for eliminating inter-plant competition in situations of planned closures. The KA planned to hold two seminars with an intervening period of distance learning, with associated training materials.

The workshops were not held. The KA did, however, produce a research report based on desk research and interviews with sectoral trade union leaders in Sweden and Germany.

3.5.9 KA17 – ÖGB

The ÖGB focussed on the growing problem of organising and recruiting workers in SMEs. SMEs account for a larger proportion of employment in Austria, at a time when trade union membership generally is falling. As well as difficulties in recruiting in SMEs, there are difficulties in organising since, under Austrian law, SMEs are not required to set up works councils. The partnership with the British TUC was established because of there was particular interest in the experience of the TUC's Organising Academy.

The activities centred a series of four workshops which aimed to develop training materials and a handbook on recruitment in SMEs. Unlike other KAs, each workshop had a distinct target audience and aimed to address particular aspects of materials development. The first brought together trade union educators and full time officers to analyse the similarities and

differences in the Austrian and British situations. The second workshop provided an opportunity for activists and shop stewards to articulate their needs. The third workshop considered a number of approaches to recruitment (e.g. social network analysis, neuro-linguistic programming) and developed a course curriculum. The final workshop brought together some participants from each of the previous three to review an initial version of the course handbook.

Given the emphasis within the KA on the development of a curriculum and handbook as an output, plans for dissemination and use are particularly important. Electronic versions of the handbook have been made available to trade union educators in both countries (via the ÖGB web site and the TUC's online tutor network). In the UK, the handbook is also being distributed by the Organising Academy in its regional activities, and in both countries the handbook is being made available to academics for wider use. It is, though, a limitation of this output that its (necessary) specificity to the UK and Austrian contexts will reduce its usefulness outside these countries.

3.5.10 KA18 – SAK

Multinational companies, operating on both sides of the Gulf of Finland, often move work to areas of lower labour costs. From the perspective of Finland, this may include countries such as Estonia. From the perspective of Estonia, this may include Russia and China. This KA, led by SAK, aimed to develop workplace-level links between the new trade unions in Estonia and Finnish unions, particularly in the service and metalwork sectors. In the metal sector, relocation of work to Estonia has been an issue for Finnish union, while conversely Estonia labour has moved into the Finnish service sector.

The KA originally planned a single workshop bringing together pairs of trade unionists from companies operating in Estonia and Finland, to start to develop workplace links. Recruitment emerged as a priority for the Estonian unions and early in the project it was decided to hold a second workshop aimed at young Estonians interested in becoming shop stewards. Both of the workshops were well attended (a total of 59 participated in the two workshops, against an expected 16 cited in the project proposal) and received. Plans were made for future collaborations at workplace level, and a small handbook produced aimed primarily at shop stewards and activists in the two countries. The handbook highlighted a number of aspects of globalisation and restructuring and mechanisms available to trade unionists to respond to change.

3.5.11 KA19 – TUC

The KA was led by the Trade Union Congress (TUC) in collaboration with the TCO, the Swedish white collar confederation. The primary aim of the KA was to help improve trade union capacity to anticipate outsourcing via the provision of a UK accredited course. The course will cover the new area and initially be targeted at officers, providing new knowledge, practical skills and curriculum material that they can apply to real issues in the workplace. The long term aim is to include union representatives in addition to officers. Alongside the development of the accredited course, the KA aim to develop manuals which will provide building blocks for similar courses to be developed, thus appealing to a wider audience.

Two workshops were planned in addition to the online courses and training courses for the trainers who will deliver the accredited course. It is not evident how many participants have been involved to date.

The fact that the TCO was not a TRACE partner caused some complications for the KA.

4 Key themes and recommendations

4.1 Introduction and overview

Overall, and despite some localised difficulties, TRACE has delivered on its commitments, frequently to a high standard. The main issue is that restructuring calls forth the need for a more focused approach around different types of projects and forms of restructuring. TRACE has begun to develop a format for understanding common needs in terms of restructuring change - network needs, communication skills, learning and case-based approaches - but it has also pointed to the need to look at restructuring in terms of different levels: policy, organisational-network, local, regional, sectoral, co-operation strategies, learning and skills. In many ways TRACE now reflects the portfolio of restructuring issues and has begun to envelop them around an action based learning approach. The failure of the TRACE 2 proposal means that an important opportunity to build on this work has been lost.

This section is organised as a general reflection on TRACE's contribution to the anticipation of change, and observations on more specific aspects: limitations of the project, ways of thinking about trade union education projects as organisational learning interventions, observations of building effective transnational networks and problems which have occurred which may be examples of systemic difficulties that recur in this type of work.

4.2 Understanding TRACE'S contribution to the Anticipation of Change: some reflections

To begin to understand the overall contribution of TRACE, we can begin to think in terms of four distinct levels of trade union engagement, discussed below.

4.2.1 1st Level: Knowledge

TRACE has collated a considerable body of cases, glossaries, accessible discussions, and templates for action. The role of educational materials and ready availability mean that this is a highly transparent project. The challenge is to sustain interest and disseminate this material through the networks of the ETUC. This will depend on the ability and willingness of KA participants and other European trade union organisations to reference, use and develop these materials. The indications from the final workshops and interviews with the KA participants and leaders were that this is likely to be the case.

4.2.2 2nd Level: Networks

TRACE developed a series of networks and constituencies that are establishing new forms of communication. There are new reference points and synergies within the partners of the KAs and between them in some cases. This will allow for discussions of restructuring to be shared across sectoral and national boundaries. The challenge is to sustain these networks and to ensure post-project communication and even new forms of information sharing. This is a general challenge and not one particular to TRACE as networks are much more difficult to sustain than traditional bodies, but the indications are that the key partners in KAs aim to build on their networks and sustain them.

4.2.3 3rd Level external representation

The materials and networks produced can work into the policy dimension of the EU, allowing unions to draw upon discussions and ideas about the nature of restructuring. For example, the website is already being accessed by bodies such as EU Parliamentary research projects on restructuring and change. The wide body of materials, let alone the two main reports provided by the ETUC, could act as a template for trade union repertoires to emerge. They are vital texts that permit alternative, long term, socially oriented and strategic views of restructuring to be considered. They are texts that can provide alternative narratives that fit with the EU's attempt to view restructuring in broader, social and strategic terms. This should allow TRACE to be a vital point of reference in terms of proactive materials. The challenge is to sustain the momentum and to hold post-TRACE events aimed at dissemination within EU governing structures, and at national and sectoral levels of trade union and social partner organisations. The materials should assist this in this policy dimension because they are a real-life cases and initiatives.

4.2.4 4th Level: Strategic foundations

The final level is more oblique. The TRACE project will provide greater sensitivity to the way in which restructuring has to be understood and studied. The KAs allow for a new dialogue on the way we understand the nuances and dimensions of restructuring at different levels and different spaces within the European Union's society and economy:

Table 7: Strategic foundations: thinking about restructuring

<i>Levels of Restructuring</i>
Transnational Level V Regional Level
Sector change V Company change
<i>Restructuring and Employment:</i>
Employment Content (e.g. flexibility) V Employment Context (e.g. outsourcing)
Core workforce V Peripheral workforce
<i>Nature of Change:</i>
Quantitative Change V Qualitative Change
Co-ordinated 'Change' V Reactive 'Restructuring'

Hammerstrom, Martinez Lucio, Walker and Trevorrow, 2006

Finding a language for understanding change and responding to it is in itself a challenge. It influences the levels at which discussion occurs, how it is framed and how response is understood. The challenge is to map the forms of restructuring, findings strategies that are appropriate to them, enveloping these strategies in terms of other broader approaches to ensure a consistent and solidaristic approach, and being proactive in terms of anticipation of change. Creating a progressive and strategic – let alone – social overview of restructuring has begun to emerge within the project: the foundations for an understanding of the different types and meanings of restructuring have emerged. TRACE appears to emerge as a significant point of reference in this respect but its impact will only be clear in the longer term and how it remains as a point of a reference within the co-operative attempts of trade unions and their co-ordination strategies.

4.3 Limitations of TRACE

Even a project as ambitious as TRACE will inevitably have some limitations. We raise here some points, less as criticisms of the achievements of the project, but more as highlighting areas which future work in this area may usefully address.

What is meant by change?

In TRACE, the wide term ‘change’ has in practice meant ‘industrial restructuring’. This is perfectly reasonable, since the term industrial restructuring describes many of the ways in which trade unions experience change. It does not, though, exhaust the possible meanings of ‘change’. Wider views of change are likely to be significant to unions in at least two broad ways. Firstly, trade unions have historically had legitimate interests beyond the immediate concerns of the work and the workplace. Secondly, aspects of wider change may well come to have an effect on industrial issues in the longer term. Examples of wider changes that were not addressed directly in TRACE include climate change, migration, and emerging technologies though cases can readily be made that each of these will have important consequences for trade unions across many, if not all, industrial sectors.

What do we mean by anticipation?

The anticipation of change requires both that trade unions have some understanding of current and potential future changes and that they are able to prepare themselves to respond to, or more ambitiously to shape, that change. In the organisational learning framework we introduce below, we can think of anticipation as a type of organisational learning. Organisational learning has consequences not just for the individual learner, but also for trade union practice and organisation. As noted below, there is good evidence that this process is underway and relatively new forms of structure and organisation have been developed, as well as tools to support future changes. In the following section, we present a framework for thinking about these experiences both to give some coherence to what have been a rather diverse set of experiences (which has been one of the strengths of the project) and to give allow some identification of patterns and possible areas for future developments.

4.4 Transnational learning

TRACE has been structured primarily as a set of learning interventions (understood broadly). Central project support was organised as a series of training workshops, and project partners have similarly centred on learning activities. Merely by participating in a project such as TRACE, partner organisations are indicating at least some degree of commitment to learning. Taking an organisational learning² view of the project activities helps to distinguish the types of learning that have been conducted and clarify areas that might usefully be considered in future trade union education programmes.

Drawing on the work of several prominent writers in organisational learning, Pawlowski (2001) offers a 4-dimensional framework for thinking about types of organisational learning, which is helpful here (see also Hislop, 2005). These dimensions are: learning level, learning mode, learning type and phase of collective learning. These are explained in more detail

² There is considerable debate about the precise meaning of the term organisational learning. It is rather less widely discussed in the context of trade unionism, though some have pointed to difficulties in simply importing concepts from mainstream management to the trade union context. This is not an appropriate place for a fuller discussion of these issues.

below and discussed in the context of TRACE activities. This is followed by a discussion of the implications of looking at the experience of TRACE in such a way. At this stage, these should be read as suggestive initial sketches rather than detailed analyses.

Phases of collective learning

Collective learning can be thought of as having four phases: the identification of relevant information; the internal exchange and diffusion of knowledge; the integration of knowledge into existing systems; and the transformation of knowledge into action. These phases do not necessarily need to follow sequentially, and a particular activity may involve more than one phase of collective learning.

TRACE KAs have emphasised different phases in their activities. The handbook and training materials produced by the EMF, for example, can be thought of as tools for integrating knowledge generated through experiences of dealing with restructuring into the working practices of the Federation and its affiliates. The KA built on information which had largely been identified and gathered prior to TRACE. The ÖGB's KA, contrastingly, gathered, interpreted and integrated information in preparing a handbook and training materials for subsequent dissemination. This will lead, it is envisaged, to changed practices in recruitment and organisation of workers in SMEs.

Learning level (individual, group, organisational, interorganisational).

Learning level refers to the organisational level at which learning occurs. While all organisational learning requires at least some individual learning, the converse is not necessarily true: learning at the level of the individual does not necessarily lead to improved organisational effectiveness. Here, changes in trade union practices or structures resulting in part from the experience of TRACE may be seen as evidence of organisational learning. In TRACE terms, the organisational levels of learning beyond the individual are interpreted as group, for example in a union in a specific workplace; organisational, at the level of the union beyond a particular workplace; and interorganisational learning as that for example in interorganisational networks. In this context, it is probably useful to think of EIFs as particular forms of interorganisational network³ rather than as organisations.

Transnational projects such as TRACE will generally have a particular emphasis on interorganisational learning; we can readily identify in the project examples of intended organisational learning at all three levels beyond the individual. Most obviously, the sectoral and sub-sectoral networks, as established by ETUCE and UNI Europa, are designed to provide ongoing interorganisational arenas in which any of the various phases of collective learning described above may be promoted. These networks differ, though in the organisational levels at which participants operate: in the UNI Europa Graphical Gravure & Web Offset network, the network participants are primarily related to company-level organisation (though the network includes some trade union officers) whereas the ETUCE networks and the UNI Services network are explicitly networks of national officers. These differences might reasonably be expected to have different consequences for the way in which the learning experiences of the interorganisational network are imported at organisational or group (see above) levels. The company-level networks which the CFDT-TUC project aimed to establish were heterogeneous in this sense, including workplace representatives and trade union officers with sectoral and regional responsibilities. KAs such as the two involving the

³ It might also be useful to think of some communities of practice as constituting interorganisational learning, as for example in the community of practice of trade union educators involved at the European level.

LO Skolen and CISL established an interorganisational learning arena for the life of the project, but one whose primary focus was organisational with the CISL (at regional level) and the Danish LO.

Learning mode (cultural, cognitive, action).

Learning modes refer here both to the ways in which learning happens, and aspects of the content of that learning. The three modes proposed by Pawlowsky correspond with knowing, feeling and acting as complementary dimensions of individual and organisational learning. Unlike some other arenas of learning, trade union education in general is particularly focussed on learning for and through action, but also contains strong cognitive aspects (for example, in analysing drivers for and consequences of change in a particular setting) and cultural (for example, in strengthening feelings of social solidarity). Despite these commonalities, there are significant differences between the various traditions of trade union education in Europe. The evaluation activities did not explore these issues, so we are not able to comment on how the different flavours of trade union education might influence particular types of organisational learning.

Learning type (single-, double-loop learning, deuterio).

Learning type refers at a general level to the profundity of the impact of learning on organisational activities. The three types of learning here correspond to: incremental improvement of practice within a stable framework (single-loop); learning in response to events which lead to questioning and review the fundamental assumptions which underpin a particular frame of reference (double-loop); and learning in which organisations explicitly organise themselves to 'learn-to-learn' by questioning the process of learning itself.

Almost by definition, the motivation for TRACE, with its focus on the anticipation of change, marks some recognition that traditional assumptions about how trade unions respond need to be reviewed and perhaps revised, in a context of rapid change. We can see evidence in most KAs of learning resulting from questioning existing practice and looking for new ways of working, not least as many KAs were conceived in response to recognition that some aspect was inadequate. Few, if any, KAs, might be argued to have engaged in the kind of explicit consideration of how unions might reorganise themselves to 'learn to learn' rather than how they might learn about and respond to particular (albeit frequently critically important) challenges.

Using this model to distinguish between types of learning intervention can help to refine the design of future initiatives by allowing for a more precise consideration of the types of learning that are intended and how they may be achieved. For example, networks, as thought about in TRACE and previous projects, and discussed in more detail below, are forms of interorganisational learning intervention. However, they may not be the only way of supporting interorganisational learning. Similarly, thinking of collective learning in terms of the four phases outlined above may have implications for design of workshops, or series of workshops (for example, addressing different aspects of this cycle at appropriate times). Alternatively the thinking of the four phases of collective learning may help in the design of a work programme for a network, and the identification of tools appropriate to support particular phases of work. While the TRACE experience offers evidence of 'double-loop' learning among partners, the above model suggests the question of what 'deutero-'learning might look like in trade union settings and whether it is a realistic or desirable objective.

One key site of collective learning not explicitly considered in the above framework, however, is that of the 'network of practice' or 'community of practice'. The existence of two emerging communities of practice among the project partners was evident, and reflected in the structure of the Preparation Phase training workshops. Firstly, the workshops provided

opportunities for national trade union educators to share ideas, develop practice and strengthen social relations during both formal sessions and informal social events. This community has been emerging for at least a decade through a range of activities led by ETUI-REHS Education's predecessor and to some extent is developing a shared set of experiences, concepts and vocabularies. Secondly, a significant unanticipated outcome has been the creation of a unique space for Federation officers to meet and discuss issues in an informal setting. This was commented on in interviews and workshops by several of the officers, and given their co-location (in most cases) in Brussels, it is perhaps surprising that such opportunities did not exist before.

4.5 Networks

Online networks have been a feature of recent transnational European trade union organisation and education. The potential of ICT to support new channels of communication which involve wider layers of trade unionists in sharing information and co-ordinating cross-border activity appears self-evident. However the experience both of TRACE and earlier projects suggests that the reality of building durable information and co-ordination networks remains problematic. Disentangling the multiple potential factors and their influence on the successful development of such networks remains difficult, for several reasons including:

- influences operating at different levels of analysis. Successes or failures may be explicable in more macro industrial relations terms (for example, as the outcomes of inter-union or inter-plant dynamics) or more micro organisational terms (for example, technology choices or the management of particular networks).
- Differing understandings of the nature and purposes of networks. Networks may exist informally and organically from repeated social and working contacts, for example among officers with international responsibilities or long-standing members of EWCs. Alternatively, they may be consciously designed to complement or augment the workings of formal or semi-formal organisation structures such as standing committees. 'Designed' networks may aim to involve particular constituencies over indefinite time periods and across a range of activities, or be more narrowly issue-focussed and time limited.
- Differing understandings of 'success'. Success may be viewed differently in the delivery of particular outcomes (e.g. in a campaign) such that a short network life may be an indicator of success (as the campaign objectives are achieved) or more structurally as an ongoing forum for information sharing and co-ordination.

Nevertheless, some key features of the networks envisaged are evident:

- the more successful networks have are comprised primarily of national trade union officers working on transnational issues with immediate domestic concerns. In all cases, the focal work of the network has addressed issues of public policy (the Bologna process, general tendencies towards private sector working methods in schools, the European Services Directive);
- conversely, it has been more difficult to build sustainable networks of workplace representatives at enterprise or sub-sectoral levels. The reasons for this are unclear but may include some or all of: greater difficulties with language, greater difficulty in access to ICT and/or ICT-related skills, reluctance to share information with members of other unions or workers at other plants or for other companies, workplace representatives' being less concerned with more 'abstract' or longer term trade union

issues addressed by transnational networks; greater network sensitivity to workplace-level contingencies (e.g. changes in locally elected leaderships)

- the more successful networks were led by capable ‘animateurs’ with both the personal and organisational commitment to be able to devote time to the work of the network. The same, however, was true of at least one of the unsuccessful networks, suggesting that effective animation is a necessary but insufficient condition of success.
- the more successful networks had both some form of shared online space (either a First Class conference or a web-based bulletin board) as well as email, as did the partially successful network. The less successful networks relied solely on email. Again, this may suggest that a shared online space may be a necessary, but insufficient, condition of success.

4.6 Problems:

Problems are always going to arise in any project and hence as an aspect of the evaluation framework we detailed any issues that the individual KAs experienced. Several KAs had difficulties which were highly contingent (e.g. elections removing local leaderships of KA participants, staff taking early retirement). We do not consider these particular contingencies here: rather we look at the more systemic problems which recurred across KAs. These ranged from IT and language problems, through to organisational and recruitment difficulties. Given the different patterns of problem, we consider EIF- and Confederation-led KAs separately.

EIF

Neither language nor ICT caused any obvious or general problems with the KAs led by EIFs. The issues that appeared problematic were more organisational: providing time and organisational support for network animateurs support was highlighted as problematic by three of the eight KAs and one had difficulty recruiting plant level representatives rather than national officers.

The EIF KAs tended to have more individually specific problems than any that could be noted on a more collective level. The involvement of new personnel at a late date provided a continuity issue for one KA (a problem noted also in Dialog On) and the diversity of national experiences was wider for one KA than initially expected which caused some difficulty for coherence, though this might be thought of as part of learning derived from participation in the project. Internal political issues were a concern for one KA and were highlighted by another KA at the beginning of the project but appeared to be resolved before completion. One interesting point raised by a KA was with regard to a unions’ ‘readiness’ to accept the act of sharing important information and having decisions influenced by other unions.

Confederation

Language was much more evident as a problem in the confederation KAs, with six of the ten KAs noting it as an issue. This varied in degree from being a major problem that impacted on the benefits of the project for particular participants, through to being only a minor problem resolved during the lifetime of the project. ICT problems were highlighted by three of the ten Confederation KAs as a concern with the main issue being the computer literacy or access level of shop stewards.

Late starts were problematic for four of the confederation-led KAs due to either a change of personnel or internal difficulties; most of these appeared to be resolved and had no major

impact on the remainder of the projects. The problems experienced by these KAs do not appear to have had any major impact on the viability of the projects themselves in most cases. However, it did affect the value of participation for some: in one KA language difficulties meant that one partner organisation gained rather more from the project than the other. Those who had more challenging starts than others still produced the anticipated outputs. Those who had experienced internal organisational issues did not claim that this had any damaging effect to the project work.

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