

The Power of *Mutual Learning*

#MutualLearning



How to maximise Mutual Learning before, during and after an activity

22 May 2018

ICF held its third Policy into Action Forum on 22 May 2018 to continue sharing ideas and knowledge on [The Power of Mutual Learning](#). On this occasion, the conversation focused on examining tools and approaches that can be applied before, during and after a Mutual Learning activity takes place - whether that be a Peer Review, thematic workshop, study visit and so on - to ensure that the learning experience is as rich as possible. Ideally, the learning should not only benefit direct participants in the activity, but also create a situation where participants share what they have learnt with their 'home' organisations or countries, and support a process of improvement and change. An interesting analogy for this situation comes from a participant in the previous Forum who said "Mutual Learning provides the ingredients, but the cooking has to be done back at home."

The Forum kicked off with two presentations on the [Horizon 2020 BUILD UP Skills initiative](#), which supports and develops multi-country qualification and training schemes for craftsmen, systems installers and other on-site construction workers in the building sector, as well as white collar workers (architects, etc.) The first speaker, Amandine De Coster-Lacourt from the Executive Agency for Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME), introduced BUILD UP Skills and explained how EU Exchange Meetings, working groups and peer review teams enabled project representatives from across Europe to exchange with each other around common themes and issues. The second speaker, Dragomir Tzanev from EnEffect Foundation, illustrated how mutual learning has been applied on the ground through the design and delivery of two transnational projects: TRAIN-TO-NZEB and Fit-to-NZEB. The participating countries (Germany, Ireland, Bulgaria, Romania, Czech Republic, Turkey and Ukraine) have benefited from very concrete, practical exchange in the form of study visits, peer reviews, workshops, training, etc.



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The Forum continued with group discussions to enable all participants to identify the success factors and challenges in creating the right conditions before, during and after a Mutual Learning activity. Key points included:

Before a Mutual Learning Activity

- Finding the right balance among the participants - it can be effective to pair policy experts with practitioners
- Clustering countries / participants around discussion topics

During a Mutual Learning Activity

- Keeping discussion groups small and having a mix of expertise
- Ensuring the full confidentiality of discussions

After a Mutual Learning Activity

- Translating learning into concrete practice
- Ensuring the results and outcomes are captured

As well as addressing the before, during and after of Mutual Learning, the Forum helped to identify future topics for discussion – all of which will provide inspiration for the next Forum planned in September 2018. The date and registration details will be announced shortly. In the meantime, why not stay with the cooking analogy and consider the ingredients that you will throw into the mix when designing your next Mutual Learning activity!

Policy into Action - The Power of Mutual Learning

Mutual Learning programmes help governments, agencies and businesses facing a common challenge to learn from each other as a means of improving their ability to make the right decisions, reduce or eliminate the risks of making the same mistakes twice, and adopt better ways of implementing policies or strategies on the ground to achieve better performance and outcomes. In a world that is fast-changing and uncertain, organisations cannot survive alone. They have come to rely on ICF to design and deliver facilitated Mutual Learning to open the door to a wider pool of experience and knowledge, and thereby find effective solutions to complex problems. In the European public policy context, the spirit of cooperation has never been more important and Mutual Learning provides an avenue for European countries to work together across many policy domains.

Want to get a better understanding of Mutual Learning?

Visit icf.com/mutual-learning or contact us directly.

