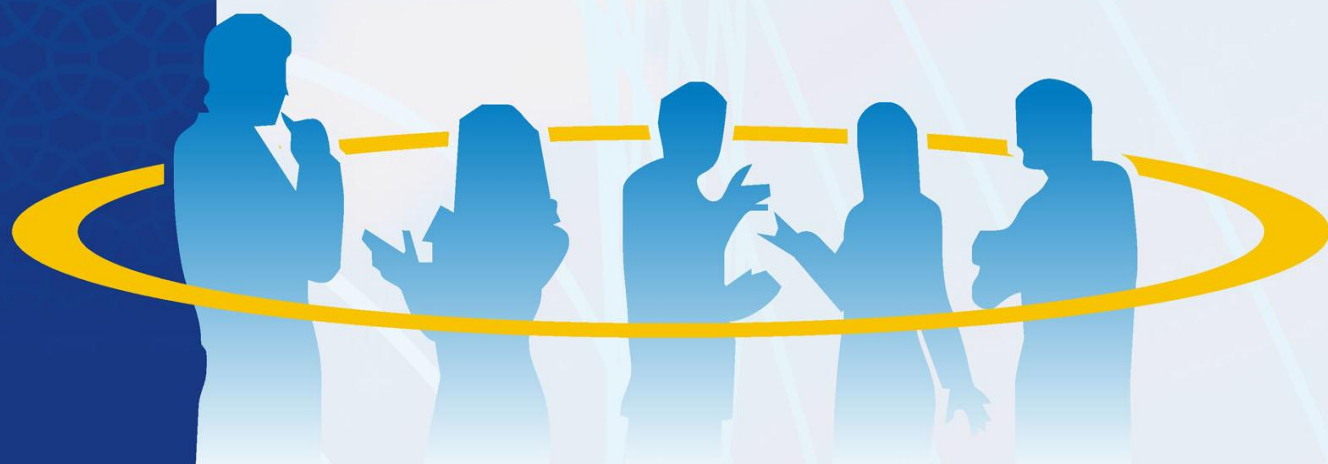




**NATIONAL REPORT
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN
LANGUAGE LABEL**

IRELAND / EIRE





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IRISH NATIONAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN LANGUAGE LABEL

1 Introduction

The *European Language Label* in Ireland has been a significant element in addressing language teaching and learning policy in Ireland. As part of its contribution to the NELLIP project, Universal Learning Systems has reviewed the history and background of the ELL award. It focuses on the methods, systems and structures that support and develop the ELL award. It addresses the key national priorities involved in rolling out and disseminating the ELL award and the identified learning outcomes.

This report addresses a number of dimensions regarding the ELL process in Ireland.

First, there is a review of the background, agencies and national institutions responsible for the *European Language Label* in Ireland.

Second there is a description of the national organization of ELL campaigns, national themes and priorities and the promotion of awareness and engagement.

Third is a review of selection criteria and the issues involved in judging and evaluating national best practice. There is an overview of the scale and nature of ELL awarded projects, evaluation and follow-up, with specific reference to impact and sustainability.

All this will occur in a context of two official national languages (English and Irish), a traditional weakness identified in the educational system in the development of proficiency in other languages, profound demographic transformation in the Republic of Ireland due to significantly increased inward migration and the escalating impact of the economic and fiscal crisis since 2008.

2 The European Language Label in Ireland

The *European Language Label*, which is simultaneously run in over 20 European countries, has been a major event in the languages' calendar since 1998. It has served as a powerful stimulus to schools, communities, individuals and local or regional authorities to address and enhance the quality of second language teaching. It has acted as a strong focus of activity in approaching issues around language learning - and these issues include:

- Methodology
- Innovation
- Lateral linkage
- Quality instruction
- Added value.

The ELL Award recognizes creative and innovative ways to improve the quality of language teaching and learning. For the Irish campaign, winners are selected on the basis of excellence, innovation, creativity and their ability to serve as a model for others.

The Irish campaign takes place against a background where there are two official languages. However, one (Irish) has been seriously compromised as a viable spoken medium since the late 1920s by a national policy





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of compulsory teaching with an accompanying lack of innovative methods in traditional schooling settings that lasted right up the 1980s. The decline of the Irish language as the daily vernacular has been both a critical comment on schooling policy and approach towards language acquisition and also a stimulus to identify the techniques and methods that enhance Irish language learning. This is reflected in the scale and nature of ELL awards recognizing good practice in Irish language teaching.

In addition, it has long been recognized at official and national levels that the Irish population's competence in languages other than the native spoken one is seriously deficient. This is partly ascribed to previous policies of language compulsion, but also to methods that rely on traditional rote learning and a lack of engaging and innovative methodologies.

The ELL Award system and process is managed by *Léargas*. *Léargas* is Ireland's National Agency for the management of national and international exchange and cooperation programs in education, youth and community work, as well as vocational education and training. *Léargas* is a not-for-profit organization that operates under the authority of the *Department of Education and Skills*. The DES is responsible for the schooling and educational systems in Ireland, as well as having direct responsibility for teacher training. *Léargas* works on behalf of the Department to manage European, national and international exchange and cooperation programs in education, training and youth and community work. *Léargas* has a lengthy tradition and experience in other exchanges and management and supervision of various EU project strands under the EU Lifelong Learning Program and other initiatives.

The *Department of Education and Skills*, through the *European Language Label* and working in association with the National Agency, *Léargas*, aims to:

- Assist in the development of professional skills of teachers and trainers
- Stimulate Irish schools, individuals, authorities, employers and training initiatives to focus on innovative projects in the field of multilingualism and to enhance the range and quality of additional language skills acquisition
- Promote the awareness and visibility of European school supports and to embed transnational perspectives on the identification and sharing of resources and best practices.
- Reach non-traditional learner groups and to acknowledge their role and development in a vastly changed socio-demographic paradigm.

The impact at national level is generally measured informally as there is no official tool to empirically measure the success or otherwise of the initiative. Project winners are provided with the logo for that particular year and are given advice as to its use. *Léargas* requests informal feedback from winners with regard to impact of winning on their organization but, beyond that, there are neither formal feedback mechanisms for project winners nor tools for the National Agency to use. This is a critical issue and raises a wider set of questions about comparability of data, defined quality standards, added value and, above all, the utility of ELL as a tool to advance – systematically and rigorously - language training standards within a context of profound change and systemic transformation.

A final point relates to the impact of the social and economic crisis that has had such an impact on Ireland since 2008. The crisis has put a new emphasis on learning skills that are relevant, transferable and quality driven. The inability of the vast majority of the Irish population to speak more than one language can be termed a significant drawback in regard to the skills and competences required to compete in an ever more globalized world. In an environment like Ireland's, where second language teaching has largely been to a set academic curriculum with a strong emphasis on rote learning, grammar and academic aspects, the role of ELL to stimulate alternative approaches and methodologies should not be underestimated.

An illustration of this was the event to mark the European Day of Languages 2010, when eleven Irish projects were awarded the *European Language Label* for innovative ways of teaching and learning





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languages by Professor Tom Collins, Dean of Teaching and Learning at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, and Chairperson of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, at an awards ceremony in NUI Maynooth. Four Language Ambassadors of the Year were also honored at the event.

In his keynote address, Prof. Collins stated that with the shift in the global center of gravity from the United States of America and Europe, assumptions that a proficiency in English would guarantee economic social and cultural mobility to Irish people, no longer hold. He added, "We must therefore become much more serious in our engagement with language learning and in our readiness to take on the challenges involved in it."

3 The Label Campaigns

3.1 Promotion

A comprehensive promotional campaign is undertaken in Ireland in early spring each year. A large-scale postal mail shot delivers promotional posters to relevant stakeholders countrywide.

These include:

- Language centers
- Schools
- Language associations,
- Education Centers
- Teacher training colleges
- Universities
- Libraries
- Specialized language initiatives.

The campaign is promoted on the Léargas website and features prominently on many language-related websites, electronic bulletin boards, etc. The *Department of Education and Skills'* website has also promoted the ELL campaign in the past. A bilingual application form (Irish and English) is available to download from www.leargas.ie/ell.

Promotion for the European Language Label is also carried out during presentations at Comenius and eTwinning Information sessions, Comenius Assistantship Induction meetings and promotional material is provided at a number of language teacher association meetings.

Promotion of the award winners begins in advance of the ceremony with the publication of a press release that is distributed to all major media outlets in the country. This press release is also available to download. A bilingual ceremony booklet is also published and made available in hard copy at the ceremony and can be viewed on the resources tab on www.leargas.ie/ell. Winners are provided with official photos and the ELL logo after the event for their own dissemination.

In 2012, a film production company was commissioned by Léargas to create short, dynamic video clips for each project and individual winner. These were shown at the award ceremony and will be available on the Léargas website shortly for dissemination purposes.

Among its range of activities, the National Agency, Léargas, undertakes significant activity around promotion, and information on the benefits of and opportunities offered by the European Language Label. Different strategies have been used for this purpose:





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- Publication of ELL information brochures and leaflets presenting the European Language Label.
- Publication of newsletters explaining ELL activities in the Irish national context.
- Organization of seminars and events to disseminate information about projects and initiatives that were awarded the European Language Label.

3.2 Call

Projects are nominated by a wide range of schools and associations. There is also the possibility to nominate an individual. Application is open and inclusive and done via the Léargas website where forms are available.

The administration of the ELL award is managed by Léargas. Promotional material is distributed by post and electronically in late winter/early spring (the deadline for the relevant year usually falls at the end of March). Regular meetings of the *European Language Label* Steering Committee take place throughout the year and there are two independent juries (one for projects and one for the individual award). No Léargas staff sits on either of the juries. This maintains the neutrality of the system.

The Irish campaign is designed to be transparent and egalitarian in nature – the National Agency welcomes applications representing all global languages to apply. As an example, Chinese, Japanese and sign language initiatives have won in the past. The inclusion of ISL (Irish Sign Language) was rightly seen as a highly innovative dimension.

In terms of main national trends, an average of 38 project applications and 10 individual applications are received on a yearly basis. (Fewer project applications were received in 2012, although this was perhaps due to one key colleague being on maternity leave during this period and only one day a week cover was provided for the duration). In terms of participation level and typology, applications are welcomed from any type of institution and the diverse winners each year reflect this comprehensive approach to the promotional campaign and the adjudication. It has been one of the aims of the initiative to attempt novel and stimulating methods which meet wider social objectives around, for example, migrant integration, social inclusion or the adoption and use of less standard languages.

3.3 Selection of winning projects

The Steering Committee for the *European Language Label* in Ireland annually revises the jury appointees for the current campaign in the autumn period. For example, the 2012 Jury consisted of 5 members representing third-level institutions, the inspectorate, public service bodies and vocational education. In advance of the first jury meeting, all jury members receive copies of all applications. Short-listing is conducted at the first meeting and in situ visits are carried out by two jury members to each of the shortlisted projects. At the second Jury meeting, the reports of the in situ visits are discussed and the winners were chosen. The individual Jury meets just once to review and decide on the individual winners. The Jury is made up of representatives in the field of language education, sign language and the inspectorate.

3.4 The Award Ceremony

The ceremony takes place every year in a well-known venue (e.g. university, government building, etc.) and a keynote speaker of repute is invited to address the audience. All winning projects and individuals receive a certificate, an engraved crystal trophy and, where budget permits, prize money may be awarded.





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4 Priorities

The European Commission proposes specific priorities each year for the *European Language Label* award. The yearly priorities aim to identify achievements and developments that, in their design, application and results achieved, clearly referenced and addressed a political or strategic framework in improving and promoting language teaching and learning.

Teaching a second language therefore becomes part of a wider agenda. Teaching a second language - or developing basic awareness among pre-primary children that second languages exist - is educationally engaging but also part of a wider strategic orientation that reflects policy towards growing diversity in Europe.

For the 2012-2013 Campaign, the priorities defined by the European Commission are:

- Language learning based on the new technologies
- Multilingual classrooms

Each Member State will then identify its own priorities and specified targets to address national issues or needs.

There is also the need to ensure that the multilingual aspirations of an emerging Europe are met. The Commission of the European Union has a Commissioner specifically responsible for multilingualism. While language policy is national, Article 22 of the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union* recognizes the right to linguistic diversity. The official role of the European Union is to support and promote multilingualism – while responsibility for methods and implementation is left to Member States. The stated goal is that European citizens will speak two additional languages in addition to their mother tongue.

A national priority for Ireland is decided on by the *European Language Label* Steering Committee and then included on all promotional posters. For example, in 2012 “Languages for Employability and Competitiveness” was the Irish priority. However, Léargas and the *European Language Label* Steering Committee believe that very good applications that do not attend to the priorities should not be penalized. Therefore, the priorities advertised are not considered to be exclusive for Irish applicants – all types of applications are welcome to apply. This is a broad and inclusive understanding of priorities.

5 Awarding the European Language Label

In Ireland, the Jury is composed of a President and a number of representatives from educational bodies with linguistic expertise. One of these representatives must come from another Member State of the European Union. The remit of the Jury is to decide whether or not a project merits the award of the *European Language Label* based on a set of quality criteria and in line with the priorities set by the European Commission and the National Authorities. The Jury is an independent body with the sole function of decision-making. The process is designed around the importance of ensuring that all individuals involved in evaluating proposals and selecting projects are entirely unconnected with the projects to be adjudicated and have no conflicts of interests.

The European Language Label may be awarded to projects which have just finished, or are currently being implemented, or where implementation is imminent and the National Jury is convinced that it has been adequately prepared. Projects which have completely terminated their activities are not eligible to receive the Award. The European Language Label is awarded to a project and not to an organization, e.g. to an initiative offering virtual language learning and not to the school or college or organization running this course.





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The ELL is not a quality mark. Recipients of the ELL are entitled to mention the certificate and the year of the award and may use the logo in their materials.

The awards are made based on the quality of applications received in any given year. There is no minimum/maximum number of awards, although in recent years approximately 4 project awards are made. However about 40% to 50% of applications received are shortlisted and receive a visit by two jury members. A number of issues and themes are considered in the evaluation process that selects award winners. These categories in turn reflect the emphasis on quality and innovation that sets awards apart from mainstream language learning efforts.

The key dimensions that shape the criteria for ELL awards in Ireland include:

1. The comprehensive nature of the initiative : including how learner needs are identified and met, the range of people involved and the methodologies employed.
2. Improvement (qualitative and quantitative) and added value: dimensions of the objective and expected results with an emphasis on added skills.
3. Enhanced motivation produced
4. Innovation and originality: technologies employed, methods and creativity
5. European added value and citizenship
6. Transferability to other environments and adaptability.

6 Evaluation and Follow Up

The *European Language Label* is a valuable tool in assessing and awarding quality language learning initiatives in Ireland. The ELL also is designed to address the priorities and aims of the European Commission in the field of language learning. European language policies aim to protect linguistic diversity, promote knowledge of other languages and indirectly facilitate the free movement of labor.

Some recent documents that provide useful background material on the European policy context on language learning include: *The Council's Conclusions on Language Competences to Enhance Mobility* (2011), *Strategic framework for cooperation on education and training* (2009), *EU strategy for multilingualism* (2008) and *Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment* (2008).

Current European Union policies on language learning focus on:

- Enhancement of quality of language learning
- Evaluation of performance of language teaching
- Teacher training
- New approaches to language teaching and learning
- Supporting mobility for language learning
- Promotion of multilingualism
- Language learning for specific purposes
- Tools for monitoring progresses in language learning
- Recognition and validation of language skills acquired through non formal and informal learning
- Implementation of the *Common European Framework of Reference* (CEFR)





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- Promotion of links between VET qualifications and CEFR
- Promotion of less widely spoken languages

As stated before, the impact in Ireland is largely measured informally. There is no official tool to measure empirically the success or otherwise of the initiative. The Steering Committee appraises the ceremony shortly after it takes place and amendments and suggestions are made for the following year's campaign. An ELL section of the LLP report to the European Commission is completed annually. Léargas requests informal feedback from winners with regard to impact of winning on their organization but beyond that there are no formal feedback mechanisms for project winners or tools for National Authorities to use. This has been identified as a gap.

The needs of four educational sectors in relation to multilingualism are addressed in Ireland:

- School Education
- Higher Education
- Adult Education
- Vocational Education and Training.

The NELLIP research has indicated a high degree of focus in awards, with a strong emphasis on meeting the needs of a growing interculturalism in Irish society. In addition, the application of the ELL awards in Ireland has targeted language acquisition in the workplace and the use of individual awards. All these awards serve as exemplary instances for achieving additional language competence. A noted development has been the award of Language Ambassador, highlighting individuals who, in often strikingly original ways, have made a strong commitment to multilingualism in various contexts. The Language Ambassador of the Year Award aims to recognize achievements of individuals in the promotion of language learning. These individuals, from both formal and non-formal education sectors, help to raise awareness of cultural diversity and encourage an understanding of different values and beliefs through their work teaching and promoting language learning.

Effective evaluation would depend on relating outcomes to national policy priorities (and those of the European Union) through systematic research and correlation over a number of years. This has not been undertaken and is unlikely to be addressed given the current state of public resources.

7 Impact and Exploitation of the European Language Label

7.1 Impact

The review of the selected Irish case studies suggests an insight into the motivation and rationale of those who seek the ELL award in Ireland. Most of the project promoters decided to submit their application to the *European Language Label* in order to:

- Secure greater visibility for language projects
- Obtain official European recognition
- Enhance national recognition
- Develop motivation for students and teachers in language related projects
- Enhance project sustainability
- Demonstrate innovation and best practice
- Position themselves for future activities.

The *European Language Label* is regarded by Léargas as having a strongly positive impact on projects. The Label gives a strong degree of recognition and acknowledgement to project promoters. A critical aspect is





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the enhanced visibility not only in language specific areas (although that is very important) but also in the wider community. The ELL award in particular was seen as enhancing the motivation of the project promoters. The increased visibility for initiatives around technological innovation acts as a particular incentive for those working on e-learning and ICT supported learning. Many university sponsored language learning start-ups have participated in calls and the achievement of an award acts as a genuine spur. For those working with immigration and social integration, achievement of ELL can have a powerful effect and act as a really important form of validation. Projects such as that undertaken by Dublin vocational teaching staff relate directly to these matters. These cross-sector bodies demonstrate real and interesting applications of language learning to achieve social inclusion and the ELL is regarded as having been a significant stimulus.

Interest in the Label by the language learning industry has been significant, and many innovative projects from university-based language laboratories to Irish language initiatives in Gaeltacht areas have been notable successes.

The National Agency released a bilingual press release in advance of the award ceremony to national, regional and local news outlets around the country. Many of the winners also used this press release to promote their winning project in local media, on relevant websites and as a promotional tool. The Léargas website has a dedicated ELL section www.leargas.ie/ell and visitors to the website can find out about upcoming campaigns and download the ceremony booklets.

7.2 Exploitation and Dissemination

Project promoters of ELL awarded projects use the ELL logo on all the publications and materials (brochures, promotional leaflets) related to the project. Most project promoters have produced press releases, and coverage in local, regional and national media has generally been quite high. Many of the ELL awarded organizations make extensive use of their websites and social media to highlight their success. As many of the Irish awards have been to technologically innovative projects this is a logical and beneficial move.

Reactions of both the National Agency and project promoters suggest that the task to develop a quality language project that can successfully achieve the *European Language Label*, requires a strong degree of innovation, reaction to community and strategic needs, and direct involvement of intended target groups. This in turn enhances the visibility of the program, and the perceived value of the ELL in promoting the work of award winning organizations as well as the intrinsic value of the projects under review.

Irish projects have benefitted from a wide and innovative range of awards. These range from multilingual training for health care emergency services in the north-west to immigrant support measures to primary schools teaching Spanish through the use of Mexican cultural, social and play activities.

8 Best Practices

Understanding Best Practices in *European Language Label* awarded projects, means not simply meeting quality criteria adopted in awarding of the European Language Label. They derive from the added value of projects that demonstrate a number of elements. These elements relate to strategic priorities identified at both European and Irish national levels. They also relate to these priorities being addressed in innovative and creative ways.

This has been addressed in Ireland by linking language learning not simply to advanced and innovative methodologies (although the ICT supported dimensions are important) but also to a wider set of criteria around social inclusion, imaginative socio-economic linkage and an interesting focus on the labor market and



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vocational training. The realities of a profound multicultural transformation in Irish society and education are critical factors here – and many ELL awarded projects reflect this.

Thus the project developed by County Dublin VEC (*Content and Language Integrated Learning*) sought to support learning of English as a second language by engaging both second-level students from immigrant families and their teachers, by providing support and training. In the primary sector, ICT and intercultural diversity skills and design looked at use of a number of minority languages (*Languages for Intercultural Dialogue and ICT*). At university level, Trinity College Dublin developed a project (*SpEakWise*) to develop intercultural communication among final year students by enhancing ICT supported learning in German.

Many other ELL awarded projects looked at multidisciplinary approaches to learning Irish and promoting bilingualism in schools where Irish was previously simply an academic rather than applied subject. The award has made a significant impact in terms of applications for both adult education and employment related initiatives. In one, for example, developed by Leitrim County Council (*Multicom 112 Extension Project*) emergency services personnel developed basic linguistic competence in 17 languages, partly to address rapidly the needs of minority groups in emergency situations. This had a strong ICT support component and a dedicated VLE was constructed to support the learning. Another important factor was that the ELL award was to work undertaken via a Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation project – thus maximizing the linkage and transversal nature of outcomes.

In 2012 Authentik language Interactive won the ELL award. This project has been developed by Authentik, which has been a recognized and respected brand name since established in Dublin in 1980. It first originated as a research project in Trinity College, Dublin, focusing on how languages are learned. It is now a significant international player in the production of high quality language learning materials. Its language products are sold in over 40 countries worldwide. Authentik produces magazines, CDs, books and online resources for French, German, Spanish, Italian and English. Its products are made up of real content from each of the target language regions. Supplementary support material and learning activities are produced by a team of experienced language professionals. The target is to develop language skills and fluency in an enjoyable way. This is a highly effective project from an extremely professional company active in the field for many years. In fact, this company has won the European Language Label twice. This project was chosen by the Irish Selection Committee to represent Ireland at the *European Language Label of Labels* conference in Cyprus in 2012.

Thus, in general terms, best practices successfully address needs of specific target groups, quality deliverables, quality results, sustainability of the project, innovation, originality and transferability. The main impact of the *European Language Label* on language learning initiatives is the visibility of projects enhanced public awareness, validation and, when possible, sustainability.

As part of the research process for the Comenius SPEAK project (*Davis, Bruce and Farrier, 2009*) a number of policy, practice, outcome and methodological dimensions in terms of best practice in additional language acquisition was investigated. These suggested a template that is useful in evaluating the impact of ELL awards in Ireland. The key elements identified were:

Logistical dimensions:

- Interculturalism and ethnic diversity
- Migration
- Type of institution
- Population
- Ratio of languages to class size
- Adequacy of teacher training in area of second language competence
- Importance of European identity





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Policy:

- Informing teacher initial and in-service training in second language acquisition
- Realistic curriculum aims and objectives
- Providing occasions to use a second language in response to real communication needs
- Encouraging knowledge exchange between teachers of second languages
- Providing opportunities for intercultural development

Cultural Factors:

- Applying concepts of cultural awareness and intercultural competence in relation to second language teaching
- Strategic focus on the role of cultural awareness
- Involving the extended community in activities to facilitate awareness of new cultures

Socio educational context:

- Assessing classroom and mediated learning (ITC or blended methodologies)
- Serving holistic needs of the learner in the context of family and community

Teaching, Learning and Assessment:

- Criteria used in curriculum design, assessment and standards
- Appropriate and creative teaching materials
- Incorporation of ICT in learning events
- Learner centered learning activities and approaches

Praxis:

- Use of pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning
- Promoting inter-cultural and multicultural learning events
- Learner satisfaction with second language learning
- Teacher satisfaction with second language teaching

9 Recommendations

Anecdotal evidence suggests a range of benefits from participation in the *European Language Label* award process in Ireland – and even more benefits for those who have won recognition. As the ELL is recognized across Europe, winning projects see this award as a mark of excellence and use it for their own promotion and dissemination. The prestige and acknowledgement need to be exploited by the individual project promoter and this is not necessarily done in a consistent manner.

The strategies and policies required to promote a more cohesive approach across all participating countries with regard to the management and adjudication of projects would allow for better networking opportunities. Also more recognition at Commission level (e.g. Label of Label events) would help with the promotion of ELL at a higher level. At present the system is regarded as somewhat ad hoc. While awareness is adequate, it could be significantly strengthened with adequate resources and enhanced publicity. A small core staff are expected to cover an exceptionally wide area and, given these restrictions, the outcomes are exceptionally positive.

Currently no funding exists to allow for follow-on ELL projects or exploitation of results in Ireland. There is a risk therefore that the good results achieved and the enthusiasm generated may end up as no more than an episodic achievement rather than part of a coherent and sustainable multilingual promotion strategy. Perhaps under the framework of future Commission programs, the ELL winning projects could apply for funding to carry out, for example, transnational projects or research to harness knowledge/innovation in the



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field of language learning and provide a broader platform to disseminate the results of ELL winning projects.

The lack of connected research and systematic evaluation on a strategic and long-term basis is noteworthy. The impact of the initiative can be blunted without coherent and linked strategy and actions as part of a coordinated and targeted plan.

The development and extension of the visibility of the European Language Label among as wide a range of language learning providers (formal and non-formal), enterprises, public authorities and community organizations should be a key focus. The overall weakness of multilingual approaches in Ireland is a reflection of the legacy and impact of traditional teaching methodologies and excessive reliance on curriculum driven and examination-results influenced formal methods. The ELL label can assist in re-framing language teaching and acquisition as an enjoyable, achievable and highly participatory endeavor. Linkage to high-level ICT supported initiatives (in which Ireland has strong existing capacity) has served to highlight strongly innovative approaches and these should be deepened.

Further publicity and awareness of the potential benefits and impact of ELL awards should be promoted through social media, collaborative research/evaluation and enhanced linkage with language provider stakeholders at community and regional levels.

Case studies and comparative analytical studies developed by the NELLIP Network should also be used in order in time to present best practices as far as the benefits of the *European Language Label* are concerned based on shared and sustainable best practice.

10 Conclusions

The European Language Label has had a discernible role in Ireland in developing awareness, acknowledging achievement and highlighting best practice in language learning initiatives. The Label has contributed significantly to visibility and profile of awarded projects. This in turn has enhanced engagement and motivation for project promoters. The Label has contributed to sustainability either by providing follow up opportunities in follow-on project streams or in terms of promoting a greater incentive for the sponsoring organization to continue to support innovative language learning initiatives. The ELL award in Ireland has also underlined quality and provided badly needed recognition that is valued and esteemed.

There remain gaps in awareness. The smaller scale and interconnectedness of the Irish educational system mean however that levels of awareness and visibility are quite achievable. One drawback is the impact of the crisis and the severe restriction in public funding which can act as a disincentive for schools or even limit the resources available to the national Agency.

Connections with universities and adult education initiatives are strongly developed. The use of research to application strategies has been acknowledged.

A key focus is on quality. While the ELL in Ireland promotes awareness, promotion of best practice implies a systematic approach towards quality standards and evaluation techniques that do convey some sense that projects are selected on objective and relevant criteria. This report includes a sample of a Jury selection visit report form to underline this.

The application of inputs around advanced ICT supports and an explicit recognition of the needs of multicultural communities in a demographically transformed Ireland are positive elements. The use of language learning not simply as a language-acquisition method but as a means to address diversity, equity and integration is a strongly valued contribution of the ELL award in Ireland.





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It would also be important that the information about the European Language Label also includes a clear description of the benefits related to its awarding. In order to do so, maybe the case studies developed by the NELLIP Network may be themselves present best practices as an indication of examples of benefits stemming from the European Language Label.

11 References and Acknowledgements

The support of Léargas, the Irish national Agency, in developing this Report is greatly appreciated and acknowledged. In particular the comments and feedback of Lisa Fox and Nellie Tattersall have been of immense help.

Neither is, of course, responsible for any opinions listed in this report.

Reference is made to a number of texts as follows:

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APPENDIX: Irish ELL Selection Jury Report Template

Project reference number:

Project title:

Project organisation:

Jury members who visited project:

Date of jury visit:

Time of arrival:

Time of departure:

As a member of the European Language Label Jury, you are asked to assess the applicants under a number of headings, outlined below. In each case, please first indicate, by ticking 'yes' or 'no', whether the applicant has met the specific criterion. If your answer is 'yes', then please give your assessment of the applicant by marking on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = excellent; 2 = very good; 3 = average; 4 = poor; 5 = very poor).

Comprehensive Initiatives

Projects should meet the needs of the learners, involve a range of participants, use a variety of resources.

yes	
no	
comments	
SCORE	

Added Value

Projects should provide have clear objectives and expected results; they should build on and improve a range of skills. They might involve several languages, particularly those which are less widely used, or use a better methodology than before.



yes	
no	
comments	
SCORE	

Motivation

Projects should provide motivation for learners and teachers.

yes	
no	
comments	
SCORE	

Creativity and Originality

Projects should use the resources creatively: people, technology, materials, methodologies, and explore previously unknown approaches, appropriate to the learners concerned.

yes	
no	
comments	
SCORE	

Transferable Innovation

Projects should be a potential source of inspiration for others in different countries and contexts. They might, for example, be adaptable to the learning of other languages or to learning by different groups than those originally involved.

yes	
no	
comments	
SCORE	

European Dimension

Projects should be based upon the reality of the European Union and its linguistic diversity and use the potential which that offers, for example, contacts across national borders, to improve understanding of other cultures by means of language learning.

yes	
no	
comments	
SCORE	

Sustainability

Projects should be sustainable, and adaptable to future needs.

yes



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no	
comments	
SCORE	

Priorities

Projects should focus on one or more of the priorities listed.

yes	· Languages for Employability and Competitiveness	<input type="checkbox"/>
no	· Language Learning using New Technologies	<input type="checkbox"/>
comments	· The Multilingual Classroom – enhancing language and intercultural learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCORE		

FINAL SCORE	
ASSESSORS' FINAL DECISION	Award <input type="checkbox"/> Reject <input type="checkbox"/>
(If 'reject', please outline comprehensive reasons which may be passed on to the project)	