



International Experience: Ensuring the Impact of Erasmus+ Projects

ToC in the case of Dutch NA TCA Impact

Willeke van der Werf (Researcher E+ NA Erasmus+ Netherlands)

Erasmus+ Thematic Monitoring Seminar “ENHANCING AND SUSTAINING THE IMPACT OF ERASMUS+ PROJECTS” 15.10.2025 | Radisson BLU Daugava, Kuģu iela 24, Riga

NA 'impact-thinking' in NL is based on the ToC

- Small steps
- Adjusted to nearest area of development of beneficiary
- About them not without them



Emphasis on impact – What is it?

Inventing the wheel again?





Definitions of impact?

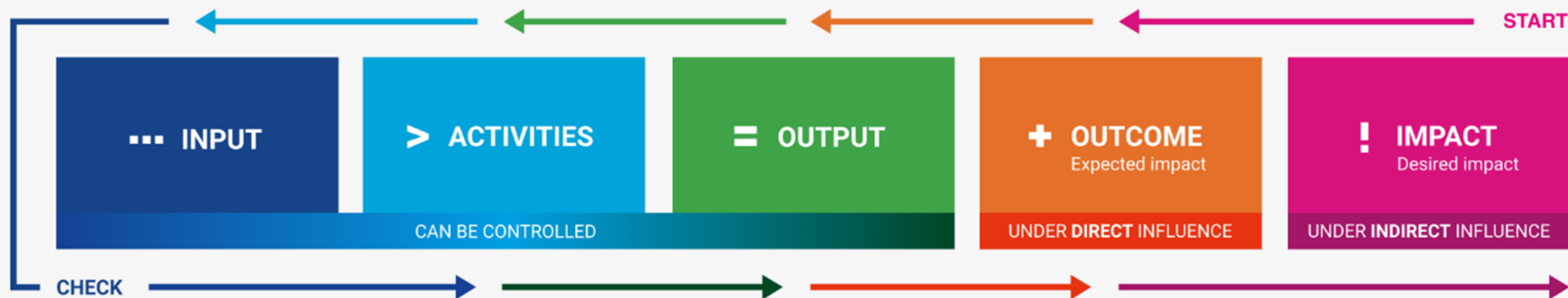
The OECD-DAC defines impact as:

a <positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended>.

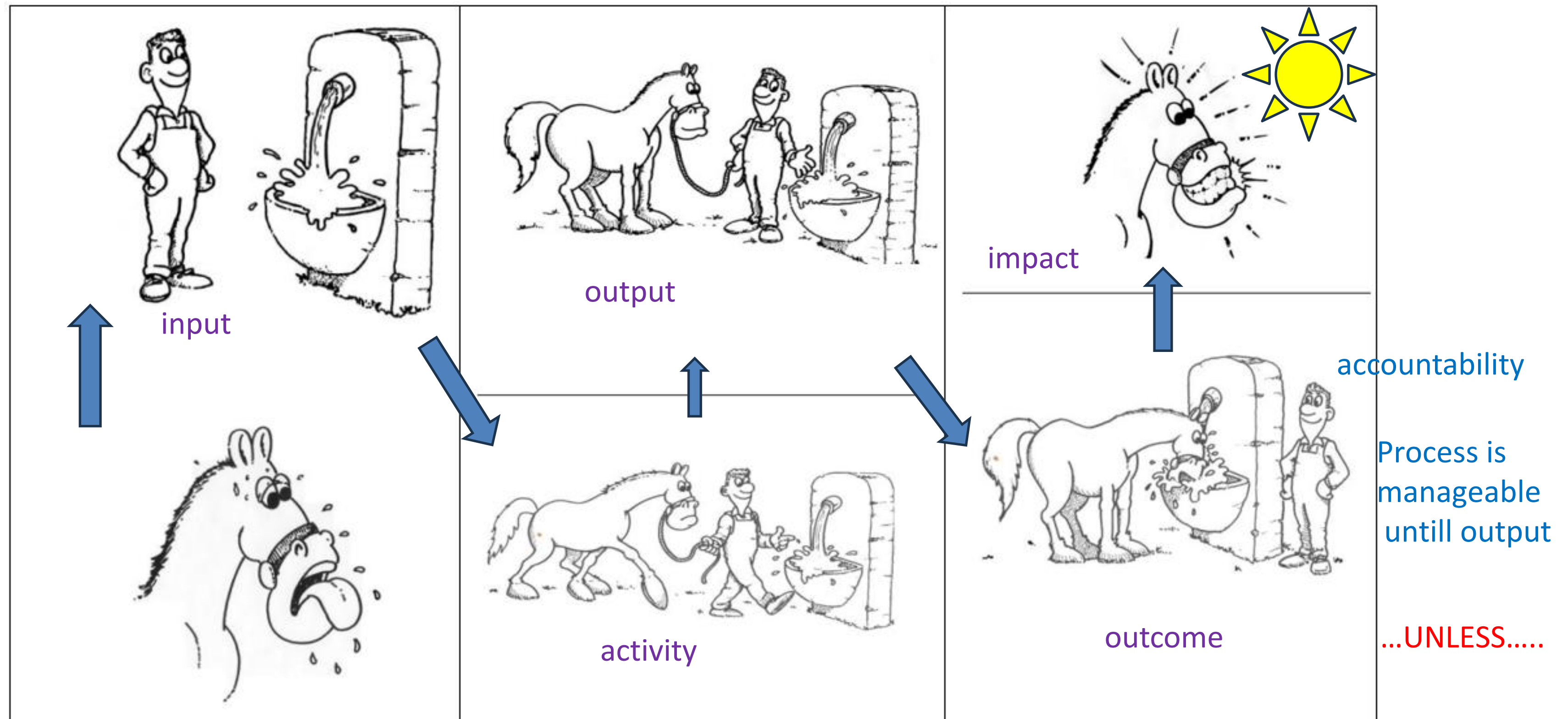
Or:*just focus on impact through all project stages....*



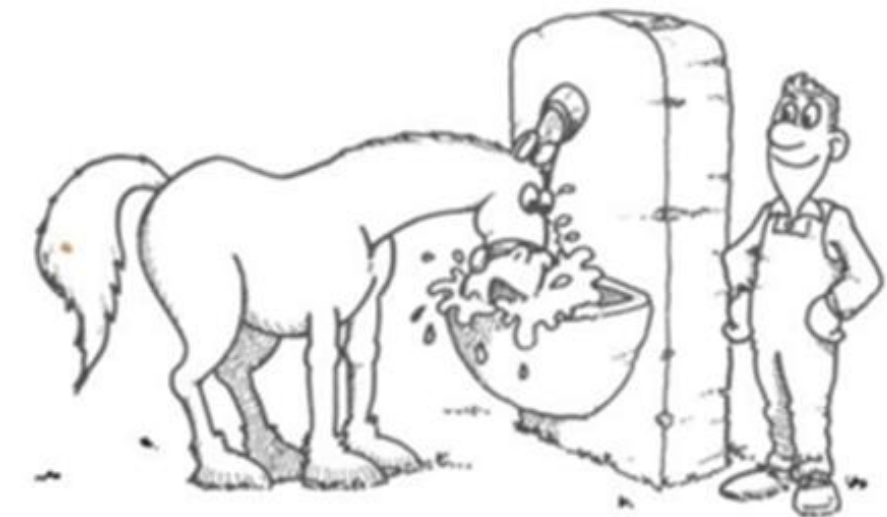
The Dutch NA promotes the use of an impact tool:



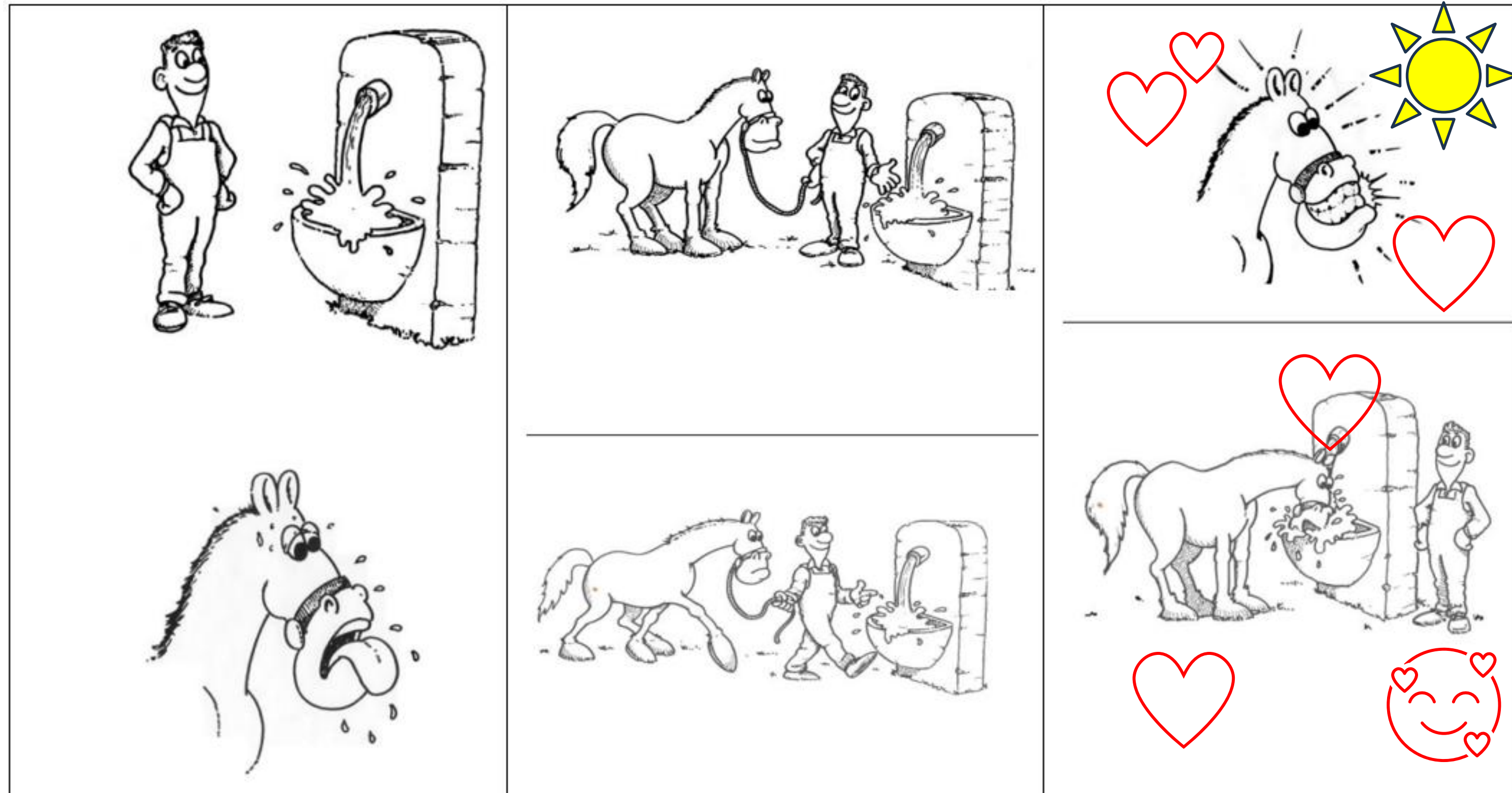
Erasmus+ impact: you can take a horse to the water but you cannot make him/her drink...



But what is missing here?



Quality of the relationship (= the connection) is the key to impact (o.a. Rathenau institute)



Moral of the story

enriching
lives,
opening
minds



- You can take a horse to the water, but *love* will make him/her drink ('about them not without them')
- Tool–development (f.e. a watersource) helps to provide *output*, however is not enough to provide *impact*
- *Quality of the connection* (and not just the relationship) is key to both impact and innovation

Use of the Theory of Change

The Dutch NA uses the Theory of Change, which is not a theory but a methodology to improve impact in projects:

- **Encourages thinking** about the **desired change**
- **Checks** whether involved parties have **confidence in the process**
- Makes participants **think about monitoring progress along the road**



**But what happens if
we say ‘impact’?**

**We usually discuss
‘output’**

Focus on 'output'

For example, in Dutch VET:

- New teaching methods
- Curricula
- Training
- Pedagogical concepts
- Languages courses



While impact may occur unintended during exchange

- Bridging differences
- Bringing stakeholders together
- Working together creating innovation...



Aim of impact support

- Understanding of the nature and development of outcome and impact level results in the context of E+
- Extended use of national research results E+ community (website)
- Relevant impact support tools



Aim of impact support

- E+ stakeholders understand roles and responsibilities on the development of E+ results and jointly work towards better impact
- E+ stakeholders know better to steer on program results through planning and monitoring
- Impact approaches internalized in participating NA's





**The aim of impact support
is to help NA's and
beneficiaries in their focus
on 'impact over output' by
offering tailored tools**



Outputs of the NL TCA impact

3 transnational policy-studies

- 
1. Context specific need for impact support mechanisms in participating countries (ready)
 2. Development of a guide for impact support in E+ with tailored **tools and impact handbook**
 3. Development of a communication and dissemination guide for impact results (...2025)

<https://www.erasmusplus.nl/impact>



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Erasmus+ Impact Handbook

How to work towards impact
in the programme Erasmus+



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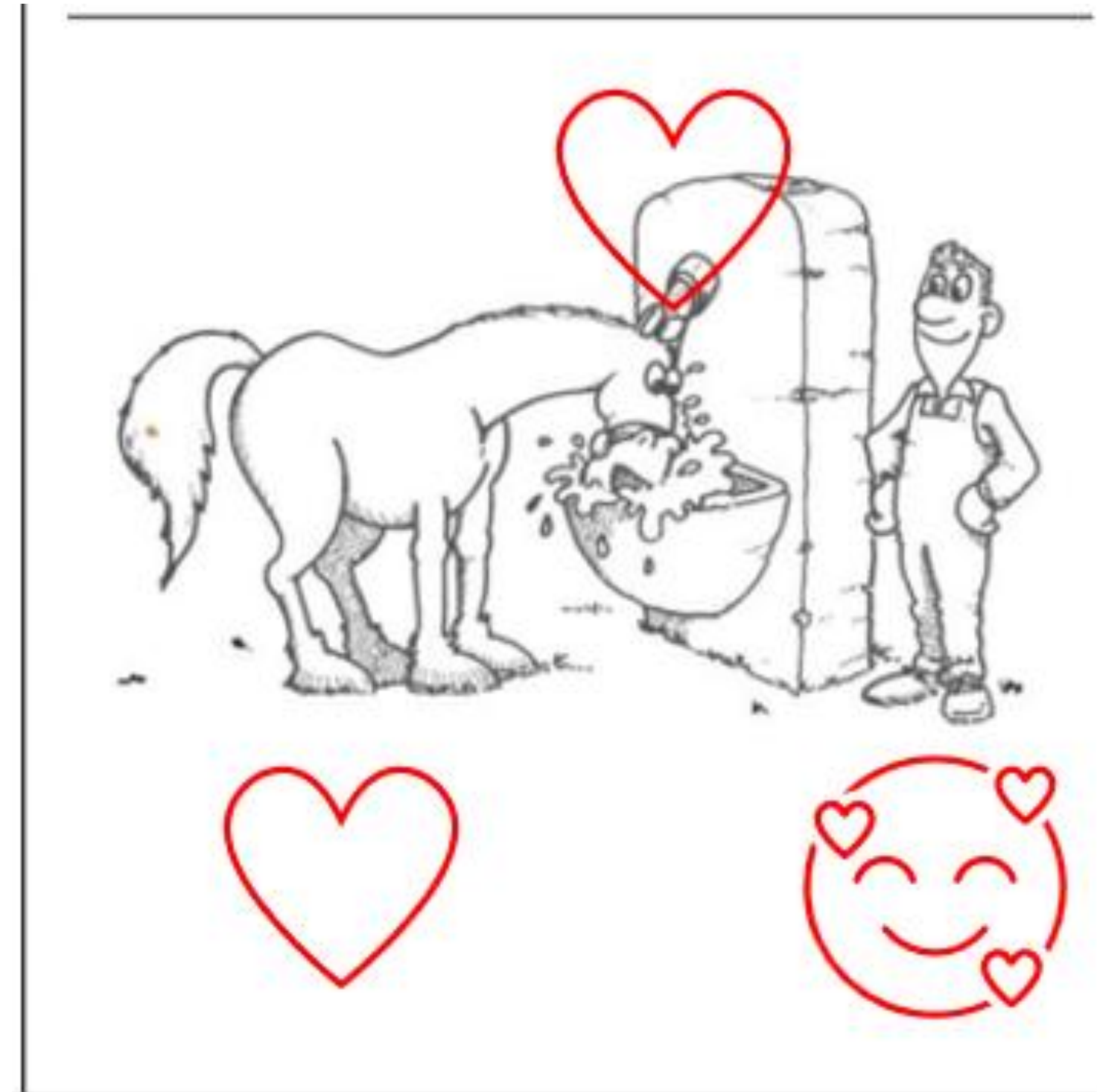
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[**https://www.erasmusplus.nl/impact**](https://www.erasmusplus.nl/impact)



Tools will help, handbook will help.... it offers a framework and a structure...
...the CONNECTION however brings impact and innovation





How can we use our research results for better NA effectiveness and E+ programme impact?



**We have beautiful impact results, such as large impact on
organisations, teachers and learners, and on embedding
internationalization in education (VE, PE/SE, VET)**

**However, to enable ourselves to learn, we also need to look at not
that nice results from smaller research on impact per sector**

Results from our AE impact study (2023) showed f.e.:

- Usual suspects (multi-annual) regarding small beneficiary-organizations, few large (libraries, etc.)
- 27% intends to apply for adult learners, 30% does not



erasmus+ Impact-research AE 2023 (N=70):

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- More embedded internationalisation in VE organisations, improvement in vision and project management
- 99% development professionals
- 87% outputs used in teaching methods and materials on regular base
- 71% improvement in teaching arrangement (15% strong improvement)
- More attention for LLL (58%), digitalisation (52%) and inclusion (38%)
- Enlarging participation in everyday life (81%), flow more education (76%) and more connections (74%)



- Relatively **many small organisations** maybe companies that use E+ als businessmodel?
little large organisations with **large reach** such as language schools, libraries, etc.
- **Usual suspects**, but how to reach outsiders?
- 27% willing to apply for adult learners (as not staff), however, **30% not!**
- Chances for digitalisation remain **lower than we want to see**
- **Impact outside organisation low -> transformative effect on system is low**

Results from our PE/SE impact study (2021) showed f.e.:

- Peer-to-peer learning needs E+ NA support
- Newby's in E+ need support to reach their colleagues
- Impact usually limited to school itself, not outside



- Large impact on teacher development
- Large impact on development of international competences pupils (48%)
- More attention for sustainability, world citizenship, D&I, digital tools, European dimension of international competencies
- Quality of education improved
- Content of education improved in large institutions
- 55% feels supported by NA in realising impact



- NA may support more to have schools learn from each other (Peer-to-peer)
- NA may support in facilitating better connections between national policy and priorities in E+ projects
- Impact outside school limited -> transformative effect

Results from our VET impact study (2024) showed f.e.:

- Overrepresentation of students in arts, childcare, tourism and hospitality
- Underrepresentation of students in technics, welfare-care and (lower)management/administration
- Innovation-centers are not reached by E+



- Large impact on **organisations and teachers** but especially on **students**
- Large impact on **embedding internationalisation** in the organisations
- **Mixed results on innovation**, predominately conditional: **sustainable international connections**
- Contribution to horizontal priorities especially **D&I and participation**



- **Underrepresentation** Erasmus+ in
 - Technics, technical services
 - Wellbeing
 - Management and administration support studies
- **Overrepresentation** Erasmus+ in
 - Art
 - Pedagogical and teaching support studies
 - Personal service (tourism, hospitality, leisure)
- VET **innovationcenters are not reached yet** so far, not targeted policy either of E+
- **Use of outputs is limited-> about them not without them, transformative effect**

Onderwijs

Onderzoek naar impact Erasmus+ op mbo studenten, docenten en instellingen

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Het mbo profiteert steeds meer van internationalisering

Samenwerken met buitenlandse studenten, docenten en organisaties in het kader van Erasmus+ levert het Nederlandse mbo veel op. Zo leiden uitwisselingen en stages bij mbo-studenten tot verbeterde interculturele competenties en zelfvertrouwen, en levert internationale





Meaning:
Research shows a lot of opportunities to improve impact and effectiveness
but IN PRACTICE
we need to adjust to NA colleagues and beneficiaries

NL TCA impact offers tools for practice to:

- Improve NA strategy and effectiveness
- Help beneficiaries to improve impact
- Impact support

**Helps to make research results
to work in and for practice**





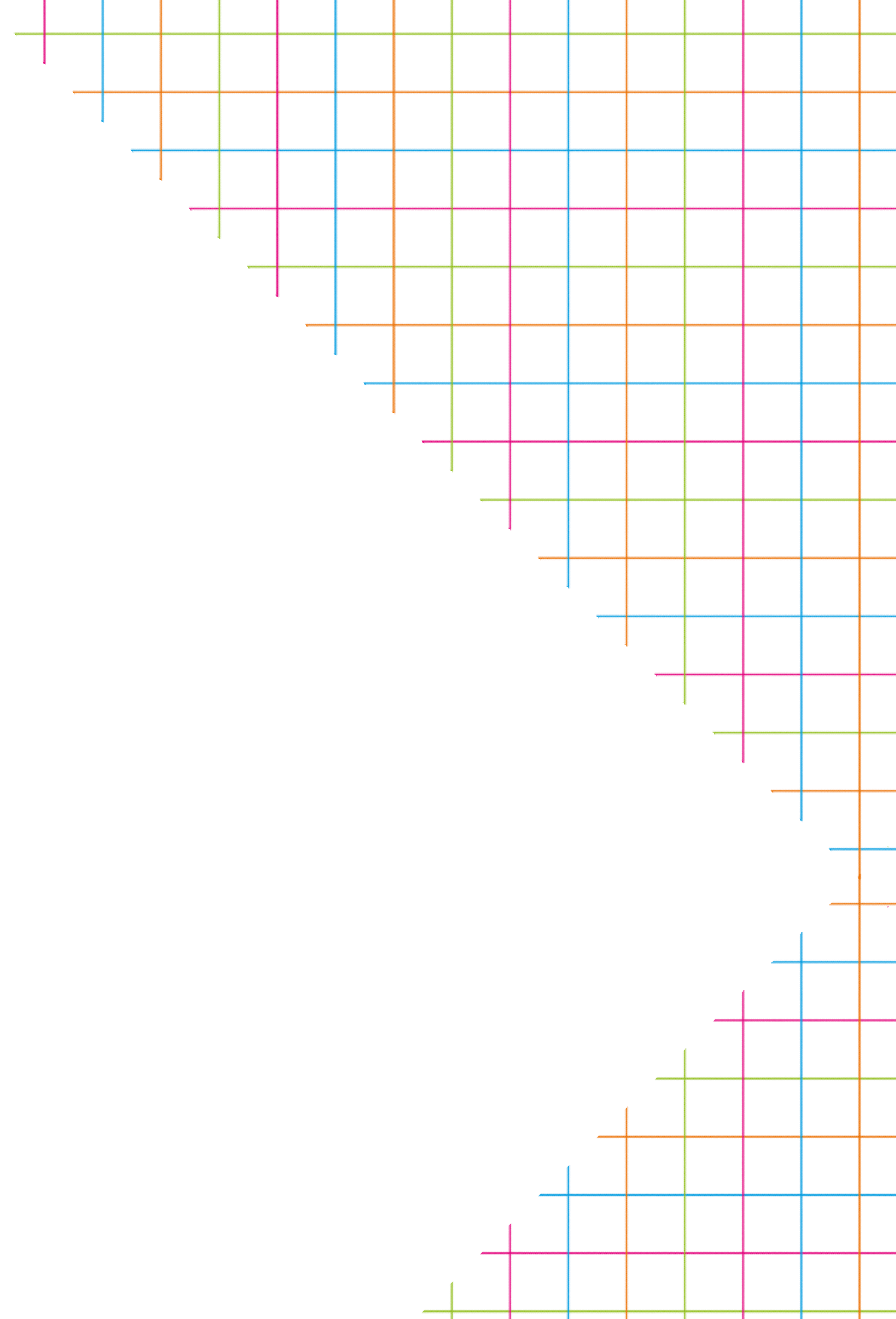
Questions?

wvanderwerf@erasmusplus.nl



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**Besides, we may also recognize chances for impact in
ENABELING FACTORS (from New Public Governance):**

- 1. Public purposes-relevance should be Nr 1**
- 2. Team-mission, team-spirit, inspiration, worksatisfaction**
- 3. Tools based on co-creation and participative methodology** (about them not without them, step by step, no tools without sense)
- 4. Equality between partners**, always, also in case of inequity
- 5. Beneficiaries are ‘engaged’ intrinsic motivated** and committed to E+
- 6. Quality in connection and collaboration** in networks
- 7. Alignment** between policy-principles and tools for effectiveness