Working with AI on impact: the 4Ds

A one-page guide for Erasmus+ project teams, for use with the Impact Toolkit for Erasmus+ Beneficiaries.

You don't have to use AI. If you do, these four habits keep you the author of your project's impact story. Impact evidence is only worth something when people can trust it, so the habits matter most exactly where AI is most tempting: summarising, counting and reporting.

D1

Delegation: decide what to hand over, and what to keep

Would speed help here, and could I easily spot a mistake? Who is accountable for the result?

Reasonable to try

- First drafts of Micro Follow-Up Survey questions
- A first pass at grouping long open answers into themes
- A devil's advocate for your Problem Tree: "which root causes have we missed?"
- Tidying meeting notes into your Living Learnings Document

Keep human: the "don't" list

- Choosing the Most Significant Change story. The group discussion *is* the method.
- Personal data about participants, especially minors, unless your institution has approved the tool for exactly that.
- The final judgement on what counts as impact in your report.
- Anything nobody will check.

D2

Description: say clearly what you need

AI knows nothing about your project unless you tell it. Give it:

- **Context:** who takes part and what the project wants to change
- **Task:** what you want it to do
- **Format:** a table, five bullet points, 150 words
- **Limits:** "use only the material I gave you", "say when you are unsure", "do not invent quotes or numbers"

> *"Here are 14 anonymous answers from our follow-up survey of catering students, three months after their placement in Spain. Group them into themes. For each theme, give the number of answers and one direct quote. Include answers that describe problems. Use only these answers."*

D3

Discernment: check before you trust

AI output sounds equally confident when it is right and when it is wrong. Before you use it, ask:

- **Numbers:** did I count them myself?
- **Quotes:** does each quote appear, word for word, in the source?
- **Voices:** whose experience is missing, especially the critical or unusual ones?
- **Claims:** does it say something *caused* an outcome when the data only shows that it happened?

D4

Diligence: take responsibility for what you use

- Tell your team, partners and National Agency when AI helped, and how you checked the result.
- Follow GDPR and your institution's AI policy.
- Keep the costs in view: errors, energy use, and the risk of flattening participants' voices into averages.
- The person who signs the report owns everything in it.

Not sure? Leave AI out. Every tool in the Impact Toolkit works on paper.

Adapted from the AI Fluency Framework by Rick Dakan and Joseph Feller. Guide and files: ai-impact.tools.demoshelsinki.fi