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STEERING SMARTER...

...FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE OUTCOME



A Personal Report by Michael-Bernhard Zita, MEDLIT Project Manager

Communication and Decision Making processes are closely tied, but they are also culturally determined. The intention of the MEDLIT project management structures was always to implement democratic structures, open to discussion, exchange - giving the involved partners the chance to make the project idea, a project of their own.

This basic idea was laid down by basic rules: Communicate and document transparently, stay in contact and discuss. Perhaps too little was thought about, how much documents will be produced, how much has to be read and that often there isn't enough time to be prepared well, especially by all project members that fulfill (another) fulltime job.

While the European Higher Education system has been largely transformed already to project ready or sometimes even project driven (time) structures, in other parts of the world this hasn't happened yet and perhaps won't happen on its own ever.

This transformation to more time- and task-differentiated structures, especially boundary work between different projects and responsibilities, is mostly economically determined with the crucial goal to be more efficient and reduce risks. Or more simply said: Have just the right amount of time to do your work in the best possible manner. This should reduce costs of many different kinds, but is also based on two general ideas: "Collaborative Work" & "Know your and be prepared for your Job". In project work this transforms in two important different but also supplementary approaches:

1. Have (and understand) a plan
2. Be ready to improvise and adapt

Starting there, that means the best way to collaborate is, to be pro-active but also be able to listen and be flexible. All of these sounds very easy and manageable till it meets the cliffs of reality. And within international and so intercultural collaboration these cliffs are more like mountains, well hidden in a sea of clouds.

Our approach within the Project Management Team in Vienna was always to try to make it easy for the project partners, trying to give them information in time, be there to discuss and explain guidelines. We called it Callcenter approach, but had always one thought, back in our mind, these major efforts will be temporary, giving the partners time to understand rules, structures and system on their own.

While this worked, in terms of producing project progress - it didn't work, in terms of the area of responsibility and willingness to make it a project of their own.

We thought much about reasons, may that be the long-distances, web-based (and so reduced) communication or the one-reason-to-catch-them-all: Different cultural backgrounds. Or perhaps it has more to do with structural reasons, like when there is coordinating institution that decides about eligibility while being the main risk-taking organisation, this institution has to say how it has to be done, killing initiative or just making it easier for others, limiting them to be vicarious agents.

Hierarchical structures and thinking is always easier if you want to reach specific goals but it is very limiting if you want to make structures sustainable when funds will expire after the project.

So with the window of opportunity, that the review of the Mid-Term-Report opened, we try something new: Smarter structures, in the sense of more locally made decisions, more shared responsibilities and very important: the opportunity to make the experience that collaboration is a two-way street.

The new "Smarter Steering & Monitoring Structures" were announced at the Steering Board Meeting on April, 12th 2017, and discussed, formed & agreed on at the Change Board Meeting during the TtF-Workshop at the University of Vienna in Vienna, Austria.



FROM ZU

Zeppelin University's team is currently working on the final Delphi report for submission to the project lead in Vienna and the EU. Based on the reported data and additional materials by all partners, we are assembling the information gathered and are processing the findings of the various national analyses. We are also working on our goal of improving dissemination within the academic community.

ZU's team will present a paper at the IAMCR conference in Cartagena, Columbia (July 17-20, 2017) on the topic of Media literacy. Based on further conceptual work and building on our experience in preparing the theoretical and methodological foundation of the MEDLIT-surveys we put up for scholarly discussion an extended model for researching media literacy from the perspective of media systems and media cultures.



CHANGE BOARD MEETING

Besides the activities at our TtF workshop Media Emancipation in Vienna in May 2017, MEDLIT's first Change Board Meeting with constituted quorum could be carried out. The attendees agreed of the rule of a Participation Fee of 10% of the participants' Costs of Stay and Costs of Travel, which is already in place so far by coordinator's decision. But with the last signed Partnership Agreement by AJC this could now be made a formal decision, captured as an appendix to the Partnership Agreements, replacing the old rule, which was too vague for the (cost) planning of activities. In the meeting the quorum also agreed on the UMK as Sub-Lead, as support for Main Lead OUNL, in the MOOC Development process.

The MEDLIT Project Management in Vienna is glad to announce our new "Smarter Steering & Monitoring Structures", which includes the assignment of new roles to certain partners. While the Reporting Role, carried out by SWU through a monthly newsletter, has already started its work with this issue, USSH will monitor the project's progress via the software ASANA and send out monthly status updates. Last but not least, CU will carry out the Impact Monitoring, which is meant to show and document the integration of the project's content at partner institutions and in the partner's countries.

The biggest and hardest decision, which led to an extension of the Change Board Meeting to May 19th and 22nd, 2017, was on a potential application for a project extension. On May 22nd all partners decided unanimously FOR the application of a 5 months project extension (till March, 14th 2018). All further needed steps towards this wish will be taken.

Additionally, many small agreements and arrangements were discussed and agreed on, so that planned outputs and outcomes were made more tangible for the collaboration between partners.

The whole Meeting protocol can be found on our website:

<http://medlit.vision.dhub/downloads/> (path: 01_Project Management > 01_Reports > 05_Change Board Meeting_May 2017)

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THE DIFFERENT MEANINGS OF 'FREEDOM'

As part of the External Expert Board, Anton Pelinka gave an input on the different meanings of freedom during the Ttf Workshop on Media Emancipation in Vienna. In his expertise as a professor for political sciences and studies on nationalism at the Central European Budapest, he focused his speech on different interpretations of democracies, how they always have to be seen in the historical context of their development and their intentions. Besides references to theoretical approaches by Lincoln, Schumpeter, Dahl and Lipset, Pelinka stressed the fact that living in freedom always also means some kind of restrictions. It can be self-restrictions as well as activities carried out by well-informed citizens and/or the acceptance of the state's law and regulations, which have been negotiated by voted representatives. This is an important point, which meets the necessity of Media Emancipation, as there the comprehension of rules and conditions of media production are important in order to use them and thereby co-shape society.



UMK'S EXPERIENCES AT OKTO



ACTIVITIES IN VIENNA



On 10 May to 22 May 2017, UMK team comprise of Prof. Dato' Dr. Ibrahim Che Omar, Prof. Dr. Nik Maheran Nik Muhammad, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Suria Baba, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mokhtarrudin Ahmad and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zailani Abdullah has participated Workshop on Media Emancipation, organized by MEDLIT University of Vienna. This workshop aimed at the question of how to handle the new media players, different to media institutions like newspapers, TV and radio. During the workshop, we had the opportunity to visit OKTO TV, which is a local community TV station in Vienna.

During the visit, we participated in several series of workshop conducted by OKTO TV. During the workshop, we learnt about theoretical of media literacy and culture, focusing on filming and techniques to develop and edit a high quality film. The ultimate goal of the workshop is to create UMK's short film and presents the it during closing ceremony. To create the short fim, we interviewed a few staffs of OKTO Station. They were Christian Jungwirth (CEO), Senad Hergic (Program Coordination), Georg Lindner (Project Manager), Harald Huto (Coordinator for Mulatchag TV), Alenjandro Pena (Coordinator for Latino TV), Tamres Cardoso (PhD student) and Susi Luschin (Coordinator for Senf TV). We learnt about their perceptions and opinions of pertaining media literacy and culture. At the end of the workshop in OKTO, we summarized the contents of the interview into a short film using the filming techniques that we have learnt previously in the OKTO workshop. With the great efforts and cooperation from all UMK team members to create the short film, the short-file received an excellent positive feedback from University of Vienna and whole MEDLIT team.



OKTO: OUR NEW VISION ABOUT TV CHANNELS



OKTO's CEO and CU & SWU Team



CU & SWU Team members on their duties

One of the things from the workshop in Vienna that surprised CU & SWU MEDLIT team is from OKTO, the TV community from people to people as there are very few communities TV in Thailand. Although the idea about the role of media in Thailand seems clear to us and other Thais, how normal Thai people could get involved in producing a TV program without financial investment and high-profile experience related to media is another issue. OKTO does belong to people in the community regardless their race and their origin and it offers opportunities for new generations to take part in program production. What I like is a variety of programs created by the genuine interest of producers, which makes their programs unique. I could not say that we should follow what OKTO does. What we could do is to reconsider who the real owners of TV channels in Thailand are.



EXPERIENCING THE CHARM OF VIENNA

Surrounded by the Baroque architectures and the imperial palaces together with the classical music, as well as, great coffee, Vienna is indeed the most romantic city. Due to its charming cultures, the Thai MEDLIT team together with the teams from Malaysia and Vietnam had a great opportunity to sightsee the attractive historical places such as Museums Quartier, Hofburg, Stephansplatz, Albertina Museum, Oper, and etc. Beside enjoying the beautiful buildings and learning the history of Austria, this walking trip was aiming to provide the MEDLIT participants with a great opportunity to understand more about other cultures and politics which will benefit the teams in terms of developing the MOOC. This sightseeing was also the filming session which was part of the OKTO workshop that we could use it as the materials for the editing activity.





A TALK SHOW IN TWO DAYS OF TRAINING AT OKTO TV

As part of the Media literacy project, we had an opportunity to visit and participate in a TV Production Training Course on the 9th & 10th of May 2017 at Okto TV. Lecturers from Universities of Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam accessed to a very new community television model which does not produce any content, but broadcasts programs produced by communities. Most of the TV shows in Okto are made by non-professionals and we are the ones who have never produced any TV shows, but after only 2 days of training and thank to the support from the specialists from Okto, our team has already completed a talk show about Media Literacy and a video clip prepared for MOOC production. This is a great experience for all members who have been the first time becoming a director, filming, secretarial, scriptwriting and post-production.

