

## **Borderland Workshop in Lviv, 31.10-3.11. 2013**

### **Evaluation questionnaire synthesis**

workshop leaders: *Nathalie Bolgert and Krzysztof Czyżewski*

synthesized by Agnieszka Podpora

#### **1. Overall assessment of the workshop.**

##### **a) Expectations and personal objectives of the participants regarding the workshop:**

- to learn from very experienced trainers, who are practitioners but also serve as selection committee members in different grant-giving institution
- to broaden the knowledge about project management techniques and get relevant skills
- to actively work in order to improve/develop their existing projects step-by step, to look at them from a different perspective, get new ideas
- to receive feedback on their projects
- to meet other NGO activists and cultural managers and get inspiration/new ideas
- to hear about other peoples projects and initiatives
- to take part in a discussion with others about the situation of cultural operators in Ukraine
- to work in detail on the application to the Borderland School small grant contest

Around half of the participants described their expectations as fully met, the rest as either partly met (the majority) or not at all met (two respondents): The reasons for that were: too basic level of instruction (nothing new), too general ideas, low level of individual feedback given. One respondent described the level of experience of other participants was too low.

Possible conclusion: the group was too diverse –it consisted of very experienced cultural operators and of beginners.

##### **b) As the most interesting/innovative elements of the workshop the participants indicated:**

- the meeting and discussion with Krzysztof Czyżewski
- techniques of easy solving of complicated questions about the project
- discussions between participants and peer to peer learning experience
- the experience of role-playing exercises, especially during the final presentation and judging
- working with real projects of theirs and others, not imaginary ones
- feedback on what are the strong and weak points of the presented projects and on the possible ways to improve them
- tips on effective fundraising techniques and interactions with sponsors

The things indicated as new were:

- the structure of the workshop concentrating on different elements of a successful project
- the importance of clear objectives formulation and the techniques to do that

- presenting the project of other person, regarding the project from the perspective of its supporter, as well as its opponent
- to think about the resources other people might have

Some of the participants (probably the more experienced ones) did not indicate anything as new.

Among the things missing the participants indicated:

- real case studies and examples of realized projects that could be examples of good/bad practices
- working on the projects with the particular perspective of the Borderland Foundation in mind
- discussing the risks that may appear during the realization of the workshop
- charisma of the leader and dynamism in the work
- more interaction between the trainer and the participants
- presentation of all projects, either at the beginning or at the end, during final presentation
- more discussion how to choose a target group
- detailed work on each of the projects
- information on other organizations and foundations abroad that conduct a similar type of work/ these kinds of workshops
- discussion about potential risks (particularly in budget section)
- more information on fundraising

## **2. Detailed assessment of the workshop:**

### **a) structure**

The majority of the respondents liked the structure of the workshop and assessed it as well planned, clearly divided in thematic areas and presented in an accessible way (which enhanced the learning process). Those who got decided to have their projects presented described it as a fruitful experience and stressed that element in the structure. There were also a few voices that criticised the structure as being too strong, which made the workshop too stiff and hard to engage into. For one respondent there lacked a detailed explanation what will be done and why in every section. One described the structure as “repetitive”.

### **b) content and the extent to which the participants may use it in their practice**

In the most part the respondents addressed content as consisting from the more theoretical, visionary part (that of Krzysztof) and from the more practical part (that of Nathalie). The first was generally described as useful and inspiring, presenting clearly the idea of the borderland and the mission the Foundation itself. As for the second part the opinions regarding the relevance of the content were mixed. The majority of respondents underlined the meaning of the workshop content in developing their ideas into very concrete plan of activity. They underlined it worth in viewing their activities in a new, more organized way and stated that they will use the knowledge from the workshop to change their ways of work. The other group, smaller in number but significant (5 out of 17), stated that the content of the workshop comprised information that they already knew and skills they already use in their praxis.

The strongest reservations concerning the content were raised regarding the lack of examples from real projects that were implemented – the examples of the trainer were described as irrelevant and abstract.

**Sections indicated as most useful:** planning of activities (good tips how to do that easily), diagnosis tools, project presentation in a role play manner (the court exercise)

**Suggestions of improvements:**

- more discussions, like with Krzysztof Czyżewski
- the goals and objectives section was too long
- lack of discussion and trainer's feedback after the final "court" exercise

**c) methods**

The methods most appreciated were:

- role-playing exercises in groups and in the final "court" exercise (helpful in thinking the project through and a chance for finding arguments for and against different proposals) – only one respondent disapproved
- group work on other people's projects (especially when switching teams every time)
- performative elements, such as different ways of presenting the aims

Many respondents criticised the overload of theoretical, frontal way of training – they would wish for more active work in every section.

**d) expertise and attitude of the workshop leaders**

The majority of the respondents spoke very highly of the competences and expertise of both Nathalie and Krzysztof – they were described as experienced professionals and knowledgeable practitioners. Three respondents indicated that the level of the trainer's competences was hard to establish.

In general, the majority of the respondents praised the relaxed atmosphere during the workshop and friendly, open attitude of the trainers toward the participants. At the same time their way of work was described as serious and productive, enhancing creativity. Some respondents indicated the language barrier existed. The way the workshops were conducted made the participants feel comfortable and safe (as indicated by three respondents).

Almost all the respondents assessed well the attitude of the workshop leaders towards the participants. They described it as respectful, friendly, equal for all and partner-like. The readiness to answer questions and critical approach was highly praised. Two respondents praised Nathalie's discipline and ability to tone down the overactive people and invite others to discussion. Some participants indicated that the workshop leaders didn't do enough to understand the local context. One person suggested that Nathalie should take the participants and their projects more seriously

The planning skills of the trainers, as well as their work-organization and timing was deemed good to high level by all the respondents.

### **3. Overall assessment of the workshop experience – its usefulness in further practice**

In general the workshops were described as useful for the participants further work. The respondents praised diversity and the ability to network with others and get possibilities for cooperation doing similar work. Some of the respondents declared they will pass on what they learned to their team members in their organizations by means of relating, showing notes, working with some of the presented methods. One of the respondents would like to use some methods exercise in their community, in trainings and seminars. One respondent indicated that he/she can hardly multiply the experience because he/she did not feel motivated to do that.

Suggestions for improvements:

- more individual feedback from the trainer
- more real case studies and examples of successful of failing projects
- more dynamics and charismatic leadership
- improved content: more detailed explanations and precise instructions, handouts
- four persons complained about work overload and suggested extending the duration of the workshop, one suggested improving timetable
- one person suggested adding a component on presentation skills