

Borderland Workshop in Minsk, 25-27 October 2013

Evaluation questionnaire synthesis

workshop leaders: *Willemijn Lamp and Chris Keulemans*

synthesized by Agnieszka Podpora

1. Overall assessment of the workshop.

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

- to learn how to put their ideas into practice
- to strengthen their values and self-confidence regarding their social and cultural activities
- to broaden the knowledge about project management techniques
- to actively work in order to improve/develop their existing projects, to look at them from a different perspective
- to meet other independent cultural managers and get inspiration/new ideas

When asked about the extent to which their expectations were met, all the respondents responded positively, the majority indicated 100%, one 80% and one 50% (he/she would like more relevance to his/her own work).

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

- presentation session (live and written presentation techniques) - the elements of drama especially appreciated
- "the day in life" exercise – for engaging imagination in manager's thinking
- detailed planning strategies
- very practical, on the ground approach to the projects
- constant feedback from trainers
- examples of practice, case studies introduced by the trainers
- community-centred approach

As for elements that we missing one person wished more team-building among the participants and one indicated she/he would have liked more examples relevant to her/his work.

2. Detailed assessment of the workshop:

a) structure

In general the workshop was assessed as well planned in time and balanced between different types of activities. The structure was considered as "very good" in all cases, with special words of praise for its logic and the combination between practical and theoretical parts, including physical activation.

The average score given to the single elements of the workshop (in scale 1-5, where 1 indicates "I didn't like it at all" and 5 "I liked it very much"):

- introduction – interviews: 4,7
- the day in life of the project: 4,8
- detailed planning and feedback: 4,45
- written and live presentation: 4,54
- final presentations: 4,72

Two respondents underlined especially the meaning of the final presentations as a sign of how much work they still have to do.

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

The content of the workshop was rather described in general terms. It was assessed as relevant to participant's needs and expectations. The respondents described it as helpful, inspiring, motivating and clearly communicated. Two respondents underlined especially the meaning of the workshop content in developing their ideas into very concrete plan of activity.

c) methods

The methods most appreciated were:

- team-work on imagining the "day in the life" exercise (it stimulated imagination and worked well as team builder)
- the elements of drama employed in the presentation session - they were very much appreciated and mentioned by the majority of the respondents, as helpful in thinking about the next day presentation and giving more self-confidence (only two people had mixed feelings towards it and described it as not useful)
- final presentation as a good sum up that enabled using what has been learned during the workshop and see ones strong and weak points
- workshop introduction done by means of the interviews (especially workshop leaders interviewing each other was described as illuminating)

In addition, in all the methods mentioned the friendly activation of the whole group and engagement in dialogue were appreciated.

d) expertise and attitude of the workshop leaders

All the respondents spoke very highly of the competences and expertise of both Willemijn and Chris – they were described as experienced professionals and down-to-earth practitioners. Among their professional traits/abilities/skills the respondents underscored analytic way of thinking, ability to inspire, attentiveness, good planning and time-management, trustworthiness.

In general, the majority of the respondents praised the informal atmosphere during the workshop and friendly, open attitude of the trainers toward the participants. The way of work was described as dynamic, full of sense of humor but at the same time serious. The way the workshops were conducted made the participants feel safe and confident (as indicated by two respondents).

Almost all the respondents mention the individual and supportive approach of the workshop leaders towards the participants. The value very highly the feedback they got and attentive, respectful way the trainers addressed the participants. Some participants underscored the way, in which the workshop leaders did their best to understand the local context.

The planning skills of the trainers, as well as their work-organisation was deemed excellent 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. Some of the respondents declared they will pass on what they learned to their team members in their organisations by means of relating, showing notes, working with some of the presented methods. Three of the respondents would like to use some methods (especially “the day in life”) exercise in their trainings and in preparation of their seminars. Two respondents stressed the presentation techniques as helpful in their further work. Among other impressions of workshop experience the respondents mentioned: gaining new breath and energy to continue their activities and getting clearer vision of their future projects and awe how much they managed to do in such a short time.

Suggestions for improvements:

- more discussion between peers – more comments from the participants on each others projects
- one person suggested resigning from the live presentation section
- one person suggested revising timetable, two indicated that the duration of the workshop should be increased
- ongoing consultations on the project (tutoring)
- more time for the tutors and coordinators to get to know the local context and cultural locations on the spot