



Running a Learning Partnership Aspects of Project-Management

From an organisational point of view I want to describe in this article some steps and methods that helped us to run the CADENCE project successfully as a “Grundtvig Learning Partnership”, part of the “Lifelong Learning Programme” and supported by the European Commission. Honoured to coordinate the cooperation, it was primarily my job to write the application, make necessary arrangements, track the progress of the work (or to initiate it whenever necessary), ensure the communication between all stakeholders (especially in the periods between visits), and patiently but diligently remind participants of agreed tasks. Fulfilling this function was only possible with the reliable support of my management colleagues in Italy and Sweden – Marco Bartolini, Esbjörn Hogmark and Håkan Larsson – and the close cooperation with those in charge for the musical part of our work – Marco Ambrosini, Ditte Andersson and Didier François.

Our three educational institutes in Sweden, Germany and Italy came in contact some years ago due to our common interest in teaching the musical instrument known as the “nyckelharpa”. Outside Sweden a structured long-term training for the nyckelharpa only exists in the Scuola di Musica Popolare di Forlimpopoli in Italy and in the Academy BURG FÜRSTENECK in Germany. And in Sweden the Eric Sahlström Institute holds a very prominent position in teaching nyckelharpa as a national institute.

Once some people from all three institutes got to know each other, it became clear that a common challenge would be useful for intensifying the exchange. We searched for options to involve more people, moving them from one country to the





others and raising additional money for financing these mobilities and, in January 2008, we begun discussing the formation of a European project.

We decided not to make a quick application, but to take a year for groundwork preparation, searching existing EU-programs and elaborating our plans to see if they could fit to any such framework. We compared the different programs from both their printed materials and impact on the web, and visited several briefing events of our national agencies responsible for those EU-programs, comparing the information we got in the different countries. Finally we decided that a learning partnership within the Grundtvig programme would suit our goals perfectly while remaining manageable. Because of our existing manpower and other commitments we refrained from applying for other extended programs which may have provided even more money.

We had an official preparation visit to substantiate our plans at BURG FÜRSTENECK in Autumn 2008. Afterwards we asked the boards of our schools' countries to support an application. We involved the local municipalities in our plans through the founding of an additional informal partnership between the communes of Tierp, Eiterfeld and Forlimpopoli. This insured a marked improvement in the cooperation between the schools and their home community, on top of the learning partnership.

After the main guideline of the project had been agreed upon, the application was written in January 2009 in Germany with support from Italy and Sweden, sent to the partner institutes, corrected and completed there, and finally sent to a native English speaker for final linguistic corrections. The application process was finished at a second, informal preparatory group-meeting held in Forlimpopoli in February 2009. During this meeting, the three mayors of Tierp, Eiterfeld and Forlimpopoli publically signed their cooperation agreement.



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Approx. starting date		Activity/Mobility description (See part 6.1 (black) and 6.3 (red) of the application)	Results	Destination	Which partners involved
	Planned ending date				
2009/02/17		<p>PREPARATORY VISIT, SIGNING OF AGREEMENT, PUBLIC LECTURE (Though before official start of the program and without financial support by Grundtvig.) Meeting in Forlimpopoli. Signing the agreement about the cooperation between the three communes by the three mayors. (see 5.2 CONTEXT) Public lecture on European history of the nyckelharpa (by Swedish experts) Meeting about steps and tasks of the cooperation. Observing lessons in Italy. Participants: Mayors, managers, some teachers, learners from Italy, one musical researcher from Sweden.</p> <p style="color: red;">Agreement of cooperation between the three municipalities is signed by the three mayors.</p>	<p>Done: February 17 – 19, 2009</p> <p>Agreement of cooperation is ratified by the three local parliaments during the following weeks.</p>	ITALY	BF SMP ESI
2009/02/17		<p>DISSEMINATION Spreading information on the (planned) project already started. It will get more comprehensive throughout the project's time and must not end by the end of the project. The teams at home will be informed about the progress of the project continuously.</p> <p style="color: red;">Information about the nyckelharpa and the planned Grundtvig CADENCE-project is disseminated by a public lecture on the history of the nyckelharpa in Forlimpopoli.</p>	<p>Done: See examples of public dissemination on www.cadence.nyckelharpa.eu/home/public-relations</p>		BF SMP ESI
2009/08/01		<p>START OF PROGRAM (Exact date according to the decision by the EU) Welcome of the partners and suggesting of an agenda for the next steps.</p> <p style="color: red;">Detailed plan for the first steps is sent to the partners.</p>	<p>Done</p>		BF
2009/08/01		SETUP OF COMMUNICATION STRUCTURES BASED ON THE INTERNET			BF

We tried being as precise as possible in every part of the application. This turned out to be very helpful during the whole period of our cooperation. Having decided at the very beginning what to do and when to do it in order to achieve our goals, our agreements kept us in check during the entire process of our work. For example, for each defined "planned activity" (asked for in part 6.1 of the application form) we specified a corresponding "expected result" in part 6.3. By fitting these two parts together into one "Time – Tasks – Results" table, we had a precise timetable in place for the project, which specified responsibilities, but could also be used as a check list for the progress of the partnership. Indeed, only minor modifications had to be made to this plan.



After our application grant was accepted by the European commission, the first mobility was set as a management meeting for October 2009. Apart from choosing the participants, and elaborating the detailed programme for the first meeting of the complete group, we took some time to refine our fiscal calculations. Grundtvig grants allocate money differently in the different states of the EU. We agreed to balance this out within the project.

We had, of course, a rough calculation in place before applying for the grant, but now we created a detailed Excel table with merged cells. We placed the money granted by the EU on one side and all our different expected outgoings on the other. For some expenses, such as airfares, we could only have a rough estimation, as booking flights is like playing the lottery. Other spending we could fix quite precisely. With this Excel table we were able to quickly test the

influence on our budgets of changing different parameters like the duration of the visits and meetings, the number of additional participants they could involve, the costs of accommodation



and sustenance, or general administration expenses. Parts of the latter were taken up as supplemental support by the three institutes. We also considered it of fundamental importance to keep enough money back for the publication of the projects' results, making this an important point in the calculation. Thus we adjusted our detailed plans to the available project funds. We continued to use this Excel table throughout the entire project, replacing projected costs by actual ones as they occurred. In this way we kept track of our finances.

For our communications, we set up several online platforms. A password protected online wiki-forum proved to be the most important vehicle for internal use by all participants. A lot of varied information could be found there, including the personal details of the participants, basic information on the institutes visited, outstanding questions to be answered, preparation



CADENCE questionnaire for the visit in TOBO
Evaluation might help us to do things better and is necessary to document to the EU what we have done.

I am "participant" I am "teacher" I am "manager" My name: _____

1. Organisation - Preparation

1.1. Did you get enough information beforehand about the CADENCE project?
You can award 1 to 7 points. 1 point means "very poor", 4 points means "medial", 7 points means "excellent".
poor-----medial-----excellent
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (Optimum is 7)

a) What was missing? _____

b) What was helpful? _____

c) What was annoying? _____

1.2. Was the travel to Tobo well organized?
You can award 1 to 7 points. 1 point means "very poor", 4 points means "medial", 7 points means "excellent".
poor-----medial-----excellent
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I organized the travel myself, so this question does not affect me.

a) What was missing? _____

b) What was helpful? _____

1.3. Did you have enough information beforehand about Sweden and the ESIF?
You can award 1 to 7 points. 1 point means "very poor", 4 points means "medial", 7 points means "excellent".
poor-----medial-----excellent
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

a) What was missing? _____

b) What was helpful? _____

1.4. Did you have enough information how to prepare yourself?

a) musically yes no a) remarks: _____

b) in other ways yes no b) remarks: _____

tasks for students and administration, sheet music, schedules, protocols, and evaluation of meetings held as well as ideas for the further work. All participants were able to contribute to the content of this wiki. While evaluations of the project were gathered during the visits, we also sent questionnaires after each meeting to all participants, which included standardised as well as open questions. This feedback was very valuable in planning

the next visits and making them even better. To publicise the project to non-participants a freely accessible website was set up, which got updated with new content after each meeting.

The whole group of 18 participants met three times in 2010: January in Sweden, June Italy and October in Germany. Each mobility had a duration of 5 – 6 days. In each visit, the programme consisted of a presentation by the host institute, including information about the management of adult education, practical and theoretical attitudes with the teaching of music (especially the nyckelharpa) to adults, project working-time in which new ideas were gathered and the direction of progress was agreed upon, a little touristic trip, a meeting with the local mayor and of course some free time in the evening to talk and



play sessions. In addition we had a public conference in Sweden with speakers from the Department of Folk Music at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm and concert rehearsals in Italy and Germany.

Dissemination of the ideas and outcomes of the project has been one of our goals. Several activities were planned in addition to normal public relation work in the application. Having a project with musicians, we had the chance to play public concerts. With the participants gradually forming a unified group, a larger range of outside audiences could be reached. Thus, we met local musicians and dancers during the first trip in Sweden, played a public concert on a marketplace during the second meeting in Italy, and were recorded for nationwide radio broadcast by the German "Deutschlandfunk" during the BURG FÜRSTENECK visit.

From the second meeting of the entire group in Forlimpopoli, Italy, we talked as one main theme about the idea of final reports. Subsequently, ideas for a personal contribution from every participant were collected. These ideas were visually presented and polished during the next visit in Eiterfeld, Germany. Thus, we could transform the expected reports from a chore into an opportunity, making participants more involved. On top of the actual contents of the contributions – which hopefully will be valuable for many people – we are convinced that a structured and involved presentation of project results will help the participants to remember the project fondly as a great series of events, and be proud to have taken part in it.





Karsten Evers (Germany)

Karsten was the coordinator of this CADENCE partnership. He has been a part of the folk revival in Germany since the 1970s. Later he studied music and science of cultural education after being an architect before. Since 1984, he has been responsible for cultural adult education at BURG FÜRSTEN-NECK.