

SPAR

Curricula for culture volunteers and managers
in sparsely populated areas



Erasmus+

Erasmus+ SPAR partners' meeting
Arts Council Offices, 82 Granville Street, Birmingham, England.
31 October & 1 November 2016

Attendees

- Hans Jorgen Vodsgaard - Interfolk
- Bente von Schindel - Kulturelle Samrad i Danmark
- Dr Janos Szigeti Toth - Magyar Nepfoiskolai Tarsasag
- Artur Pinto - Municipio de Lousada
- Manuel Nunes – Municipio de Lousada
- Agnieszka Dadka – Fundacja Alternatywnych inicjatyw Edukacyjnych
- Robin Simpson – Voluntary Arts
- Laraine Winning – Voluntary Arts
- Sarah Breen – Voluntary Arts
- Lindsey Jackson – Voluntary Arts
- Helen Jones – Voluntary Arts / Up for Arts
- Helene Clark – ActKnowledge

Agenda Items

1. Welcome introduction was made by Robin Simpson. RS was voted by the SPAR delegates to be the moderator for the meeting on day 1. The minutes will to be carried out by Voluntary Arts staff.
2. Approval of agenda: Agenda agreed and also the agreement of shifting items to day two if we don't have time to cover them in day one.
3. Signing of attendance sheet (signed sheet now with Lindsey).
4. Brief introduction by partners (role/responsibilities)
 - Bente Von Schindel (Denmark) – lobbying, funding, refugees, Erasmus+, Schools.
 - Hans Vodsgaard Interfolk (Denmark) – Nordic projects, local /national projects
 - Laraine Winning (Voluntary Arts) - arts development, outreach initiatives, volunteering, health/wellbeing, and media projects linked to BBC. Laraine will manage the SPAR project for Voluntary Arts.
 - Dr Janos Toth (Hungary) part-time teacher, engaged with Manifesto documenting European 21st C adult learning, arts development.
 - Helene Clark – New York City (ActKnowledge), Social enterprise, social change sector, evaluation, capacity building partnerships.
 - Agnieszka Dadak (Poland) 3rd age university, youth and youth work, supporting the crafts sector, project manager and trainer, citizenship – arts and culture offer.
 - Robin Simpson – CEO for Voluntary Arts
 - Lindsey Jackson – Human Resources and Finances
 - Sarah Breen – VA arts development officer for the Midlands.
 - Helen Jones – Up for Arts Broadcaster based within BBC Radio Merseyside

- Artur Pinto & Manuel Numes – Municipio de Lousada - arts development and engagement.

5. Overview of programme:

Hans: The project is in line with Erasmus+ (life-long learning) principles and has a volunteer focus. It aims to establish good exchange of communication between groups/individuals/organisations, as well as providing capacity building training to practitioners who coordinate arts activities. Title of the project is SPAR – as it will work in sparsely populated areas, which may be different communities in different countries. The initiative aims to add value to civic and democratic participation. It is built on the need to provide suitable support to countryside residents to access leisure time activities and opportunities to participate in culture and the arts. The state is not investing in these activities, thus people are organising themselves but need help/support and learning resources. The project focuses on a peer to peer approach to secure cultural sustainability. It is a 2 year project, producing learning resources and curricula. Erasmus+ training opportunities in different European countries will be key to the programme, to test out approaches.

Laraine: Voluntary Arts are the lead partner for the SPAR project. The project will be delivered according to Erasmus+ processes and protocols, as agreed with Ecorys (Managing Agent for Erasmus+ in UK) and in conjunction with partner agencies.. Laraine has attended the start-up course for new partners and will circulate the information provided at this meeting. The project is a first for Voluntary Arts and as such, is a steep learning curve – so please bear with us as we are learning, too. As the lead partner, we will be responsible for processing claims and allocating funding and monitoring partners progress. Funding will come in three tranches ... upfront, midway through the project and at the end – all triggered on the production of suitable reports e.g. financial and narrative. Partners will be provided with 100% of their project budgets, in staged payments, according to the above timeframe. The budget is as determined in the original application. We can vire funding within certain budget allocations – if it falls within the 20% rule. Any significant changes to the budget must be approved by Ecorys. Changes will be difficult to justify, therefore we have been advised to stick with the original budget and make it work. Any other change of circumstance (organisation change, staff changes or issues with commitment) needs notifying to Ecorys. Example templates of claim forms will be emailed to partners e.g. reimbursements of travel. Voluntary Arts have asked that partners provide monthly reports to assess progress over the life of the project. These reports will show progress and identify any major changes in delivery. They will also help the evaluator and be useful to provide well compiled reports for the funder. Project deadlines, as outlined in the project proposal, are key to the success of the project. We must abide by these deadlines as any change in delivery must be agreed with Ecorys, as it will be seen as a change in circumstance. In terms of copyright, anything produced by partners belongs to you, however, you must make this freely available to other parties and agencies by widely promoting the resource. Data protection, DDA, Safeguarding for young and vulnerable adults, health and safety, risk assessments - all protocols must be in line with your own countries standards. Finally, VA can be audited at any time and may come back to you about expenditure or queries from the auditor. It is, therefore, important that you be robust in collecting and collating all relevant information. Documentation to evidence claims; to enable the partnership to work and that no one partner lets the partnership down.

6. SPAR Partners Project plans:

1) Artur (Portugal) Aims to organise and implement a cultural volunteer programme based on need and linked to communities that they are based within. This will be a pilot programme, linked to sparsely populated areas. The aim is to support volunteers and volunteer managers. The course will help to show how to formalise this activity. It will have a local feel working with 100 approx. groups; theatres, musicians, writers, folk lore and ethnic, singers, heritage. A wide/diverse approach is needed to engage with them all. Target demographic 18/60. Reach: 500,000 11 principalities. Lousada area named as the cultural area for this programme of work.

2) Bente (Denmark); Will carry out a needs assessment to understand what is needed, why individuals are moving away from rural communities places e.g. spare time, work, shops, creating activities from these places. The aim is to identifying problems and barriers and other areas of concerns. She will also identify localities/groups that have succeeded – what works, interviews, roles/responsibilities and volunteers experiences. It is Important to contrast this against communities that don't have this track record of success. Cohesion and local identity will be key to this mapping/scoping exercise. Planned activities and research will help identify the next level of approach. National organisation – Cultural counters – will hopefully join project

3) Janos (Hungary) core concept is to be determined at the start of the project through survey of the region, including small rural villages who organise a wide range of cultural activities e.g. music, singing, painting, crafts. The aim is to tap into a wide network of partners, resources, groups' including local music schools, art school/college etc. New ideas will also be assessed, including digital support, social media/smart phones, digital painting. At present Janos is assessing target audience e.g. young people in rural areas & 2) older demographic.

4) Laraine (England) VA is building on what we have achieved previously through the Culture Guide project. Impact areas this time will be East of England – Lincolnshire, SW & North with a number of partner agencies e.g. arts organisations, local authorities, BBC, village halls. Initiatives will be based in sparsely populated areas. We are keen to look at learning resources that lead to accreditation e.g. Arts Awards, Open University, City and Guilds. May also pilot a new arts community reporters programme – which will help profile local groups and their opportunities but also build the media literacy of CG's themselves. Content produced will only be aired through merit on BBC local radio but could be offered to other media outlets/platforms e.g. community radio, local newspapers, community magazines.

5) Hans (Denmark) Life-long learning focus – adult learning, informal learning and formalising a number of key competencies. 8 areas of competencies to be defined (i.e. high ability for cultural awareness, volunteers, and drivers in community) learners and key people who already have a level of pre-competencies to be targeted. Can't be a formal structure, needs to be flexible, geared at different grades and paced at a level that individuals find appropriate.

6) Agnieszka (Poland) the programmes focus will be to target NGO's - who are open and welcoming and offering local community engagement opportunities. The focus for the learning must be organic – bottom-up focus, helping consumers/beneficiaries/groups shape their ideas. The project will support arts/craft networks and local authorities in the South of Poland – where need has been identified. Mixed approach to take into account wide array of creative cultural activities based within these communities.

Queries & feedback from partners

- Hans: Partners can't subcontract but can employ staff.
- Artur: e-learning concept – everyone to be responsible for their country to deliver; highlight different areas; commonality and variety are a priority.

7. Common competencies

The below were the key skill gaps for groups noted by SPAR partners: Financial skills, fundraising, skills sharing, networking, regulation/legalities, compliance/licensing, protection (DBS) insurances, health and safety, governance, publicity/equal opportunities, diversity, information, case studies, storytelling, sharing of information, added value, civic responsibilities, local identity especially in rural/sparse areas, promoting participation, bonding, positioning of projects to highlight the benefits of involvement, breaking down barriers, sense of identity (civic/community).

8. Sparsely populated areas definition

Partners agreed that the project must be defined by the Erasmus+ application. The EU definition is listed below¹ (NUTS classification). Partners agreed that the common definition for the project should relate to rural areas or areas on the outskirts of a town/city that face specific challenges e.g. income levels, population and employment opportunities. All agreed working areas will also demonstrate significant elements of multi-disadvantage including poor access to the arts/crafts and culture.

- UK - Indices of Social Deprivation for identifying multi-disadvantage communities. Project focus will be rural communities;
- Denmark – Rotten Banana – area of multi-disadvantage;
- Portugal - centre of principality is a village of 5k, 97sq/km;
- Poland – rural areas; less than 20,000 inhabitants, little access to jobs, poor cultural offer.

In general, population density is a guide, not a rule, to define a sparsely populated area. Cultural boosting activities in a city, but accessed by rural communities might also be a possible area to consider. We will endeavour to work in NUTS 3 locations – where we can.

9. Methods of communication:

Next face-to-face meeting will be held in April 2017 in Copenhagen. Ongoing partner dialogue will take place through monthly reports and emails. Monthly progress report will include questions from Helene regarding monitoring/evaluation. This process will enable

¹ The current NUTS 2013 classification is valid from 1 January 2015 and lists 98 regions at NUTS 1, 276 regions at NUTS 2 and 1342 regions at NUTS 3 level. The NUTS classification is a hierarchical system for dividing up the economic territory of the EU for the purpose of :

- The collection, development and harmonisation of European regional statistics
- Socio-economic analyses of the regions
 - NUTS 1: major socio-economic regions
 - NUTS 2: basic regions for the application of regional policies
 - NUTS 3: small regions for specific diagnoses

everyone to share best practise and also progress to date although we are aware that some months there will be little to document. Most felt that Skype is difficult to manage and can be counter-productive in terms of liaison, therefore, a Facebook closed group seemed the best option. Helene will arrange a one to one interview with all the partners before the next meeting takes place.

Action

- VA to email monthly report template. Process to be reviewed at next meeting.
- Reports to be shared.
- Helene to add questions/queries to monthly report template.
- Laraine to remind groups when they should provide a report and also add a list of key issues that groups might want to focus on in their report.
- VA to set up a closed Facebook group
- Emails to be responded to with 7 working days to facilitate a quick turnaround of information or decision making.

Day 2

Laraine Winning appointed Moderator

1. First Session – Helene Clark

Helene indicated that her presentation is to explain further about the 'Theory of Change' process and how it will tie into the SPAR programme. Helene is an external evaluator – so can be a critical friend to projects/partners. Evaluation should be owned by each country taking part. The more people you bring to the table – the stronger the plan will be. By the next meeting in Copenhagen – we will start looking at plans and activities. We will work as a team – to explore what has been achieved. Helene will report back at end of the first year – then end of the second year. She is a key partner “at the table” – to listen and ask the right questions Use the evaluation to help as a tool to monitor. First process is to carry out a workshop in the community with partners' to identify what needs to be done. Map out in a visual way from the start of the project, what is a priority. To reach the goal and succeed with project commitments, use model to reflect on planning/delivery, you can change things if you need to. Find examples and systems that work – tweak and modify so you can get it right.

Process: Start with vision – a changing framework that improves when you learn. Use visual mapping, logic, collaboration. Start with blank page and brainstorm

Theory of change components

- 1) Outcomes
- 2) Indicators
- 3) Interventions
- 4) Assumptions
- 5) Rationales
- 6) Narrative

Don't be hung up on the jargon. Start with a long-term vision (your cause)

Turn your long-term vision into a well-defined OUTCOME. Don't settle for abstract outcomes: define them, note measurable indicators of success or evidence. Using software

provided on the website for colour coding; problems in red, action points in green. Questioning is important as you look back through the process of planning. Dialogue is the best form of communication - valid opinion then based on consensus. Have an established framework for your programme plan – ask yourself “Is this long-term goal achievable” Be honest and objective. What is a goal? – How do you measure success? Needs assessment – Helene has template as guide for groups to use on her organisation’s website. Use the technology to help you log progress/ideas/historical data/checklist for next meeting.

Actions:

- Helene will send her presentations to all group members as an aide memoire.
- Partners to look at the www.theoryofchange.org website for a step by step guide.
- Helene will arrange one to one interviews with all SPAR partners before the next meeting.
- Please speak with Helene directly if partners have worries or concerns about the Theory of Change process.

2. Next Meeting planning: Copenhagen April 2017

Date agreed as 19th - 20th April 2017

Meeting will explore evaluation (2 hour session) Helene will feedback on the general issues coming out of one to one interviews with SPAR partners.

Key focus will be to evaluate surveys and discuss next steps to the programme.

Finances will be discussed and reporting procedures (monthly reports to be assessed and reviewed).

Operational goals will be reviewed.

Partners will give a more in depth review of their projects and key operational goals.

3. Overview of work plan (Hans Vodsgaard)

First phase – Agreement brief for the portal and baseline study needs to be implemented between Oct – April. Key competencies – needs analysis process to be implemented through a series of local surveys. Voluntary Arts to proof the final survey report and its key findings – need to be produced in 5 languages & PDF editions. This process will aid partners in defining more closely their approach and how they will implement their delivery plan. Bente will compile the generic survey, which will be used by all the partners. Each SPAR partner can add specific questions to the survey if needs be. The generic study is to be ready by Jan 1st 2017 for dissemination to partner agencies. VA’s role is to design the portal website and maintain the running of it. Brief to be produced and circulated to everyone asap. Portal to be in all partner languages as stated in the Erasmus+ application. Artur illustrated an existing project he is involved with as multiple partners access same information in different languages: www.innovationsecosystems.eu Portal should include: homepage; partners details and login for each partner to access materials and administration, file creation, saving of work, databank of research, case studies. Research outputs for each country, as identified within the application (VA to provide desk research on new culture policy; FAIE to provide info about start of art in field) Partners must refer back to Erasmus+ application to remind themselves of their obligations. Second phase (after Meeting in Copenhagen April 2017) Pilot work – March – May. Development of curricula for culture boosters, Test National pilot – 2 day / weekend courses

4. Finance (Hans & Laraine)

Payment will be made in Euro's through bank transfer; the full budget has been approved. VA has only received 40%. Key categories for payment fall under: Management fees, Transnational Partner Meetings, Intellectual Outputs, Multiplier Events and Exceptional Costs. Breakdown of budget is in the original application but more details will be sent after the meeting via email and within the Partnership Agreement. VA is the lead contact for project finances and management – we intend to pay 100% of agreed funds to partners in staged payments (management fees are the exception). Key points to note: We must abide by systems & procedures set by Erasmus+ and defined further by Ecorys. We also must agree protocols on shared costs e.g. digital support and evaluation (note: in the application we stated that these would be co-financed by partners to the tune of 25%). Shared costs for host meetings regarding meals/subsistence proved to be a disputed area. Hans has always shared these costs across partners – with a set amount deducted from the overall budget (TPM category) for those attending. Artur/Manuel felt this is not possible within their country – feel that their system is best (each partner pays to host a meeting which would include subsistence costs) and costs should come out of Project Management costs. Manuel stated it is not possible to pay for something that has already been paid for. He feels reciprocal support for these meetings would be preferred. National Agency in Portugal may not allow the systems discussed. Bente felt that catering costs vary so much from country to country, that this is unfair and unequitable to ask each partner to subsidise. She doesn't think that meeting costs are eligible under the Project Management category. Manuel did not want to impose their view on the whole group – rules have been set within Erasmus+ as to how payments are justified. We must live within these rules but also allow for different partner's procedures.

Action:

Laraine agreed to take the issues of shared costs up with Ecorys and find a solution that is agreeable to all the partners. She will check what budget should be used to attribute costs for meetings e.g. venues, food, catering. She will come back to the partners with recommendations on how we should proceed. Partners can then vote on it – the majority view should prevail. It should be noted that shared costs will be outlined further in the Partnership Agreement.

Meeting ended

Laraine thanked everyone for coming and hoped that any issues raised could be resolved amicably over the next few weeks. She indicated that it had been a packed agenda and that she hoped that discussions had given us a starting point to agree roles/responsibilities and key financial protocols. She hoped everyone would have a safe journey back to their own country and that minutes would be emailed to everyone with 15 working days. The partner agreement would also be emailed out to everyone once the issue regarding shared costs had been resolved.