

**“How did it go? What worked? What didn’t?
What improvements can be made?”**

- CROSSTALK Evaluation Report and Appendix -

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Introduction

Evaluation asks “How did it go? What worked? What didn’t? What improvements can be made?” Action research is very similar: the findings are fed back so as to improve the process, something we all do whether it’s learning how to drive a car, use a cooking recipe, or improve a sports skill. *Crosstalk* was about a participatory type of media, community radio, in which people who are often ignored or misrepresented by mainstream broadcasting learn how to use radio for themselves. So it was appropriate to use a participatory form of evaluation in which all those involved had a voice – the evaluation team, the trainers and the trainees or participants themselves.

This report describes the CROSSTALK evaluation process itself and the findings which provide evidence of the project’s success in achieving its objectives. Detailed evaluation reports of all the activities can be found in the appendix. In addition, instructions for evaluation and the instruments used for evaluation within CROSSTALK are provided in the appendix. They are also available free for download in 6 languages from the CROSSTALK website www.crosstalk-online.de

Those materials and instruments can be applied for the evaluation of other projects. Thus this report not only addresses those who are interested in the Crosstalk project itself but also researchers and trainers who would like to apply (parts of) the evaluation design to their own projects.

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There are two aspects of evaluation that are addressed in this section: the first concerns the evaluation process itself, what instruments were used, how the process worked, was the work-package (No 7) successfully delivered? The second concerns the success of the *Crosstalk* project as a whole: were its objectives achieved? For the most part, this second question is answered in the relevant sections of the report, and this section will offer a summary.

1. The evaluation process

The approach agreed among partners from the outset was based on action research. In this approach 'research' is not something applied from outside on passive subjects, but is an attitude shared among all participants, a commitment to reflect on actions undertaken, identify successes and failures and make adjustments to subsequent actions accordingly. It follows that a considerable element of *self-evaluation* is involved, using instruments and methods agreed in advance with the evaluation team and reliant on continuous monitoring and exchange of information by face-to-face meetings and by email with other partners and the evaluators. The findings arrived at by self-evaluation are cross-checked by visits between partners, by outside academic observers and by the evaluation team. This allows observation and interviews to confirm or correct the data derived from self-evaluation (questionnaires and reports).

The way this worked in *Crosstalk* was that initial brainstorming and planning meetings were held by those involved in each of the three Activities. These meetings discussed how the detailed work plan (indicating stages and milestones) devised for each Activity by the project Co-ordinator should be applied to the particular context of each partner's organisation. At each meeting there were representatives of the partners undertaking the follow-up courses in the second year of the project. Their presence ensured that the content and methods of the training course was adaptable to the different work and cultural contexts in the different countries involved in the project. Each meeting complied with the evaluators' request to check a list of objectives and learning outcomes, based on the EU's Priorities and Lifelong Learning Programme objectives. This requirement was useful in keeping detailed planning in line with the project's overall aims. The intention was that partners should report progress and difficulties every 3 months. In fact, the reports were delivered at the relevant stages of the Activity: after the initial planning meeting, and after the completion of the course. Questions and problems that arose were dealt with through constant email exchange.

For each course the data available for evaluation included the questionnaires (see appendix) completed by the target groups (course participants) at the beginning and end of the training in order to record self-perception of skills, knowledge, employability in media production etc. The trainers themselves completed questionnaires (see appendix) at the end of the course, reporting what went well and what difficulties were encountered. Each course was observed by a visiting evaluator, either from the project team, or, in two cases, a specially contracted academic working in the locality who was specially briefed. Each of these evaluators wrote a report based on observation and interviews, as well as a study of documents (course publicity, teaching materials) and a collation of the completed questionnaires of participants and trainers (see appendix). The co-ordinator of each Activity also produced a report and the two reports, of co-ordinator and evaluator, could be compared. An interim report by the evaluation team, summarising the evaluation findings

across the project was circulated for discussion at the first International conference in Vienna in September 2009.

Separate meetings (face-to-face) of the whole evaluation team were deemed not necessary since the Vienna meeting provided one opportunity for all three to meet, and the Co-ordinator's visit to Castelluccio in July 2009 and May and July 2010 gave time for discussion between Dr. Günnel and Dr. Barbalato. Other exchanges were made as necessary through email and Skype telephoning.

2. The evaluation also encompassed **the project as a whole**, its management, internal and external communication, implementation of the work plan and its outcomes. The following summaries draw on the Handbooks produced by each Activity as well as the evaluation data described in the previous section.

Moving Stories and Migration (Activity 1) This Activity began with a pilot in Sunderland and Peterborough. Work with refugees in Peterborough concentrated on training within an emerging community radio station and its host /partner organization, Peterborough African Community Association (PACO). Simple methods of confidence building combined with practical radio skills training produced at first recordings, and soon after regular weekly programmes on the internet radio station, Peterborough FM (<http://www.pborofm.com/>). 13 trainees attended the course and these included two professional language teachers. In January 2010, PACO won a £100,000 grant under the Big Lottery's 'Reaching Communities' programme for Dan Cissokho to develop the Peterborough Community Radio project, a success which has given a huge boost of confidence to the group.

In Sunderland students at Sunderland University from India, Thailand, Indonesia, China, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, Malaysia and Nigeria – in effect, 'temporary migrants' - were brought together by an Indian student with journalistic experience and trained to use community radio to help them settle into their studies, university and city life. Programmes were broadcast on the University community station, *Spark FM* (<http://sparksunderland.com/>). 17 students were involved.

In the following year courses were held in Hungary and Finland. Civil Radio in Budapest (<http://civilradio.hu/>) has a well established tradition of radio by migrant groups and for Crosstalk a group of 18 trainees were recruited whose backgrounds included Africa, India and Turkey as well as ethnic Hungarians with Romanian nationality. Following the course, members of the group contributed to a weekly programme 'Everybody's Right'.

Radio Robin Hood in Turku (<http://www.radiorobinhood.fi/>) has also over a long period engaged with refugee and migrant communities and the Crosstalk training fitted easily into the station's established practice. Participants came from Bangladesh, Chile, Iran, Lithuania and Senegal and chose either presenting or production as a route to being on air. Exceptionally severe weather in the first weeks of the course reduced the expected numbers to 16.

One point that emerged from these experiences is the importance of role models for aspiring broadcasters from refugee and migrant communities – people who have experienced the isolation and confusion after arrival in a strange country but who have used community radio to make contacts with other refugees in their new country, with their new neighbours and with their homeland – and now pass on their skills and confidence.

The experience of the all the partners in this Activity in encouraging Moving Stories from this sector of the community is shown in the thoughtful discussion in the Handbook about the needs of migrants and the solutions that community radio can offer.

Moving Stories and Gender (Activity 2) It was striking that the theme, certainly a broad one, was adapted by each partner to their own interests and experience. So in Freudenstadt, the pilot course focussed on the interviewing skills that could bring out women's life stories and the ways gender roles have influenced them. Orange 94.0 in Vienna looked at the music world and ways that young women can be encouraged to be actively involved rather than passive consumers. In Lodz, the focus was on the representation of gender in mainstream Polish media.

In Freudenstadt, the presence of a well-established community radio station, *Freies Radio Freudenstadt* (<http://www.radio-fds.de/>) provided good facilities for the pilot training course during which interviews with studio guests and a panel discussion were recorded. Participants ranged in age from 16 to 71 but numbers were limited due to insufficient advance publicity.

In Vienna's Orange 94.0 (<http://o94.at/>), twelve girls and two teachers from an alternative school took part in the course which culminated in a 28-minute recording that included elements of the discussions and activities centred round music and gender stereotypes in lyrics and on CD covers. In interviews with the evaluator, all the girls said that they wanted to continue with radio work as a result of the course.

At the University of Lodz, the course was organised by the Women's Studies Centre and the Department of Transatlantic and Media Studies. Most of the participants were linked to the university's outreach activities. The course included presentations and practical sessions – conducting interviews and analysing press and media talk-shows. The enthusiastic engagement with the subject and lively discussion led to time running out for some of the activities and a general desire on the part of participants for further sessions.

The three components of this Activity together sum up the work that is necessary in challenging gender representation – in this case the stereotypes and failures where women are concerned. (There is equal need to address the same issues in the representation of men). An analysis of the record of mainstream media (Lodz) provides the basis for proactive initiatives to counter stereotypes and bring into the public sphere points of view and production styles which more fairly represent women (Freudenstadt) or which engage the younger generation's technological skills (Vienna).

Moving Stories and Life Histories (Activity 3) The idea for this Activity, conceived in the first brainstorming meeting, proved very effective in bringing together old and young participants in all three courses. This was to exchange experience of childhood play and games in their geographical setting. Originally developed in the Ebnet district of Freiburg as the pilot course, the main outcome was an audio-walk around the places where young and old played, with interviews between the generations which both developed media skills and furthered mutual understanding. The method was repeated in the St. Georgen district of Freiburg in Year 2. That the number of participants in each case was small mattered less than the originality of the idea which is eminently replicable.

The Castelluccio course in the northern part of Puglia involved many more participants owing to integration of the idea within the curriculum of two schools and the impressively

thorough preparation of the children. These skilled young interviewers were able effectively to elicit stories from their elders, but the senior citizens, less prepared, were less ready to question the children. Nevertheless the feedback from the children showed that strong interest was engaged and impressive learning gains in media skills and understanding of local history were achieved. The children also enjoyed finding out about games their elders had played and, coached by them, playing the games they played long ago.

The success of this Activity lay in a very simple but ingenious idea whose development in three different contexts shows how easily applicable and reproducible it can be in other places and communities. Its repetition needs, ideally, the commitment of an educational or social institution (adult education centre, church, club) to support the senior citizens as well as preparatory research to identify and recruit participants through friends and personal contacts. Also, as the Italian example showed, the interest of a school to co-ordinate and focus the energy of the younger generation is valuable. Senior citizens may start from a position which chooses to ignore, dismiss or deplore the younger generation's experience which is why time must be allowed for these attitudes to change if a positive engagement with young people is to result. This type of activity might benefit from adopting the 'role model' approach. An older person who already has a good relationship with a younger one, typically as a grandparent, would be able to show the way and encourage a curiosity about the younger generation and the media skills necessary to maintain a balanced inter-generational dialogue.

Sustainability

Each of the areas covered by the three Activities is eminently sustainable. Moving Stories and Migration (Activity 1) has the benefit of community radio stations to continue the work. In the case of *Spark FM* in Sunderland, the recruitment of a first cohort of foreign students to make their own programmes has set an example that can be followed in future years. In the case of the Peterborough participants, *Peterborough FM* is providing a platform for continued experience and capacity building for the refugee communities. In Budapest, *Civil Radio* has a regular 'slot' in its schedule (*Everyone's Right*) to which trainees can contribute, while *Radio Robin Hood* in Turku has a long tradition of hosting programmes for migrants and involving them in the station. In Poland, the University of Lodz's Department of Transatlantic and Media Studies is a base for continued activity.

Moving Stories and Gender (Activity 2) also worked with two community radio stations in *Freies Radio Freudenstadt* and Vienna's *Orange 94.0*. In the first, the Activity 2 co-ordinator has a long history of involvement with the station so gender issues will continue to be addressed in the station's practice and schedule, while in Vienna, the station has a record of initiatives in this area of programming and Crosstalk has added a resource in a group of young female radio producers keen to be involved in the station.

The Freiburg base of Moving Stories and Life Histories (Activity 3) can enjoy the continued support of both the Pädagogische Hochschule and of its radio station, *PH 88.4*. In Southern Italy, the Crosstalk partner continues to organise seminars which address the topic of life histories which involved key educators in the region of Puglia and beyond.

Obviously sustainability is not confined solely to the place of origin of the Activities. The courses, course curricula, and the teaching and learning materials developed during *Crosstalk* will be used by the consortium partners and by institutions and organisations reached as a result of the project's dissemination strategy (see below). These include

community radio stations (reached through networks of community media such as the Community Media Forum for Europe, AMARC (World Association of Community Radios) and national associations of community media; institutions and organisations involved in adult education, universities and academic networks and networks of Adult Education and Media Pedagogy.

Dissemination

Partners of the consortium present(ed) the project, its outcomes and materials at national and international conferences, for example those of ECREA (European Communications and Research in Education Association) and IAMCR, as well as national associations such as the GMK (Gesellschaft für Medienpädagogik und Kommunikationskultur), the Radio Studies Network, MeCCSA (Media Cultural and Communication Studies Association) and in Journals and books. For example, two of the project's partners will present papers at the UK MeCCSA's annual conference at the University of Salford in January 2011., on 'Communication sustainability' and 'Ethical issues in the participatory evaluation of community media'.

A significant recognition of the sustainability of Crosstalk material and its potential for exploitation was the award to Activity 3 "Moving Stories and Life Histories: Games Venues and Favourite Places: An Audio Tour" of the prestigious German media prize *Dieter Baacke Preis 2010* in the category "Intergenerational and Integrative Media Pedagogy". The award was made by the *Gesellschaft für Medienpaedagogik und Kommunikationskultur* (GMK) and by the German National Ministry for Families, Seniors, Women and Youth.

Trainers and institutions involved in the field of adult education and media pedagogy profit(ed) from the project as they are invited to deliver similar courses using the handbooks of good practice, the course design and the teaching and learning materials published on the website for free download. They are also invited to implement training modules developed in the project into their own training schemes. Where possible courses are offered in joint ventures of partners together with other organisations such as institutions for senior citizens, migrants, women etc. Thus educational offers are improved and extended.

Appendix