

Dear Trainers,

Within our SMART-project we will run a couple of pilot trainings to test the set-up curriculum for our 3 target groups and to evaluate which content and which methods fit well, furthermore what should be improved or worked out in more detail.

And then there is also the question of training facilities. What sort of place do we need to run a good training or in which structure could we achieve our goals easier? How can we make the course more attractive for the participants and/or the trainers?

So this evaluation form should not contain tick boxes to fill, but rather it could suggest a structure to give space for describing observations. Also it should support the activity of taking notes during your pilot training, and these notes later could be presented to the whole project-group.

Please use all the space you need to answer!

SMART Pilot-Training

Date and Place: Budapest, 2014. 05. 06, 2014. 05. 13, 2014. 05. 20., 2014. 05. 27.

Organization: Civil Radio

Name of the trainer(s): Mónika Csúcs, Ádám Magyar, Ákos Cserhádi

Target group: people with learning difficulties

Duration of training: 120-150 minutes / session

Number and brief description of the participants:

Altogether 19 participants were interested and attended the training. They are all the clients of Szigony (harpoon) Foundation which organization helps people with psychiatric difficulties, coaches them in managing their life. Their clients have various cognitive problems – memory, concentration problems, *limited* social and communication skills.

The first groups were very heterogeneous regarding their age (22-67), their level of mental state and communication skills. 3 women and 16 men took part.

The 19 participants were split into three groups.

Please add to this report the applied curriculum and the agenda of the workshop - make some photos and attach them to your report.

Other material collected (will be available at ...) :

Uploaded at google drive / test training courses / LD / Civil Radio

Methods: What didactical methods did you apply to get the content across?

(e.g. lecture, discussion, group work, ...)

Because the participants have concentration difficulties and cannot pay attention to one thing for a long time we did not want to deliver a training with conveying a lot of information by frontal teaching or in the form of a classic lecturing.

We reduced all the information which are necessary for using the basic technical equipment, devices to make an interview or a short audio material. We attached one or two easy to remember sentences (almost slogans) to each unit and we tried to build these basic pieces of information into the participants' minds through practice orientated activities, exercises and games.

Our basic idea was to connect new information to the participants' existing knowledge and experiences and point out very clearly those particular pieces of information, which are essential in making an audio material that fits into Civil Radio's usual programme content.

We used many role playing exercises (e.g. when we illustrated them the differences between media types), short discussions and we asked them to work in pairs.

Methods: What methods went well - why?

(e.g. lecture, discussion, group work, ...)

The games – like role playing exercises worked well and the trainees liked it. But the trainer has to be sensitive to group dynamic and has to be aware of the participants' state of mind. Because of the differences in communication and social skills, not every participant likes to join such games, but everyone can be involved if possible – only the trainer has to have a good eye to see where is the limit of comfort feeling in the case of each participants.

Pair work was also successful - the participants liked when they could work together, when they could live the room and produce something (record a sound) and they could show it to the others.

Shorter plenary discussions worked as well – like when they presented what they did in pairs to the others and we “analyzed” these materials, talked about them.

Methods: What methods did not work - please explain?

Lecturing and frontal teaching. We tried to avoid situations where we present something to the participants by conveying information without involving them, but in some cases it just happened. Like when we talked about our programming guidelines or about the media coverage and regulation. Of course we realized it very soon that we cannot talk

to them endlessly and we changed quickly (e.g. we demonstrated in a role playing game what we were talking about).

Overall: finding the good balance between the methods is very important.

Content: What elements of the curriculum were difficult to get across?

Basically none of them were too difficult, but we had some topics that we knew we should talk about, but we also knew that those topics would be boring for our participants – so we had to think it over how to present those issues to our special group.

One of these topics was the introduction of our radio, a community radio in the media landscape. We usually do this in discussion form or by a lecture – now we had to find another method.

The introduction to radio genres and features was also a hard topic and so was the media regulation, which seemed to be unavoidable, but of course it was impossible to go into too much details.

In case of these topics we focused on finding the basic message, the simplest information and presented them to the participants in the form of games, exercises.

Content: To what extent the available time fits with the volume of the curriculum?

We knew that in our case with our special group (learning difficulties) we cannot go through the training agenda very strictly and we have to be very flexible.

We reduced what we wanted to convey into small pieces of messages, short sentences of information and we built them into the sessions with many repetition rounds. As we experienced, 120-150 minutes for a daily session, meeting once in a week is the ideal way to organize the trainings. As we calculated minimum 5 sessions are needed to make them able to produce and edit sound materials independently and after 5 sessions we have to support and help them frequently.

Organization: What aspects went well and which not - please explain?

We held the trainings in our bigger studio (where 5-6 people can sit around and there is still enough space for games and exercises), in our smaller studio (where the 5-6 participants can try out the basic studio equipment) and in the building/garden of the radio (where the participants could try out portable devices and could record sounds while they were in a protected, safe area). The training venue with such basic facilities was ideal.

The trainings were in the afternoons between 14.00-17.00 – it was not possible to organize it in the morning hours since most of the participants take tranquillizers and

different nerve medicines, which prevent them to show up earlier than 2pm. In itself this would not be a problem but since the training venues are used by the radio's volunteers in the afternoon hours, we had to think in advance and organize it in a way, when we were able to provide normal and calm working conditions both for the training participants and the volunteers of the radio.

Organization: What organizational aspects were important to run a "good training" with your target group?

Calm working conditions. Since the participants had difficulties in focusing on one particular task and also because they have psychiatric problems, the calm working conditions were more important than in other situations. We had to take care of their distress and uncomfortable feelings (what they had initially because we moved them out of their comfort zone) and in such situation it was important not to be bothered by anybody or anything.

Participation: How did the training meet specific needs and capacities of the participants? (e.g. Did it ask to much or not enough? How could mismatching be avoided?)

The participants did not have clear and precise expectations from the training – they were interested in visiting a radio and their coach introduced them the training/visit as a creative activity, which they can continue later if they are interested. We tried to keep everything simple, we conveyed simple pieces of information and did not want to go into sophisticated details unnecessarily.

We focused on teaching them a piece of new information and practiced it until it became nearly a skill (e.g. they can ask questions in a interviewing situation without being embarrassed, they can produce an audio material independently, they can get confident with editing etc.).

We tailored our teaching material to our special group and we got prepared to make changes when we experienced that it was necessary. We did a lot for making meet the needs, capacities and the taught material.

Participation: Are your participants (or some of them) motivated to go on with their radio work and what could be next steps of involvement?

Three of the trainees are interested in making audio materials, interviews or joining a radio crew. None of them would undertake to run a frequent radio show – but one of the

three, a “most dedicated” participant has already produced an interview which was aired in a show.

Two participants noted that they would like to work as technicians helping in mixing live shows – now we train them for being able to assist live shows.

What other experiences from the pilot-training were for you and your work most interesting or helpful and you would like to share with your colleagues?

Well, compared to other “ordinary trainings” that we deliver to “ordinary people” the most remarkable difference was the continuous focus and attention we had to pay to the participants and to the group dynamic. Most of the trainings we do are routine – no special or more efforts are needed.

The trainees of our special group were more sensitive and needed more care – the trainers should adapt to this situation and had to be more patient towards the participants and the whole training progress. So the overall training needs a different point of view and approach from the trainer.

Feedback: How did you organize feedback?

We had an oral feedback round at the end – a very simple one – we asked them only about how they felt being here in the afternoon. The next question was if they liked it and if they liked, they would be ready to come also in the future and join in.

Summary of trainees feedbacks:

Please note the aspects mentioned by the trainees during feedback round(s) or at any other occasions during the pilot training?

Overall they liked the visits/trainings – only one of them had been in a radio studio before, so they found it interesting and enjoyed trying out mixers, microphones, equipment. The reason why most of them did not want to go on working and making a radio show was because they could not undertake such a continuous responsibility.

Stakeholders: If there has been other organizations involved - are they furthermore motivated to cooperate and request further trainings?

We organized the training with the Szigony (harpoon) Foundation, which organization helps people with psychiatric difficulties, mental disorders in managing their life, offers them various creative occupation and support them in order to live as independent life as possible. Since the radio activity is a creative occupation and help their clients to develop their social and communication skills, they are very interested in working together and organize further trainings also in the future.

