



Health Reporting Training Project (HearT)

Progress Report

Public Part

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Executive Summary

Health Reporting Training (HeaRT) is a two-year project that will develop courses and e-learning tools to help fill in the gaps in specialized health reporting knowledge. The project target audience includes health reporters and journalists who cover stories related to health, as well as students of journalism and media or communications who may have an interest in health reporting. Furthermore, it is aimed at media outlets, organizations and associations, as well as journalism organizations, associations and networks, and educational or training institutions offering journalism and communication studies. In addition to these groups, health organizations and networks, policy makers and, in particular, ministries of health, communications/ media and education across EU are among the project's target-groups.

The general objective of HeaRT is to develop high quality innovative vocational training tools that offer specialized knowledge and skills on covering health related issues to journalists, so as to contribute to the improvement of health reporting in the European Union (EU). More specifically, it aims to make information on existing training health reporting opportunities in EU available for journalists, media organizations and academic institutions. In addition, it seeks to provide knowledge and understanding of the situation of health journalism, which will help raise attention to the issue and better understand journalists' needs in terms of training and health reporting. HeaRT aims to develop new training tools on health reporting that will benefit journalists, media organizations and associations, as well as academic/training institutions bodies such as ministries of health and journalism. Finally, it aims to widely disseminate this knowledge and training tools.

Initiated by the Athens-based organisation Institute of Preventive Medicine, Environmental and Occupational Health, Prolepsis, HeaRT brings together a combination of skills from Germany, Portugal, Romania, Great Britain, Finland, Estonia and Spain. It is a multi-disciplinary geographically diverse consortium, to which partners offer specialized know-how and expertise from the fields of journalism, medicine, media training and education, journalists' associations, NGOs and international networks of media stakeholders.

The project's methodology includes EU wide research to identify existing training courses on health reporting, as well as literature review and survey among journalists to further explore the issue of health journalism. Based on these results, a training methodology will be developed which will guide the development of the training tools. Training tools will be both face-to-face workshops and electronic and will be conducted in all partner countries in their language. Dissemination activities, such as informational materials, an EU conference and info days take place. Throughout the project, evaluation tools are used to assess processes and outcomes. Major results of the first year of the HeaRT project include: a report and a friendly-to-use electronic database that include available courses on health training around Europe; a literature review report with some key points on health journalism and a survey with valuable insights on the profile of health reporters their needs and interests; a network of individuals and institutions with an interest in health journalism in the EU and internationally; awareness raising on the issue of health journalism. Confirmation of the lack of specialized health training opportunities and information in the literature was one of the major achievements of the first year of project implementation, in combination with the results of the original survey conducted.

Future activities are to finalize the training methodology, develop and apply the training tools, as well as widely disseminate the developed tools across the EU to all stakeholders including journalists, media and health organizations, educational institutions and policy makers. Monitoring and managerial activities will continue until the end of this project.

HeaRT website: www.project-heart.eu

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1. Project Objectives

The general objective of HeaRT is to develop high quality vocational training tools that offer specialized knowledge and skills about covering health related issues to journalists, so as to contribute to the improvement of health reporting in the European Union (EU).

Media can play a key role when it comes to health, by informing the general public about health, maintaining important issues on the public agenda, and promoting health literacy. At the same time, the majority of journalists appear to lack specialized health reporting skills, while relevant training opportunities are limited.

The HeaRT project, in an effort to further explore the need for specialized health training and most importantly provide tools to cover this need, has the following objectives:

- ✓ Identify existing training opportunities on health reporting around Europe and make this information easily accessible as a valuable resource for journalists and interested parties.
- ✓ Explore the literature on the situation of health journalism in the EU and better understand journalists' needs in terms of training on health reporting.
- ✓ Develop, pilot test and evaluate new training tools on health reporting, by conducting workshops in the participating European countries and providing e-learning tools and resources.
- ✓ Build an informative web site to serve as an EU health journalism platform and a valuable resource for health reporters
- ✓ Widely disseminate the developed tools across the EU, including the organization of a European conference on health reporting and national info-days in the participating countries

By accomplishing the above described objectives, this project primarily benefits health reporters and journalists who cover stories related to health, as well as students of journalism and media or communications who may have an interest in health reporting. Furthermore, it benefits media outlets, organizations and associations, as well as journalism organizations, associations and networks, and educational institutions offering journalism and communication studies. In addition to these groups, health organizations and networks, policy makers and, in particular, ministries of health, communications/ media and education across EU are among the target-groups regularly informed about the project its lifetime.

Informing the project's target groups on its existence and raising awareness on both the project and the issue of health journalism was considered a first step and a prerequisite in getting them involved. In order to achieve that, databases of these groups in each of the HeaRT partner-countries were created and used to disseminate information on the project's different activities and results. More specifically, in an effort to involve the project's target group as early as possible a press release informing on the project and inviting journalists to get involved was sent to the media in all the participating countries, as well as a newsletter that was sent a few months later. In addition, HeaRT actively participated as one of the organizations sponsoring a European Conference on Health Journalism that took place in the United Kingdom in June 2011. The project was presented to members of its target group across the EU. Members of its consortium were also given the opportunity to discuss the project with stakeholders and interested parties, as well as make new key contacts in countries outside of the consortium.

HeaRT's target group was also involved throughout the core activities of the project's first year implementation. In particular, media and journalism professionals, organizations and associations, academic and training institutions, ministries of health and communications

were contacted to contribute to the identification of training courses around Europe. Moreover, journalists and editors themselves were invited to participate in a survey on health journalism conducted in Greece, the United Kingdom, Finland, Romania, Estonia and Spain. Approximately 150 journalists participated in the survey and, hence, offered valuable insight on their needs and perceptions regarding health reporting training. This knowledge contributed to the development of the project's training methodology, based on which the training tools will be constructed.

HeaRT aims to benefit its target group users by raising awareness and providing resources and knowledge on the issue of health journalism, as well as offering specialized training tools to journalists themselves. Research that was conducted by the HeaRT consortium during the first year of its implementation confirmed and revealed the lack of training opportunities in the EU as well as the limited information in the literature concerning this issue. In addition, it is indicative, that according to the survey conducted, more than 7 out of 10 journalists had not received any specialized training on reporting health issues, while around half of the journalists who participated in the survey considered specialized training as necessary or if not necessary good to have. The impact the HeaRT project aims to achieve is enhance understanding and available information on health journalism and offer much needed specialized knowledge, skills and qualifications to journalists on issues journalists themselves have identified as most important for their profession. By developing and providing evidence-based training tools to journalists, HeaRT can also have a positive impact on enhancing journalistic standards and employability in the EU, as well as improving the health information disseminated by the media. Its final products can be useful resources not only for journalists and media organizations, but for academic and training institutions offering journalism studies across Europe as well.

2. Project Approach

Briefly, the methods used by HeaRT project include the conduct of research on an EU level to identify existing courses on health reporting, literature review to explore current knowledge on the situation regarding health journalism and a survey among journalists to investigate their needs and beliefs. Based on the results of the above, a training methodology is being developed, which will lead to the development and application of the training tools in a face-to-face and web format. Throughout the project specific evaluation and dissemination methods are applied.

The project's implementation in its first year consisted mainly of the research activities and some initial work on the methodology design. More specifically:

- **Identification of existing training opportunities on health reporting around Europe**

The University of Applied Sciences Düsseldorf (FHD) was the leading partner of the research needed to be completed by HeaRT, so as to collect information on existing courses, programs, training schemes and other forms of formal, in-formal and non-formal training for health reporting in all EU member states, Iceland and the US. The aim was to provide a European-wide comprehensive overview of available health journalism courses.

The purpose of this investigation was to lay the groundwork for subsequent work packages, ensuring that gaps are identified and that any training package that will be designed would be complementary rather than duplicating existing training programs, and would fit the perceived and actual needs of health journalists - current and future.

The specific objectives were therefore to:

- Record health journalism educational and training opportunities including courses and degrees at all levels (undergraduate, post graduate and continuing education), formal and informal seminars, workshops and conferences.
- Identify the target groups for such courses (doctors and medical professionals, health management professionals, PR and marketing staff)
- Report any “crash courses” or “quick information courses” at local, regional or national level
- Collect information and any learning tools from these courses that might be of value for the HeaRT project.
- Analyze needs and gaps
- Identify the methodologies employed by training and educational courses, including the validation criteria used.
- Develop a discussion document/report
- Publish findings in an online database

A first milestone to achieve this goal was the project's kick-off meeting (1st transnational meeting of project partners) that was organized by FHD in Düsseldorf, on December 13-14, 2010. During that meeting, participants agreed that each partner would be responsible for reviewing the health journalism educational opportunities in their own and additional allocated countries and produce a country specific report. The following countries were allocated to be reviewed by partners based mainly on each partner's language:

- FHD: Germany, Austria, (Switzerland, Liechtenstein), Belgium, Netherlands, Luxemburg and Iceland

- Prolepsis: Greece, Cyprus, Slovenia, (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia) and Malta
- COVUNI: UK, Ireland, USA, Italy and Turkey
- UT: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland (Belarus, Russia, Ukraine)
- FIOH: Finland, (Norway), Sweden, Denmark
- CIJ: Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, and Moldova.
- UMinho: Portugal, Spain, France

Partners also discussed potential target groups of the courses under investigation, which included both journalists and students of journalism, as well as medical professionals and staff of medical services. Due to the fact that during the last years many medical service providers (such as hospitals) have developed public relations units representatives, staff members of such units were seen as a secondary target group. A research grid was developed by FHD taking into consideration all possible aspects of users, needs of learners, initial training programs, continuing vocational training programs and interdisciplinary training schemes. This was sent to all partners, in order to enter data on identified courses according to the following criteria in a consistent and standardized manner: Character of course (formal, in-formal, non-formal); Target group of course (journalists, media professionals, students, others); Specific data of course (provider, address, content, duration, costs, certification, validation etc.). In addition, space was allowed to include flyers, printed information on courses and other relevant details. This approach proved to be an added value for the HeaRT project, since it allowed partners to respond to the latest trends and potential future developments in the field of health reporting, innovative forms of learning and training, as well as validation of skills and competences in the field of health reporting.

FHD was in constant communication with Prolepsis and the other partners concerning the work and research that was being conducted. Different methods used by partners in an effort to identify courses, such as research on the internet, websites and other online communication platforms, email and telephone contacts, academic networks and personal contacts. In Finland an electronic questionnaire developed by a team member and first tested among a test group was used to collect information.

Based on the guidelines and the grid provided, all partners prepared comprehensive research reports on their own as well as additional allocated countries. FHD collected all this information by July 2011.

The limitations of this study were as expected limited or no provision of this type of training. Also the non-formal courses that exist appear to be offered internally to staff and thus not advertised on a wider basis.

FHD compiled an 85-page research outcome report on the work conducted with a comprehensive overview on courses found in Europe. For entry of information into the HeaRT online database, a second grid was developed which listed research information according to information categories. The HeaRT online database was constructed as a user-friendly resource which allows the user to search for courses using numerous filters, such as country, type of training, etc. This open approach allowed including courses which might have only touched the issue of health reporting as a side aspect, but which were listed anyway in order to offer a comprehensive picture of training options available for the identified target groups.

- **Literature review on health journalism situation in the EU**

A comprehensive literature review was conducted by experienced researchers among all partners following the standard procedure for conducting scientific literature review research, so as to present a comprehensive account of the situation concerning health

journalism in the EU. The University of Minho from Portugal (UMinho) and the Institute of Preventive Medicine, Environmental and Occupational Health from Greece (Prolepsis) led and coordinated the work conducted on the literature review.

Each partner was allocated with specific countries (including its own) to review, so as to ensure that the situation across Europe would be thoroughly recorded. This process of allocation maintained exactly the same distribution as the one established for WP1 and followed the same criteria: distribution was primarily and where applicable based on each partner's language.

Guidelines for conducting the bibliographic analysis were provided to partners, in order to ensure quality and uniformity of results and based on the acknowledgment of the diversity of situations among EU countries when it comes to health journalism reporting and training and even in the production of research and scientific literature on this subject. The HeaRT consortium reviewed literature in order to find information on the following issues: needs and limitations of health reporting; mostly/ under-reported health issues; sources; frequency of health stories; effect of health reporting on attitudes and decision making concerning health; health journalism education; qualification criteria for health journalists.

The research methodology included:

(1) a systematic search for key words related to health journalism and reporting, journalistic training, health news and the issues listed earlier in scientific journals, conference papers and proceedings, academic press, books and grey literature as well as in all possible databases (general or specialized), library catalogues and in some cases telephone interviews with journalists and health professionals;

(2) a list of the identified references; and

(3) a country specific literature review report. Bibliographic references were organized according to the type of reference: Books & Book Chapters; Scientific Journals; Thesis (PhD; Master's; Bachelor's; High School).

Partners identified lists of literature, articles, grey publications and publications that were related to health journalism. These were read and analyzed and a review on the different countries was sent UMinho and Prolepsis as comprehensive state-of-the-art reports.

As added value UMinho's researcher wrote an article in a professional magazine about the HeaRT project. This enhanced the project information diffusion.

- **Journalists' survey on needs and beliefs**

To ensure an in-depth comprehensive understanding of health reporting and take into account the target groups' interests and needs for the development of health reporting training, original research also took place. The aim was to assess journalists' education, experience, skills, perceptions, barriers and needs concerning health reporting. In total, as by October 2011, 146 journalists from six countries participated in the survey, while it is currently administered in Spain as well.

The questionnaire used was adapted by the *Survey of AHCJ Members, 2009* conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Association of Health Care Journalists (USA), after ensuring the necessary authorization. The HeaRT questionnaire consisted of 24 mostly closed questions, so as to facilitate the process of analysis.

Guidelines for partners specified that health journalists and generalists, including both senior and younger journalists, who report or are interested in reporting on health issues from different types of media (eg. print, broadcast, web media) would be approached and asked to complete the questionnaire. Each partner translated the questionnaire in their own language and had a sample of around 20-30 journalists from different media. Two options were offered regarding the method of questionnaire completion: self-administered (suggested) and structured interviews. Partners circulated the questionnaire mainly by

email to lists of local, regional and national journalists and in some cases through associations' databases and websites. Journalists that had already expressed an interest in the HeaRT project were especially approached.

As a complimentary tool aiming to facilitate the questionnaire completion process and to ensure that similar procedures are followed, an interview guide was designed. The guide included a description of the questionnaire, with particular emphasis on each of the five thematic units, general information regarding the methodology, which should be followed, as well as tips and guidelines for the process of completion and for overcoming possible limitations and difficulties. An easy to complete database was developed as an excel file used by all partners to enter the collected data of the questionnaires. Clear coding instructions were also prepared and provided to all partners so as to ensure the quality and uniformity of the data coding. Prolepsis received the completed databases by partners and conducted the analysis of the questions on basis of the total sample, as well as on country-specific basis, under a comparative view. Survey results accompanied by tables and figures were included in a comprehensive report that included a section with the General Features and Conclusions that can act as a useful resource for the HeaRT consortium as well as researchers, academics and interesting parties, as well as an Appendix with the descriptive comprehensive analysis of all results.

Two of the partners also conducted interviews with health journalists and reporters, in order to acquire more in-depth knowledge on their needs and interests.

The questionnaire attracted quite a lot of attention, and paved the way for the press release just sent out to the same big circulation, revealing some of its key findings for the UK and Europe-wide. This in turn has been forwarded to the big list of contacts, the MJA and to the Association of Journalism Education.

- **Training Methodology**

The above-described findings contributed significantly to the drafting of the training methodology, which was the responsibility of the University of Coventry. The aim was to ensure that HeaRT offers genuinely new training tools, useful and in line as far as possible with issues identified by journalists within each partner country. Results from the journalists' survey offered specific guidelines on the content (interest in issues, need for skill development), as well as the organization of the workshops (duration, format of training). The "one size fits all" approach appears not to be suitable. Thus, rather than mapping out a single 4-day package of training based on a Europe-wide template and ideas that may have received little support, a combination of topics that aroused the greatest interest and combination of skills will be applied to each country in the format that appeared to be preferred by the target group.

The methodology includes an overview of the survey data, highlighting common areas and differences, and examines each of the potential topics and skills (in the overall order of preference, noting variations where appropriate). It seeks to make use of what resources already exist and to suggest a framework of approach that can allow those leading the training package to develop a critical understanding and offer resources that will stimulate new thinking in journalists accessing the training package. It therefore offers initial, general guidelines on the curriculum, the materials, links and references. The issue of staffing, selection criteria and admin/technical support needs to be addressed in each partner country. The general outline of the Draft Methodology will be discussed and agreed at the next partners' meeting, a website plan can be drawn up to offer the various sources, adding where necessary additional material to be translated from one of the partner countries, and perhaps with sections for each partner country to put additional material in their own language.

Once agreed, and supplemented wherever necessary by additional material in appropriate languages, the publicly-available material (with appropriate prior agreement and credit) or links to publicly sourced material and appropriate source material can form the basis of an

internet e-learning platform for health journalism. This would remain and could continue to be developed as a legacy of the project.

Based on the Evaluation Strategy, Center of Independent Journalism (CIJ), the partner responsible for the project's evaluation, reviewed the above described activities, based on specific indicators with purpose-made evaluation tools. Evaluation of both the process and the outputs took place. More specifically, the work conducted on identifying existing training was evaluated according to whether all EU countries were reviewed and the number/percentage of curriculums collected for identified training programs. The literature review and the survey were also evaluated based on indicators, such as included coverage of literature from 1998 onwards, common survey methodology and tool, and ≥ 20 survey participants per partner. Changes were requested when problems were found and, in some cases, reports were improved. In addition partners were asked to assess the processes of these activities through questionnaires.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

Major achievements and results of the first year implementation of the HeaRT project are described below in correlation with the objectives served:

Objective: Identify existing training opportunities on health reporting around Europe and make this information easily accessible as a valuable resource for journalists and interested parties.

Outcomes & Results: A list with 77 identified and fully described courses with accompanying materials, flyers, links, contact data and addresses of institutions offering courses and for some courses more comprehensive descriptions of course content (where available) has been produced. This information is available in (a) a comprehensive report ("WP1 Research Report": <http://www.project-heart.eu/index.php/projectheart/project/reports>) that includes an analysis of courses found in a quantitative and qualitative overview and a full list of all course data listed by country, and (b) an online data base on the project's website with information on all 77 courses found ("EU Course Database": <http://www.project-heart.eu/index.php/projectheart/datamainviewpost>), which can be easily searched by filters (EU country, Type of training, Institution, Degree, Intended users) to help the user browse through the courses easily and effectively. Apart from information related to these filters, for each course and where available, a brief description, duration, languages, pre-requirements, degrees/certifications, curriculum, downloads and link to its website are provided. Important products of the work conducted also include a comprehensive (a) research grid and (b) data grid for entry of data on online-database, as well as (c) state of the art reports prepared by each partner organization.

A valuable finding was that despite the need for training for journalists in the field of health reporting only a very small number of training seminars, courses and programs was available in Europe. Most courses found were 2-or 3-day short-term training courses offering an introduction in health reporting. It should be noted that it was extremely difficult to find relevant courses, programs or training schemes focusing on health reporting or coverage of health issues in the media, as well as receive updated information on courses identified. Furthermore, often courses took place only once with poor documentation and no data on number of students, satisfaction with course content, etc.

Objective: Explore the literature on the situation of health journalism in the EU and better understand journalists' needs in terms of training on health reporting.

Outcomes & Results: Information on health journalism for numerous EU countries was identified, analyzed and included in a literature report which will be available from the HeaRT website. The report includes the methodology followed, a synopsis of the main literature review findings, as well as a list of references of literature. The information is related to health journalism scientific studies; health journalism practices, education and influence to the society, as well as needs and limitations. The following findings were of importance : (1) absence of or limited published information and research related to health journalism in some countries; (2) relevant differences between the state of health journalism practice and education among European countries, as well as common points, such as the issue of conflict of interest, the need for training and the need for better communication and collaboration between journalism and the medical communities. State of the art reports on specific countries were also delivered. Due to difficulties regarding this activity and even though the information is collected and partners have delivered their country reports, the literature report is not yet finalized and available for the public, but still under final review by the consortium.

The second major achievement is the questionnaire (adapted from a US model), the conduct of the survey, as well as its results, all of which are available and thoroughly

described in the Survey Report, which can be downloaded from HearRT's website (<http://www.project-heart.eu/index.php/projectheart/project/reports>). Valuable information is provided on both a country-specific and a comparative basis. Based on the analysis of 146 completed questionnaires, significant variations between countries on the ideal duration of any training event, and in the mix of topics and skills that journalists were most interested to learn more about were identified, although there also was a surprising degree of consensus over which methods of teaching and learning were preferred over other. The survey was conducted in all partner countries, except for Portugal, where UMinho faced significant difficulties in finding journalists to participate. Nevertheless, it is currently being administered in Spain.

The main objectives were achieved, because this part of the project aimed to gather existing knowledge as well as the target groups' views on the development of a training program that will best fit the needs and preferences of journalists in Europe, taking into consideration the differences that may exist in various countries. In particular, it was concluded, that tailored made training packages need to be developed by each partner to be specifically linked to the views and interests of the journalists who are the most likely participants in the training program. Furthermore, these findings resulted in the identification of additional health journalists and advancement of networking in each country, as well as raising awareness on HearRT through the announcement of findings (press release).

Objective: Develop, pilot test and evaluate new training tools on health reporting, by conducting workshops in the participating European countries and providing e-learning tools and resources.

Outcomes & Results: The information acquired by the above described achievements consist the basis and resource for the training methodology and later the development of the actual training tools. In addition, they have significantly contributed to making the project known among its target group, members of which will also be applying the training tools.

Objective: Build an informative web site to serve as an EU health journalism platform and a valuable resource for health reporters

Outcomes & Results: During the first phase of the project, the HearRT project logo and project corporate ID were developed and are used on all project product and materials, including the project website, which is available at www.project-heart.eu. The website contains information on the project (target groups, aims and objectives, implementation steps and work packages, consortium), the main results and reports, the electronic course database, HearRT news, calendar and the newsletters.

Objective: Widely disseminate the developed tools across the EU, including the organization of a European conference on health reporting and national info-days in the participating countries

Outcomes & Results: Dissemination lists have been constructed by all partners, which are used for communicating information on the project. A press release, a newsletter, the website, HearRT's participation in conferences and communication with the target groups throughout the first year of implementation have contributed to raising awareness on the project and preparing a network through which the training tools will be disseminated and promoted. It is worth noting, that this network consists of contacts from countries outside the consortium, such as France and Ireland, as well as the US. The HearRT project was also included in databases, such as ENTER and ADAM.

4. Partnerships

The HearT project is implemented by a multi-country partnership that consists of seven organizations from seven EU countries: Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Portugal, Romania and United Kingdom. All partners offered specialized know-how and expertise from the fields of journalism, medicine, media training and education, journalists' associations, NGOs and international networks of media stakeholders. Enhancing communication and collaboration between the medical community and the media/journalists is a need that has been evident throughout the research conducted by the HearT project. The aim was to build a strong interdisciplinary, multi-country consortium, where each member can bring the different knowledge and expertise, as well as the perspective of different EU countries. For several of the participating countries this is considered a much needed program, which would have hardly been possible without an international consortium and international partnership.

Furthermore, geographically diverse areas of the EU are represented, for a comprehensive EU wide understanding and knowledge of the issue concerning Health Journalism to be made possible. During the research activities described above, European countries outside the consortium were allocated to be reviewed by HearT's partners. This was made possible based on the criteria of language and geographic proximity. Hence, HearT was able to identify courses on health journalism as well as review the literature, where this was possible, across Europe and not only among the consortium countries.

Towards to end of the first year of the project, UMinho from Portugal was obliged to withdraw from the consortium and was replaced by Asociación Nacional de Informadores de la Salud (ANIS), an organization focused on health reporting located in Spain. The expertise and activities as well as the position (both geographically and linguistically) of ANIS within the EU, resulted in sustaining the value and the composition of the partnership guaranteeing the successful continuation of the project work.

As expressed by all partners, the experience of working in a European partnership has been enriching, positive and productive. One of the strong points has been the interdisciplinary collaboration among medical and public health specialists and experts, journalists, communicators and journalism professionals, etc. In many cases, because of the exchange of knowledge, experiences, practices and even personal contacts, this collaboration has been valuable for each individual partner. The shared background and expertise of all partners has been an enriching experience for the HearT project. This European partnership has also been useful in regards to interesting new contacts and information gained by the organizations involved, as well as contributing to the development of an EU wide network of relevant organizations.

The special quality of the HearT consortium of partners was also evident when a partner experienced severe health problems and had to re-schedule some of his project activities. Even at that time all partners were very cooperative and collaboration continued very well.

Communication during transnational partner meetings was very good. When there was need for further communication phone conferences were regularly scheduled approximately every 1-2 months, to facilitate collaboration. Bilateral exchange of information via email has been working very well too.

There have been times that the experience of working together has also been difficult because of the size and the cultural disparities of the group. In addition, it has been sometimes challenging to get the representatives from different fields and expertise, various languages and countries to a same understanding about research methods and various issues. Some miscommunication issues with some partners have also occurred that led to delays and difficulties in the work conducted and meeting the deadlines.

In general, the group has worked well together throughout the different activities of HeaRT's first year and all organizations involved have gained something in the process.

The opening up of the project to journalistic networks in the US, the attendance and active participation in international conferences, such as the European Conference "Health in the Headlines" that took place in Coventry in the UK, the close interaction between academia, media practitioners, health experts and experienced project managers has been of very high value for the project. Several partners have been able to strengthen or establish contacts with journalistic networks, unions, public and private media, publishing houses, newspapers and independent writers. All these institutions and individuals are both potential target groups of the project and have provided tremendous input during the first research phases of HeaRT, during which information on courses and the current situation of health journalism were explored. These also served as target group for the survey that was conducted and, have thus, contributed to the development of the methodology and the training tools. They are also expected to take an active role during the development and piloting of the health reporting training tools.

Indicatively, Prolepsis has made contacts with individual health journalists, owners/directors of media organizations, members of journalists' associations, the National Kapodistrian University, Department of Media and Communication and the Medical School of Athens, in Athens, as well as health journalists, institutes and associations on a European level, such as the London School of Economics and the Association of British Science Writers. Within Düsseldorf University and the State of Nordrhein-Westfalen, key stakeholders were included in the project that can support a future sustainable use of project products and their integration into mainstream journalistic training in Germany in the field of health reporting. University of Coventry through the organization of the first-ever Europe-wide conference on health journalism had the opportunity to build on the partnership, drawing in journalists from 14 different countries, all of whom responded very positively to the conference, again reflecting the big gaps that currently exist in professional support, including a powerful delegation from the American Health Care Journalists - AHCJ (US). The work on HeaRT project so far has opened up possibilities of ongoing partnerships and joint work with the AHCJ, with the Medical Journalists Association in Britain and the National Union of Journalists, as well as a visit to Romania to participate in the first health journalism summer school and invitations to develop more contacts with the organizers there. Furthermore, it has resulted in opening and enhancing the dialogue with academics and a number of editors and other senior health journalists who have been interested in the project and its possibilities. CIJ was given the chance to their international expertise and obtain more first-hand knowledge of the media community and its needs at a national level. They were also able to broaden their contacts and established links with organizations, such as journalism and communication schools or public authorities or medical professionals and organizations. The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health was able through HeaRT to get in touch with existing / previous target user groups like health journalism associations, as well as find new potential co-operation directions and partners by widening the existing network. This will be useful both for the HeaRT project and FIOH in the future.

Direct contact with the target group was also a crucial element for dissemination of project activities and to make the project known in the public and within the interested primary and secondary target groups.

5. Plans for the Future

The second year of the HeaRT implementation includes activities aiming to finalize the training methodology, develop, pilot test and evaluate new training tools on health reporting, as well as widely disseminate the developed tools across the EU to all stakeholders including journalists, media and health organizations, educational institutions and policy makers. As for the first year, evaluation/monitoring and managerial activities will continue until the end of this meeting.

To be more precise, in regards to the training methodology, COVUNI will collect the necessary materials and any changes or additions to the main document arising from partners' feedback and discussion at the November project meeting. These will be incorporated and lead to the document's finalization and circulation among partners. The final methodology will contain information on both the topics and skills that journalists need further training on, and which training modules will be developed by all partners. Each partner will be allocated 2-3 specific training modules (3-hours each) that need to be developed and translated in English. During a partners meeting in spring, partners will train each other on the developed modules, which then need to be translated in their language as well. As a result around 15 training modules will be developed, from which each country will be able to design a training package tailored to the specific needs of their target group (topics and skills journalists are more interested in, as well as preferred organization, duration, etc.). The possibility to provide validation of the training courses will also be explored.

All partners will conduct a training program equivalent to a 4-day workshop in their country and language. At least 30 participants will attend the program. Health journalists and health reporters/editors, who want to advance their skills, as well as journalists in general, who want to develop basic skills on health reporting, will be approached.

At least 80% of the training materials and resources will also be transferred and made available as an e-learning tool through the project's website. Suggested structure includes a list of all modules in all languages available, from which the user can search with filters such as topics, skills, languages, etc. In addition, the e-learning tools will include the European course database, resources, a forum for articles' evaluation and other.

Evaluation of the training will also be conducted based on questionnaires administered at the time of participation in the workshop and 2 months later, so as to assess the level of application of knowledge and skills acquired by journalists on their professional work. Feedback forms on the e-learning tools will also be used. Based on the evaluation results, the training tools will be finalized by September 2011.

Apart from press releases, newsletters, the leaflet, the continuous update of the website and the strengthening of the contacts and informal networking with members of the target group, major dissemination activities will take place towards the end of the project. In particular a European Conference will be organized in Athens, Greece, in September 2011, aiming to present the training tools, further disseminate the project's results, as well as raise awareness on the issue of health journalism and the available training opportunities on health reporting. European and international experts will participate in the conference, who will help enhance the health journalism network promoted by HeaRT project, as well as the exploitation and sustainability of its products among the project's target groups. National Info Days will follow in each partner country so as to nationally and locally disseminate results.

The evaluation plan for the second year of the project includes the following with the use of specifically developed evaluation tools (both process and quality wise):

- Assessment of developed Health Journalism Training Methodology

- Assessment of the development and application of the training tools
- Assessment of the project's dissemination activities
- Assessment of the project's managerial activities

Questionnaires will also be developed to evaluate the partners' meetings (pre- and post-meeting questionnaires). 6-month progress and financial reports will also be administered.

Throughout the continuation of the project effective scientific and administrative coordination will be ensured, by creating necessary conditions for successful cooperation and results, supporting and supervising the technical and scientific work performed, as well as managing administrative and financial issues. Two partner meetings and regular conference calls, in addition to frequent email communication will also be taking place.

6. Contribution to EU policies

Research and work conducted during the first year of the project have confirmed the project's initial argument that there are limited opportunities for health reporting training in the EU, with none in some countries, including some of the partner countries. The literature that deals with health journalism also appears to be very restricted in most of the European countries. On the other hand, health journalists themselves, based on the survey conducted by HeaRT project appear to consider specialized health reporting training as either "necessary" or "good to have but not necessary", and have expressed specific interest in topics related to health journalism and skills on health reporting.

HeaRT is developing new training tools that will provide journalists the skills and knowledge they consider necessary to better understand, evaluate and cover issues related to health. Hence, the project contributes to the objectives and priorities set by the Lifelong Learning Program by developing quality innovative lifelong learning that will be attractive and at the same time accessible to its target group, since it is designed tailored to their needs, interests, limitations and preferences regarding its format. In addition specialized knowledge and skills, as well as the possibility of receiving validated training will also help health journalists be more competitive in their field. Based on the research conducted by HeaRT, journalists would be more interested in attending face-to-face workshops, conferences, on line reports and resources, as well as printed resources. HeaRT will utilize this knowledge to develop innovative and attractive practices that combine face-to-face (workshops and conferences) with electronic training tools (e-learning tools) and fit the needs of its target group. HeaRT contributes to the priority regarding the improvement of quality and increase of the volume of cooperation between institutions, through its interdisciplinary and multi-country consortium, as well as the partnerships developed or strengthened beyond the consortium, as described in detail in the previous section.

Through its network, the target groups' active involvement and the project's dissemination strategy, HeaRT also aims to promote sustainability of its training products that can act as models for the development of other innovative vocational training practices that consider the labour market and fill in the gaps in specialized training.

Concerning LLP Horizontal policies, the project promotes awareness of the importance of cultural and linguistic diversity within Europe. Being implemented by a multi-country partnership, significant attention was given to the different needs among participating countries. Utilising the important findings from the research conducted by HeaRT, instead of applying a "one-size-fits-all" approach, training packages for each country will be developed based on each country's needs, interests and characteristics as expressed by their target groups. Common modules will be applied, but differences among countries will be taken into account in the training tools, which will be applied and be available in different European languages. In addition, some training modules will be specifically designed based on the situation and the system/policies of each country.

By offering vocational training that is tailored to their needs and interests on a specialized field, for which very few training programs exist and very limited scientific knowledge is known, HeaRT acts complimentary to EU policies in regards to employment and social affairs.

Finally, the project acts also complementary to the European Center for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), by researching existing information on available training and scientific knowledge on training, developing new training tools and providing scientific and technical know-how in the field of health journalism. These can benefit the project's primary target group directly, by training specialized health reporters. On the other hand, it can help the academic and scientific community by raising awareness about the gap and the need for vocational training, offering valuable knowledge and resources on better understanding

the issue of health journalism, as well as providing new training resources. Exchange of ideas and expertise and further collaboration among medical and journalism experts and professionals are also promoted and facilitated throughout the project.

