MCO Conference, Salamanca, 17 – 18 September

Workshops

Report for 1.2 and 2.3 by Janja Komljenovic

Workshop 1.2

Facilitator: Caroline Parker

Speaker 1: Astrid Soderbergh

Speaker 2: Mono Bunwaree

The two universities have started the process of living values this year. Will share the experience.

Astrid: the first step was to anchor the idea of the pilot within the university as there were some questions or sceptics. Thus lots of dialogue was held as well as a document was prepared to explain the idea (the prospectus from the MCO toolbox). The second step was to start the process – which was a bottom-up approach but strongly backed by the leadership. Thus it started at several levels of the university leadership and then spread across university departments (academic, administrative, student union). It was important that this project was inclusive and staff and students were invited to participate as opposed to being forced to participate. The third step was collecting responses by people through meetings and written communication; as well as creating a website to keep the communication and information going. Finally, there was a kick-off of the living values project at which it became clear that the project managed to spread out across the university. Every unit or department besides two (out of 60) responded to the project and answered the call for a response. At the moment they are writing a strategy based on the received written responses by various university units. They found that two out of three initially suggested values needed to be replaced after the consultation as they were found to be redundant.

What worked? The prospectus from the MCO was used. Challenges: Communication department of the university identified three institutional values at the beginning of the process, which were then discussed. They were not pleased that two were replaced. Moreover, administrative staff felt excluded from the values as they felt they were only academic values (e.g. academic freedom). Thus the community needed to discuss how they resonate across the institution and departments including administration. Positive effects: they found keywords that are agreed across the university and shared values became clear.

Mono: will present how they went through the process rather than why values are important. When UoM was invited by MCO to participate as a pilot site, it immediately responded yes. The first thing they did was set up a local working committee (through the call of expression of interest directed to all departments of the university – academic, admin and students) that would work on the volunteer basis. It was meant to be a bottom-up approach. Vice-chancellor strongly supported this and the process was managed by an academic elected by the university community.

The second phase was dedicated to selecting the values. They took stock of existing values – 15 of them, discussed them and two were added (respect and responsibility). They then took on the four values of the MCO and the two additional ones; and assessed the six values. The assessment was organized via the Google survey tool and a Likert scale. All values had a short description and people answered how much they agree or not. The survey was sent to all at the university (all staff and students), the response rate was satisfactory. Many respondents did not know about these values; particularly students did not know about academic freedom. The conclusion was that values needed to be promoted.

Promotion was thus the third step with the aim of informing about the six values (tools like banners, stickers and logos were created). This was a marketing strategy to make people aware of the chosen values. The timing was important and they used the opportunity of the new student intake – freshers’ week.

Now they see that students talk more about the values and the campaign was successful.

Workshop 2.3

Facilitator: Gulsun Saglamer

Speaker 1: Sijbolt Noorda (replacing Amr Elhelw)

Speaker 2: Marcelo Knobel

Sijbolt: was an ambassador for the project who worked with the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport – he can only report in this capacity. The Academy has four campuses in more than one country; governors are ministers of transport. The first step was thus about protecting their autonomy (regarding curriculum, choosing students to enrol, choosing academic staff to employ and academic freedom). The first experience regarding engagement with stakeholders was to protect the freedom from the authorities. The second observation is that the Academy works for many professional fields (maritime industry, information technology, data management, biomedical sciences and so on). The Academy discusses professional standards with employers for these different disciplines, but they are different in different countries. Thus the Academy sets different standards differently in each of these cases. Third and last observation is about the latest campus that was built that is equipped with modern facilities and has high fees. Thus the Academy needs to find a way to be accessible for wider population – thus offer equity of access. These three circumstances guide the university towards specific values.

Marcelo: Project objectives was to investigate and discuss the values shared by the university community, find values that it must incorporate to support autonomy and respond to social expectations. The team that was involved was formed from different parts of the university and managed by an interdisciplinary team of seven people. The project was designed in eight stages: a preparation of a reference document, workshop on perception of values experience at Unicamp, presentation of workshop results, feedback of workshop participants, survey with the academic community, preparation of the action plan, presentation of it to the central administration, workshop for dissemination f the action plan. Stakeholders involved: vice-rectors, directors, staff, and so on – internal to the university.

At the moment, they are in the third stage and have just finished with the workshop (which was the second stage). At the workshop, the participants voted on the initial list of values to prioritize further discussion at the workshop. Then they discussed the chosen values in small groups (e.g., is this value lived at Unicamp?). Then the group came up with definitions for each of the chosen value. Finally, they ended up with the list of 12 different values. The idea is to now prepare a survey with these 12 values and apply it across the university.

The difficulties were that there was some resistance at the university as it was seen as in competition to the institutional evaluation. However, the management team managed to accommodate these problems and promote the project.

At the discussion it was raised that universities should also include external stakeholders in discussion about its values. Technically speaking, this could be done later in the process of specifying explicit values.