



This project is funded by the European Union's
Rights, Equality and Citizenship
Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

LESSONS LEARNED

From the implementation of project VIVIEN

Vedar Georgiev

January 2021

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's
Rights, Equality and Citizenship
Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

Acknowledgements

I express special thanks to the Bulgarian partners in the VIVIEN project - Eyes on Four Paws Foundation and Narodno Chitalishte "Sveti Sveti Kiril i Metodij-1924", who proved that they have an organizational culture of identifying, documenting and analyzing lessons learned from activities and contributed greatly to the creation of this book.

Many thanks also to the Lead Partner of VIVIEN project Giolli Cooperativa, Italy and the Croatian partner in the project "Be active. Be Emancipated", which also contributed a lot to the book and with their materials guided us to the extent to which the culture of "lessons learned" exists in their organizations.

Vedar Georgiev,
Coordinator in project VIVIEN

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's
Rights, Equality and Citizenship
Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

Contents

Introduction	4-5
Organizational culture of documenting and re-use of lessons learned	6
Basic Knowledge about Lessons Learned	7-9
The approach of project VIVIEN to identification and documentation of Lessons Learned in the implementation process	10-11
List of Lessons Learned in VIVIEN	12-14
Presentation of the Lessons Learned in work packages	15
Lessons learned in the implementation of WP 1 Management and coordination of the project	16-24
Lessons learned in the implementation of WP 2 Analyzing, mapping and knowledge sharing	25-32
Lessons learned in the implementation of WP 3 Experimenting training	33-41
Lessons learned in the implementation of WP 4 Dissemination and Exploitation of results	42-48
Lessons learned in the implementation of WP 5 Quality assessment, monitoring and evaluation	49-53
The importance of proper documentation of lessons learned	54
What to be attentive about to avoid mistakes in documenting LL	55-58
The difference between lessons learned and best practice	59
Conclusion	60

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

INTRODUCTION

About projects and lessons learned

Projects are implemented all over the world and in all areas - activities with main characteristics uniqueness of the planned result (new product or service), limited time for achievement of the result/results and predetermined resources for use. These characteristics of the project determine the importance of maximum avoidance of mistakes in planning and implementation, as mistakes can seriously jeopardize the success of the project to achieve its expected results in the restricted time and with the approved resources.

All innovative activities inevitably face challenges and the need to make the best possible decisions to overcome difficulties and unexpected obstacles. Psychology has defined decision-making as a cognitive process, as a result of which a final choice is made between several alternatives, choosing a certain view or course of action. An essential part of this process is the analysis of the alternatives that are known to the decision maker, the so-called multiple-criteria decision analysis (MCDA). And of course, knowing as many alternatives as possible contributes to successful decision making.

The importance of the "lessons learned" from project implementation logically stems from this need to choose between alternatives, that need to be known. And well known as application, so that not to choose a seemingly attractive alternative, which could later appear to be no less endangering the achievement of the project results. A good alternative expected to bring desired results can jeopardize the implementation of a project if the person choosing it is not aware of the costs of its implementation or the required time or human resources and expertise needed for its implementation. A number of possible good solutions to problems is unrealizable due to lack of sufficient resources. Thus practical knowledge is needed and experience from projects advises best what works well and what does not.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

In the implementation of each project we face the challenge in achieving its expected results in its limited time and with its restricted resources, acting in a changed social environment from the time of its planning, looking for solution of new problems that we could not have foreseen, because at the time of proposal writing they did not yet exist.

What helps us and made it possible for us to achieve success, is our most valuable resource – the human resource. Project management is an important and responsible activity that allows and requires timely assessment of circumstances, finding successful solutions to overcome obstacles in project implementation, regrouping of resources and harmonization of activities in case of delay in some activities, threatening to damage planned inter-connectedness.

What helps project managers to implement successfully their difficult tasks is their experience in this complex activity or, in other words, the lessons they have learned from the implementation of previous projects. It is widely acknowledged that we learn not only from our success, but even more from our failures, which warn us not to repeat them and to look for other more successful solutions.

Of course, it is not only the project managers who are faced with the need to continuously assess the implementation environment and take a series of decisions, on the totality of which depends the successful implementation and the achievement of the objectives of each project. Project implementation is a collective activity in which each expert contributes and in which everyone's mistake and/or omission jeopardizes the end result.

Each participant in the implementation of a project has the opportunity to learn useful lessons from their successes and failures. It is this individual learning of lessons from the implementation which endangers that the lessons learned, if not shared, documented and made accessible to anyone in the organization who plans or performs similar activities, increases only the individual knowledge and the performance capacity of the individuals, when capturing and re-use lessons learned is valuable for any organization and institution. And each learned but unshared lesson can "leave" the

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

organization when the individual who „owns” the particular lesson leaves it for one or another reason.

Organizational culture of capturing and re-use of lessons learned

When in the process of developing the VIVIEN project we decided to set the activity for identification, documentation and stimulation of re-use at the appropriate time of the lessons learned from the implementation, one of our main goals with this activity was to build, and strengthen where it existed, an organizational culture of lessons learned in all partner organizations. In this regard, we also learned a new lesson from the project - that building such an organizational culture requires more time than the duration of a project which can lay its foundations in an organization, but requires the involvement not only of the project team but of everyone in the organization to become a sustainable part of the overall organizational culture.

The stimulation from a project to start building an organizational culture for documenting, archiving and further use of lessons learned is the beginning of a process that ultimately depends on the commitment of the management team of an organization to build such a culture and especially from the understanding of the management how important is this culture for the development of the organization. And what a project can help with, is to increase the understanding and contribute to internal capacity building.

Building a new culture in an organization requires not only support from the governing bodies of the organization - *conditio sine qua non* - but also the understanding of everyone in the organization/institution of the essence and importance of this culture and readiness to accept change and contribute to it.

At the beginning of the VIVIEN project, the two Bulgarian organizations, partners in the project - the “Eyes on Four Paws” Foundation and the National Chitalishte “St. St. Cyril and Methodius-1924”.- have already had such a culture, established with internal policy and procedures. With the aim to build such a culture in all project partners, at the first transnational partners meeting in Italy the project staff was trained to document the identified

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

lessons learned with an approved form for documenting them. All partners were assigned the task to identify valuable lessons and share them with the other partners to evaluate and include the most important ones in the Lessons Learned brochure of the project.

Basic knowledge about Lessons Learned

The definition given by The Project Management Institute (PMI): is that the lessons learned are the knowledge acquired in the process of project implementation. This includes the pros and cons, successes and failures. The idea is to identify, document and re-use in future what has been learned, and thus repeat the positive aspects and not to repeat the mistakes.

The most useful lessons are expected to be 1-2 sentences long, short and clear. They should be specific to indicate what is wrong and possibly what is appropriate to do in a given situation and where and when what has been learned could be applied to save effort and mistakes. As lessons are learned in a context, background information is also needed.

The purpose of documenting lessons learned is to share and use lessons learned to:

- Promoting the repeatability of the desired results
- Prevent the recurrence of unwanted results

As a practice, according to the Project Management Institute, learning and preserving lessons learned as a value to the organisation includes the processes needed to identify, document, validate and disseminate lessons learned for future application.

The use and incorporation of the lessons learned into organizational knowledge includes the identification of an applicable lesson learned, documenting the lesson, archiving it in an accessible way, disseminating it to appropriate staff, identifying actions to be taken as a result of the lesson and follow-up activities to ensure that appropriate action has been taken relevant to the experience.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

More information about the lessons learned could be found at:

https://www2a.cdc.gov/cdcup/library/pmg/implementation/II_description.htm

How to identify and document lessons learned

Each lesson learned reveals the reason for a success or a failure and the motives behind any corrective action taken to address the issue. When thinking how to effectively document the lessons learned of the project, the Project Management Institute advises us to consider the answers of the following types of questions:

- What did you learn about the project as a whole?
- What did you learn about the project management?
- What did you learn about communication?
- What did you learn about budgeting?
- What did you learn about tenders?
- What did you learn about working with donors?
- What did you learn about working with beneficiaries?
- What did you learn about what went well?
- What did you learn about what did not go well?
- What did you learn about what should be changed?
- How could that be included in a project?

The lesson learned should be based on both positive experience - good ideas that improve the effectiveness of the project or save money, and negative experience - a lesson learned after an unwanted result has occurred.

Each documented lesson learned should contain at least the following common features:

- Information about the project, contact information, additional details
- Clear and concise presentation of the lesson
- Basic summary about how the lesson was learned
- Benefits of making use of the lessons learned and suggestion how the lesson could be re-used in future?

At every moment of the project life cycle the project team and the key stakeholders can identify lessons. The lessons learned get identified,

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

formalized and stored during the implementation of the project. Usually by the end of the project a special lessons learned session is held, focused on the identification of successes and failures of the project, leading to recommendation for improvement in future projects.

The lessons learned session is a meeting with participation of:

- the project team
- representation of selected stakeholders, including eventually also auditors and/or quality assessment experts.

The participants in lessons learned sessions usually discuss issues such as:

- Does the created product meet the requirements and objectives of the project?
- Is the beneficiary satisfied with the final product (s)? If not, why not?
- Do the costs correspond to the planned budget? If not, why not?
- Was the schedule followed? If not, why not?
- Are the risks identified and mitigated? If not, why not?
- Did the project management do methodology work? / If not, why not?
- What can be done to improve the process?
- What challenges or obstacles have the project experienced?
- What procedures should be applied in future projects?
- What can be done in future projects to facilitate success?
- What changes would help speed up the implementation of future projects while increasing communication?

Lessons learned and comments regarding project evaluation should be documented, archived, presented and openly discussed with the intention of eliminating the emergence of unavoidable problems in future projects.

The ultimate goal of documenting the lessons learned is to provide future project teams with information that can increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their implementation and build on the experience gained from each previously completed project.

Properly documented and disseminated, the lesson learned is a powerful method for sharing ideas for improving work-flows, usage, quality, safety, and cost-effectiveness, and helps to improve management decision-making and

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

the effectiveness during each phase of a project. They also help to validate some of the more difficult periods experienced in the implementation of the project and help future project managers to avoid such difficulties.

The VIVIEN project approach to identify and document lessons learned from project implementation

At the beginning of the VIVIEN project, the two Bulgarian organizations, partners in the project - the "Eyes on Four Paws" Foundation and the National Chitalishte "St. St. Cyril and Methodius-1924" were the organizations with established organizational culture of capturing, storing and reusing lessons learned.

To build such a culture in all project partners at the first transnational partners meeting in Italy the project staff was trained to document the identified lessons learned with an approved form for their documentation, internal procedures and policies were developed for the lessons learned and all partners were assigned the task to identify valuable lessons and share them with partners for evaluation and inclusion of the most important of them in the brochure "Lessons Learned", planned to be developed by the expert of the National Chitalishte "St. St. Cyril and Methodius-1924", who was in charge of it.

The partners were encouraged not only to identify and document lessons learned, but also to lobby and contribute to building an organizational culture for lessons learned in their organization or institution.

The project applied the principles of BEST PRACTICES for identifying and documenting the lessons learned, namely:

- **Include all experiences** - the lesson learned should be based on both positive and negative experiences.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

- **Act quickly** - Get feedback as quickly as possible to avoid people forgetting the challenges they faced during the implementation of a project.
- **Seek and provide feedback** - Conduct post-project research to get feedback on the project from the project team, beneficiaries and stakeholders who were well acquainted with project management.
- **Act collectively** - Conduct a session on lessons learned to encourage the success of future projects.
- **Document and store lessons learned** - Store lessons learned throughout the project in a central repository. The lesson learned should be archived as historical project data by including best practices and any other relevant project documentation and included in the organizational lessons learned.
- **Make lessons accessible** - Make the lesson accessible for other projects.
- **Distribute lessons** - Lessons learned should be disseminated in the project management community.
- **Use lessons learned** - Use lessons learned from past projects to help better manage current projects.
- **Involve stakeholders** - Involve all project participants and stakeholders in the lifelong learning process.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

List of the lessons learned from the VIVIEN project

Lesson 1: Arrange from the start of the project an alternate to be available, if needed, for replacement of key personnel.

Lesson 2: Ensure maximum use of digital tools to harmonize international partnership activities, joint decision-making and online activities.

Lesson 3: Review not only your workload, but also that of other partners, and its impact on working days and clarify this before signing the Partnership Agreement.

Lesson 4: Clarify from the outset all technical details about any differences between your national reporting documents and internal rules and what the Lead Partner requests.

Lesson 5: Good human relations between the members of the partner teams are what contribute most to the implementation of the project and become the basis for a future sustainable partnership.

Lesson 6: Do not overload internal management and coordination activities with too many requirements for documenting.

Lesson 7: When delaying a task for organisational reasons, look for capacity for sharing or substitute performance among other partners.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

Lesson 8: In case of great and/or insurmountable difficulties for finding / identifying sufficient material in a planned scope of empirical research, ask the donor to expand the scope to achieve the project objectives.

Lesson 9: When researching and formulating advice in the field of specific expertise of any of the partners outside the research team / organisation, consider the best involvement of this partner in the research task.

Lesson 10: Do not allow the delay of a project product to deprive the partners of the opportunity to discuss and consult the product and submit their suggestions for its improvement.

Lesson 11: Achieve precision in the presentation of practices proposed for transfer - distinguish the presentation of experimental training from the presentation of proven good practices.

Lesson 12: Focus more on the quality of training than on quantity.

Lesson 13: Plan catering with included coffee breaks and lunch for all days of full-time training held in presence.

Lesson 14: The exchange of training materials between partners with different training experiences in the field of specific training can save effort and enrich the training.

Lesson 15: Newly trained multipliers need a series of individual consultations, discussion of their training plans and advice in organizing their first own trainings.

Lesson 16: The transfer of new training methods such as the use of role-playing games, Forum Theater, the Somebody in Violence Work method, focusing more on building skills instead of providing information, makes learning more interesting and different from other trainings.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

Lesson 17: Preliminary agreement for the participation of professionals in project training should be sought from their institutions during the development of the project, because only in this way their participation can be guaranteed.

Lesson 18: Delays in partner products related to the training of other partners can be compensated in a timely manner by mobilizing the internal resources and expertise of the partners.

Lesson 19: Creative use of social media is becoming increasingly important for successful dissemination of project results.

Lesson 20: The value of a project web page increases with the availability of useful downloadable materials that usually appear at the end of the project and this requires both the provision of such materials as early as possible and further promotion after the end of the project.

Lesson 21: International events have a huge potential to expand interest in the project and bring new supporters and partners for future projects and initiatives.

Lesson 22: Dissemination of information about the results of the project together with useful material for stakeholders stimulates the interest also towards the other products of the project.

Lesson 23. When planning information and dissemination activities, take into account the context in the partner countries.

Lesson 24: Being in charge of other people also means being in charge of their mistakes.

Lesson 25: Realistic assessment of the possibilities for organizing an external group evaluation, and of the products and events to be planned for evaluation.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

Lesson 26: The analysis of the feedback should be taken into consideration as work effort by large number of trainings and events.

Lesson 27: Quality assessment should not be neglected because it contributes for the continuous adjustment in the implementation of the project.

Presentation of "lessons learned" from the implementation of the VIVIEN project by work packages

Practice has shown that most and often many lessons from project implementation are identified by mistakes, not by the rarely achieved overfulfillment or extraordinary success, which teach us very valuable, but usually few lessons.

According to the implementers of the project, VIVIEN is successfully executed with the maximum for the situation of COVID-19 achievement of the expected results and with the closest possible following of the project implementation plan in our very well written project.

The increased criticality in identifying lessons learned does not reflect a weakness in the overall implementation, but areas in which future projects may seek to improve their dissemination and implementation, which is also the goal of capturing lessons learned.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

The purpose of presenting the lessons learned from the implementation of the VIVIEN project is to use the lessons learned as a useful tool to stimulate and improve such projects and to serve to transfer this body of knowledge to Europe.

WP 1

Lessons learned in the field of management and coordination of implementation

Lesson 1: Arrange from the start of the project an alternate to be available if needed for replacement of key project personnel.

The human factor is of great importance in the implementation of each project. And leaving the project, even temporarily, as a key member of the team, can negatively affect its implementation. People get sick, a need could arise to take care of a seriously ill member of the family, unexpected happy events occur such as expectation and birth of a child (as is the case with us), with the extension of the project duration key staff may already be bound by another contract or with agreed transfer to another organization (another of our cases in the project). And if you do not have a planned replacement option, preferably internally in order the person to be acquainted at least to some extent with the project implementation, the progress in the implementation can be significantly slowed down.

The planned from the beginning sharing of the coordination function in the Lead organization between two Giolli staff members allowed an smooth transition in the Lead partner from co-management and co-coordination to full management and coordination of the project for the time of maternity leave of the coordinator Christina Ceruti. By delay of the implementation of a partner

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

and some internal disputes if an external and not acquainted with the project person was to be hired it could really endanger the successful and timely implementation of the project.

The recommendation here is in future all partners always to consider from the very start of the project an internal possibility for replacement of key project staff if such need arises.

Lesson 2: Ensure maximum use of digital tools to harmonize the activities of the international partnership, joint decision-making and online activities.

During the planning of the VIVIEN project was envisaged extensive use of digital tools for coordinating the international partnership, mostly in the traditional way - periodic partner meetings in Skype, later moved to Zoom, uploading reporting documents and forms and sharing project information in Google Drive, project promotion and distribution of products and results according to their nature in social media Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Thus with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the project proved to be relatively prepared for the transition to online activities. Thanks to COVID-19, over recent months, many of us had to learn how to work effectively online and communicate over distance. Unfortunately, the Bulgarian partners turned out to be somewhat unprepared - the "Eyes on Four Paws" Foundation, due to its focus mainly on working with the blind, except its specialized equipment, did not have a camera, large screen, good desktop computer and experience in organization and delivery of online training. The other Bulgarian partner also did not have the necessary equipment or experience in online presentation and video recording. Their available equipment allowed digital communication for administrative purposes, but did not ensure particularly large online events and online theater performances.

At the time of developing the VIVIEN project, the ability and skills to conduct online trainings and events was not a current requirement. With the burst of

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

COVID-19 and the likelihood other similar viruses to appear in future, preparedness for a variety of online activities is becoming important. And not only preparedness with technical equipment, but also with skills to use them.

The lesson learned is that all partners may need both the technical means and the skills to make full use of them for project activities. And in similar projects with the involvement of a partner organization of people from vulnerable groups, the possibility of lack of necessary equipment and skills should be assumed.

The recommendation here is not to avoid to have such partners, because an organization with low readiness to work online may have other very valuable expertise, especially in the field of disabilities and vulnerable groups, but to plan activities to upgrade their digital skills and share the experience of other partners.

Lesson 3: Review not only your workload, but also that of other partners, and its impact on working days and clarify this before signing the Partnership Agreement.

In project management, disputes will arise. Whether it be over what's included in someone's scope of work, additional money a partner feels they're entitled to, or a plethora of other reasons, these things happen to some extent on the vast majority of projects.

If after signing the Partnership Agreement you find that you think your effort in the project has been underestimated and the governing bodies of overvalued partners disagree with a correction, it will leave your team with the unpleasant feeling of underestimation of your performance over time, which will inevitably affect your motivation to contribute.

When a partner with accounting effort only for paying fees to two experts and possibly accounting for several of their trips, and with an internal accountant of the institution has 40 working days for it in its budget, and a partner with

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

accounting for 26 training, subcontracting, external services, organization of international events and periodic remuneration of staff has only 15 working days for accounting, it naturally raises the question of whether such an assessment of the workload is fair. Focusing on management and operational challenges, keep in mind that not all partner organization could have internally staff with the expertise to address accounting requirements. Some outsource it and the number of financial entries matters. But ... the signing of a Partnership Agreement if you have been inattentive to make the comparison in time recognizes it, while the fact and the unpleasant feeling of unfairness remains.

A comparison of the workload of all partners and the budgetary assessment of their workload before signing the internal partnership agreement will save the unpleasant feeling throughout the project and will prevent the occurrence of disputes that are probably to stay unsolved afterwards. And if one partner puts such an issue forward in time before signing the Partnership Agreement, as all project partners are interested in signing it, the probability of reaching a mutually acceptable solution is high.

The recommendation that can be drawn from this case is to resolve as many issues as possible on which disputes could arise in future, at the start of the project .

Lesson 4: Clarify from the outset all technical details about any differences between your national reporting documents and internal rules and what the Lead Partner requests.

Differences between the national reporting documents undoubtedly exist and if what is acceptable in the reporting is not clarified and agreed at the beginning of the project, it can undoubtedly become either the subject of many disputes or a source of additional workload to create N number of additional explanatory documents and / or filling in additional forms. There is no point and it is not a "green" policy to "cut a forest" for the paper to print

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

such additional forms and to waste working time of the project staff for scanning and sending them to the Lead Partner, when that time is a finite resource and should be used for significant implementing activities.

Almost at the end of the project, a dispute arose between the lead organization and two of the partners over the daily rates of their experts. Both organizations had their own internal rules of remuneration for project work, as the usual work responsibilities of their experts for their work in the organization differed significantly from the nature of project responsibilities and therefore years before the start of this project, organizations had adopted their Internal Rules. However, the lead organization insisted that the daily rates should be determined on the basis of the daily rates for their other employment obligations with a different nature of work.

Without taking a stand on who was right in this dispute, let us consider what could be the result of a change in staff rates at the end of the project. The staff members of both organizations have agreed to be paid according to their role in the project and not according to their role in the organization and the remuneration for that role. It is likely that for some staff members the pay for requiring less skills organizational work would increase and contrary, for example, the salary of a project coordinator experienced in the field, but without a high-paid job in the organization would decrease, which could result in a request by the donor for refund of the overpayment. And for a lower payment if announced at the beginning of the project, the person who has agreed to become a project coordinator would not agree to undertake this responsible role.

So here is how many problems can arise from a lack of clarification at the beginning of the project implementation of what is acceptable for the project.

The recommendation that can be drawn here is to clarify from the outset all the technical details about any differences between the partner's national reporting documents and internal rules and what the Lead Partner requests and accepts.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

Lesson 5: Good human relations between the members of the partner teams are what contribute most to the implementation of the project and become the basis for a future sustainable partnership.

People work with people in every collective activity. And not the administrative requirements for cooperation, but the desire to share experience and good practices and support the implementation of the partners with our own specific expertise in a given field contributes to achieving the best quality of implementation.

Experience has shown that one of the most valuable results of the live transnational partner meetings in projects is the creation of human friendships between professionals and the building on this basis of international professional communities.

In VIVIEN project during the cross-border partnership meetings were established good human relations between the representatives of the partners, which gave rise to their desire for cooperation, exceeding their obligations in the project implementation.

But ... attention! As in the relations outside the implementation of a project, here too a poorly measured word even at the very end of the project can influence the desire for future joint activity. As a member of the project staff of the other Bulgarian partner shared with me, near the end of the project at the end of an internal dispute, shared in circular emails with all partners to inform them of the arguments of the disputants till a peaceful settlement of the issue was achieved, a personal email was sent by one of the partners with the content "Will you stop arguing now and start working?".

No one knows how much a person works during a dispute. Everyone has their job and their responsibilities. Yes, it can be annoying to witness an ongoing argument. But you have the opportunity to abstract from it, if it does not affect you directly, even though you receive information about its course. Probably the writing of this message was an expression of the personal

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

attitude of the author to the participant in the dispute. No one is expected or obliged to like everyone. There could be personal intolerance to certain human qualities or behaviors. But what the staff of a project should not forget is that in the project he or she represents not himself, but the organization. And just as the facilitator presents his organization's point of view on the issue and the resolution of the dispute will have an impact on the organization, so this probably poor-considered reaction with personal involvement is likely to affect the organization of the offender.

Yes, it is likely that these two organizations would find it difficult to enter into future cooperation if the decision for it depends on these two parties in the scathing correspondence. But let's not forget that the injured person will probably never recommend in his network of organisations the organisation of the offender to be included as a partner in a project. I.e the negative impact on the organization of the offender goes beyond the organization of the offended.

Human relations are a very sensitive area in the implementation of joint activities. If the unnecessary insult after the end of the project had occurred at the beginning of the implementation, it could probably have led to long-term damage to the quality of the partnership. A proverb says: "A bad wound heals, a bad word is not forgotten."

The recommendation here is not to express our inner irritation at someone's actions and behavior, the reasons for which we probably do not fully understand, but to maintain our goodwill and have friendly behavior towards the people we work with, regardless of whether we personally like them or not.

Lesson 6: Do not overload internal performance management activities with too many requirements for documenting.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

Undoubtedly, everyone wants the project that he implements to have the best possible management, coordination of the efforts and achievements. But it is very important to achieve a very precise assessment of what is absolutely necessary for good accountability and transparency of implementation and what rather contributes to a more detailed understanding of the implementation process, but burdens the contractors with a lot of administrative work.

When planning the VIVIEN project, its creators had planned a series of activities that meet the principles of good project management, but without calculating exactly what administrative burden requires their implementation. When the heavy workload became apparent considering the available and required working hours, the good solution was to reduce internal administrative requirements, e.g. not to document the internal working meetings of the teams, to make reports on the monitoring in the minutes of the periodic Skype meetings and as part of other reports, etc. The details of the implementation to be included in the reports for the self-assessment of the quality of the implementation. The decrease of the administrative requirements thus leaves more time for the implementation of essential activities.

The time to discuss the requirements for internal documentation is the first transnational meeting of the project. Of course, at this time it is not yet clear to the partners how much time will be required for each documentary requirement. However, if something seems too time consuming, discuss it.

The recommendation is that a good balance between the wish to keep best administrative project documentation and time restrictions should be found with, when necessary, correction in the process of implementation.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

RP2

Lessons learned in the field of project research

Lesson 7: When delaying a task for organizational reasons, look for capacity for sharing or substitution of performance among partners.

In case of insurmountable administrative delay of implementation by a partner, which may lead to delay or difficulty for other project activities, consider the possibility of temporary replacement of the partner by another partner with the same or similar capacity, transferring part of the task together with the budget provision for it.

One of the biggest difficulties in the implementation of VIVIEN project arose due to the bureaucratic delay in the official signing of the appointment of a researcher for the implementation of VIVIEN at the University of Parma. This delay of more than 6 months affected the overall implementation of the project by disrupting the planned harmony in the implementation, increased

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's
Rights, Equality and Citizenship
Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

the workload in some periods with difficulties in combining project and other work responsibilities of the project team members and mostly affected the implementation of the interconnected project tasks.

Delays in project products related to the training to be delivered by other partners were compensated comparatively timely through mobilization of internal resources with the expertise of the partners.

One possible solution, which was not taken in the project due to uncertainty about how long the delay could last, was to look for the possibility of temporary internal replacement of the partner, existing in the presence of another partner university, which could take over the initial part of the research tasks, the desk research of good practices and existing literature in the field of violence against women and guaranteeing the rights of people with disabilities and thus reduce the negative impact of the delay of the University of Parma.

Analyzing the situation after the end of the project, when the negative consequences of the delay in the implementation of the University of Parma were outlined, the unused opportunity is clearly visible.

Of course, such a change requires the authorization of the funding institution, clear agreement between the two partners and a precise formulation of the scope of the shift, which also implies time. However, this timing of the replacement may also lead to incentives to overcome the bureaucratic delay if the partner whose participation in the project will be reduced, decides to maintain its full participation by speeding up its implementation.

The lesson learned is not to allow long delays in performance.

In any case, if such an approach is accepted in case of delay in implementation, it would be recommendable to set parameters in the Partnership Agreement in which the partners to agree to substitution considering the time of inactivity, including lack of information from the partner when the implementation will start, the degree of impact on other activities and the like. This is an issue that deserves consideration when implementing future projects.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

The recommendation is to define a reasonable waiting time, which still leaves enough time to complete the task and proceed to use the internal capacity of the project partners for substitution in the implementation of project activities, timely "discipline" the delaying partner/s, complementing or sharing activities.

Lesson 8: In case of great and/or insurmountable difficulties for finding / identifying sufficient material in a planned scope of empirical research, to ask the donor to expand the scope to achieve the project objectives.

The online study of the availability of sources of good practice and reliable studies in the field of violence against women with disabilities in the European Union showed the almost complete lack of research in this specific area and the lack of an accessible program archive for implemented projects in the field funded by the EU, except Daphne program.

It is obvious that no research team can map, analyze and derive best practices and recommendations in the absence of sources and with a very limited number of insufficiently described practices, as the conclusions can not be sufficiently well reasoned and representative.

However, the development by the Bulgarian partners of a Practical handbook in the field on the basis of an extended geographical scope of sources revealed a considerable amount of good practices, research and training

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

recommendations from global and international organizations and professional organizations outside the European Union, as well as a series of studies in the desired area, which by their nature fully corresponded to the planned goal of the research in the project.

The recommendation here is that in a similar to our project case, permission could be sought from the donor to extend the scope of the study, which upon authorization could lead to an improvement in the result and the importance of research.

Lesson 9: When researching and formulating advice in the field of specific expertise of any of the partners outside the research team / organization, consider the best involvement of this partner in the research task.

In VIVIEN project the partner with specific experience in the field of work with women with disabilities was the Bulgarian partner Foundation "Eyes on Four Paws", which was asked and contributed to the formulation of questions about the knowledge of the professionals in the field of disabilities. However, following the consultation on the research questionnaire questions, the organisation's expertise was not used to consult the Guidelines and the Collection, where the Eyes on Four Paws Foundation could also make suggestions what topics concerning women with disabilities could be included in the training of professionals, such as the specifics of communication with people with different types of disabilities, the specifics of obtaining informed consent and supported consent in disability, etc.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

These training proposals for professionals are included in the content of the additional product of the project, the Practical Handbook for Professionals Working with Women with Disabilities, Victims of Violence, developed by the Bulgarian partners, which presents global recommendations for training contents, planned for professions involved in the response to violence against women, some with focus on the disabled women and girls. Thus, the implementation of the VIVIEN project fully corresponds to the planned in the project proposals for training pathways role by role for the participants in the response to violence against women with a focus on women with disabilities.

The recommendation is that regardless of the individual tasks of the project partners, it is useful to discuss the available specific expertise of all partners at the beginning of the implementation and to assess where it is appropriate and enriching to use it.

Lesson 10: Do not allow the delay of a project product to deprive the partners of the opportunity to discuss and consult the product and submit their suggestions for its improvement.

It is good practice to share the project products for discussion in the partnership before submitting the final version of the product. The Collection of the best training paths in the field of violence against women is one of the most important products of the VIVIEN project, and the draft of the product was expected to be distributed among the partners to discuss and consult its compliance with its planned contribution to modeling of effective trainings aimed at various professions with systematic vocational training following Training Pathways to improve the practice of work against violence.

The very delayed preparation of this product, provided to the partners only 10 days before the end of the project, which, with the time required for the translation of the product, allowed only for evaluation, but not for consulting

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

and possible improvement and enrichment of the content, did not allow for improvement the quality of the Collection.

The submission of the final product 10 days before the end of the project still indicates the possibility that at least its draft, although unedited, could be distributed internally among the partners inviting for urgent input if any, and thus providing opportunity their opinions and suggestions to be taken into consideration in the preparation of the final product. The interesting issue here is, and it is waiting for its decision, the extent to which the authors of the product would agree to comply with the recommendations of the partners. On the one hand, this is a copyright author product, but on the other hand, this product must meet certain requirements set in the project, for the compliance with which the whole partnership is responsible. Thus it could be expected that the partners should have the right to express their opinion on compliance or for the lack of such in some aspects and their opinions should be considered.

The last-minute external evaluation of the Collection organized and carried in the partners organizations shows the general view that the Collection is in line with the European Union context, generally useful for the exchange of good practices in the EU, presents innovative approaches to support victims of violence and improved support for women with disabilities and contributes to the project's objectives, with research showing that secondary victimization requires more attention across the EU.

However, the same external evaluation raises questions about the adequacy of the project research methodology to draw sufficiently relevant conclusions about the impact of training on occupational skills and on the reduction of secondary victimization, and that the effectiveness of the practices presented in the Collection is not well documented. It provides evidence that an internal discussion would help to improve the product.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

The recommendation is to do everything possible to ensure the partnership consultation of the important products of the project.

Lesson 11: Achieve precision in the presentation of transfer practices - to distinguish the presentation of experimental training from the presentation of proven good practices.

The Collection of the best training paths for professionals in the field of violence against women includes both identified proven good foreign practices, the recommendations from the project research and the experimental training conducted by the project partners. All of these components are collectively included under the heading "Collection of the Best Training Paths".

If the late submission of the product for evaluation by the partners had not prevented the discussion of the content, the Bulgarian partners would have suggested the experimental training to be presented as “promising” and not

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

as "best practices", as the experimental trainings still do not meet the requirement. for proven "good practice", namely that the practice has been proven over time.

Undoubtedly, the experimental trainings in the project with their innovation were planned and implemented with high quality, the feedback from the participants proved their high degree of satisfaction, and the practical application of the multipliers in trainings organized and conducted by them showed the good results of the trainings. Experimental training fully deserves to be presented and shared in the international community of professionals working in the field of response to violence against women. The issue here is whether it is right without data from testing the conducted in one country experimental trainings in another context, and without confirmation of their positive impact in different context, to declare these trainings "good practices" when presenting them in the Collection.

The point here is that in such a case it is appropriate to discuss this in partnership and the way they are presented to be the result of a collective decision.

The late presentation of the product, only 10 days before the end of the project, given that the Collection of the best training paths had to be translated during these remaining 10 days in all partner languages, obviously did not provide an opportunity for such a discussion.

Anyway, in my capacity of expert in lessons learned, I recommend partners discussion on the content of important project products to take place in each project.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's
Rights, Equality and Citizenship
Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network
An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

WP 3

Lessons learned in the field of experimental training

Lesson 12: Focus more on the quality of training than on quantity.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

The VIVIEN project included a large number of different trainings, most of which lasted 2-3 days, which put a heavy burden on the implementing partners. The main difficulty came from the duration of the trainings, the participants in which were working professionals, whose participation was not previously officially agreed with their institutions to take place during their working time. All these institutions have their own training bodies with planned training during working hours. The desire of the professionals themselves to participate in the training, unfortunately, differed from their possibility to participate.

Practice has shown that professionals find the opportunity to participate in one-day trainings, but find it difficult or impossible to participate in longer trainings unless an order is issued to respect their participation in trainings for working hours which was sometimes difficult to arrange with their institutions.

The project VIVIEN has succeeded even half implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic to achieve remarkable results with a total of 47 trainings with 994 participants, 40 seminars with 827 participants, 4 national trainings with 101 participants, 1 international training with 25 participants from 12 countries and 1 Closing Conference with 82 participants, 32 speakers and 10 moderators from 15 countries from 3 continents and a series of dissemination events with about 1,600 participants.

However, this significant quantitative result, on the one hand, exhausted the implementers, and, on the other hand, limited their ability to spend more time on preparing the different trainings with a view to enriching and updating their contents based on the feedback from already conducted trainings.

Therefore, it is good to consider the number of planned trainings, to ensure the possibility to take into account the feedback and observations of the trainers from already delivered trainings and thus to achieve a continuous improvement of the quality of the trainings.

Our recommendation is in future projects to apply the lesson learned in VIVIEN – to focus more on the quality than on the quantity of training.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

Lesson 13: Plan catering with included coffee breaks and lunch for all days of full-time training held in presence.

The lack of a budget to provide daily catering during the trainings (for a series of trainings catering planned for the first day only) caused widespread dissatisfaction among participants, suspicion of misuse or "saving" of funds and demotivation for participation due to a sense of underestimating their participation and their human needs. As one of the participants in the trainings put it: "We are talking about human rights, but do you also think about human needs?" And in Bulgaria the project staff reacted negatively to the planned catering for the only 2 hours long 3 meetings with directors/chiefs/ managers held in other partner countries and the lack of any planned catering for the supervision meetings with multipliers expected to last

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

3-4 hours – that was perceived as discrimination on the basis of the professional position.

The time for coffee breaks and especially the longer time for a common lunch is also a time for valuable communication between the participants and for building professional relationships, which should not be neglected. And if we assess the impact value-for-money, planning full catering for the duration of the training is worth the budget.

The limited financial resources often put the project developers in a dilemma of what costs to reduce in order to provide funding for all important project activities and the project budget to be assessed as effective. But in this case, saving money from reduced catering leads to a negative result, which does not justify the amount saved.

The recommendation based on this lesson learned is that the impact of budget cuts in an activity should always be carefully considered.

Lesson 14: The exchange of training materials between partners with different training experiences in the field of specific training can save effort and enrich the training.

In the project VIVIEN the national partners had different training approaches and included different training material in their experimental trainings. That was good for experimental training but without sharing training resources internally, the partners with less experience to provide training in the field faced the challenge to search sources and training advice outside the partnership to prepare their training.

Time is a valuable resource, as is the effort to identify and collect training sources in a new field. With different experimental trainings in different

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

countries, sharing some training materials and information is still possible, and especially if there is a partner for whom the training area is a novelty, it would contribute to saving time and effort.

The Bulgarian partners had the biggest experience in working with women with disabilities, which could probably make a valuable contribution to the training of other partners in this regard, but they had the least experience in delivery of training to combat violence against women. An initial agreement to exchange materials and consult the trainings between the partners in the situation of the high workload of numerous trainings, would probably save efforts of the less experienced partners to research online resources in the field. And it could make the trainings more comparable in regard of the feedback from professionals from different countries on the same information presented to them in a given field.

The recommendation is that in future projects with partners with different specific expertise required for the training of all partners, consideration may be given to organizing an exchange of materials and consulting between the partners on information in certain areas of the training contents. Time is a finite resource and should be used to the best of the project abilities.

Lesson 15: Newly trained multipliers need a series of individual consultations, discussions of their training plans and advice in organizing their first own trainings.

The support of the multipliers for conducting their first trainings was organized in the VIVIEN project by the establishment of a Supervision Team with planned periodic group sessions for consideration and analysis of cases of violence encountered in their professional practice and quick counseling on demand for those who want to train their colleagues in their own institutions or have identified difficult cases of violence.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

The theoretical training of the professionals in the project is supported by the practical additional learning-by-doing that they receive in joint trainings with the trainers in the project. However, the practice has shown that the multipliers face many challenges in organizing their first independent trainings and have many issues to ask related to the logistics of the trainings, the planning of the training agenda and its contents.

The multipliers asked the Supervision team for individual meetings on demand and put many questions as: on what topic how much time to spend, what additional materials to develop for distribution, in what form and in what amount such materials should be distributed, what are the most appropriate exercises in the training and where to plan them, what relaxing games to choose, how to stimulate the activity of the learners and to be able to prevent several more active participants from capturing the audience and dominating the discussions, suppressing the more shy participants, etc.

The group sessions provide an opportunity to exercise training roles and training situations by roles play, but the collective exercise does not allow for individual discussion of the individual challenges that each novice trainer encounters, and not everyone wants to show colleagues their own doubts and ignorance in any area.

Seeking individual counseling, i.e. the use of the proposed option of additional consultation on demand, undoubtedly offers the possibility of individual counseling, but it still makes it more difficult for the more timid ones, who are unaware of the extent to which they can engage trainers in the project with their questions. Thus they sometimes preferred to act on a trial-and-error basis, which carries the risk of becoming discouraged in their learning activities.

The proposed by some multipliers planning of a certain time and number of individual consultations per multiplier (without excluding the possibility of arranging additional consultations) deserves to be considered as a proposal coming "from below" by the direct users of the project.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

The recommendation is to consider planning a number of such individual consultations in preparing trained for trainers for independent learning activities in future projects.

Lesson 16: Transferring new training methods such as the use of role-playing games, Forum Theater, the Somebody in Violence Work method, focusing more on building skills instead of providing information makes learning more interesting and different from other trainings.

At the very beginning of the trainings, when the trainers tried to define the participants' expectations, the trainees became interested in the announced new teaching methods, especially in the use of the Forum Theater as a teaching tool and in the experience-based Finnish method of interaction / interactivity and touch. The Croatian teaching method, combining theoretical

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

knowledge with case studies and active listening exercises, was also interesting for the learners. Interactive learning always activates participants with learning potential of doing and participating in tasks that engage each of the participants.

In the case of the transfer of foreign good practices the trainers were also emotionally engaged in teaching what they had recently learned, building their own skills to use these new training approaches.

The feedback from the trainees confirmed the importance of the "differentiability" of the training among the majority of continuously offered different trainings in the professional communities. Some of the trainees directly stated that they would recommend our trainings to their colleagues as not only useful but also "different" and interesting.

The recommendation that can be made on the basis of practice is that such "distinction"/differentiability should be sought in future organized trainings.

Lesson 17: Preliminary agreement for the participation of professionals in project training should be sought with their institutions during the development of the project, because only in this way their participation can be guaranteed.

It is risky for the implementation of a project to plan interdepartmental trainings without a prior agreement with the institutions.

One of the biggest difficulties in organizing the trainings was to ensure the inclusion in the trainings of professionals from all 5 main sectors of the target

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

groups of the project - police, social, health and legal professionals and teachers. Of course, it is difficult to negotiate centrally the participation of freelance doctors, nurses and lawyers, but in these cases negotiation with their professional organizations could be sought, which, although they cannot guarantee their inclusion, can promote and stimulate their members for participation in project trainings.

Undoubtedly, achieving such an agreement is difficult in a situation of still unsecured funding and still unclear training time, but the guarantee of professional participation is worth the effort.

Experience in all countries has shown that without support by the institutions, it is difficult to gather a sufficient number of participants from all target groups. And that starting to seek such support after the start of a project often faces already planned internal trainings and the danger of exceeding the allowable days of absence from work due to training, especially when the project trainings are not officially approved as qualifying.

The recommendation based on this lesson learned is to start seeking approval from the institutions for the planned project trainings with involvement of their staff before the approval of the project. Even if such prior approval is not officially obtained, at least the institutions will be informed of the likelihood of being offered such training and it can be assumed that thus they could be more willing to support it.

Lesson 18: Delays in partner products related to the training of other partners can be compensated in a timely manner by mobilizing internal resources and expertise of partners.

The trainings started with a delay due to the delay in conducting the project research, as the training was supposed to be based on the research results.

Due to the different training methods of the partners, the situation required everyone of them to make its own decision how to compensate for the lack of

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's
Rights, Equality and Citizenship
Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

research results. In Italy, the found solution was to start the training on the basis of a general hypothesis about the training needs of the participants, which was built in previous informal meetings and from prior knowledge of the training needs of many of them. The specifics of the Finnish method which was developed at the university and of the Croatian training suggested an opportunity for an on-line study of the available needed information. In Bulgaria was chosen the opportunity to conduct desk research with a practical focus and to prepare a support product for the multipliers - the Practical Handbook, based on global good training practices and recommendations for training contents for professionals dealing with violence against women.

The uncertainty of the length of delay of the product prevented the possible joint efforts of the partners for remedy measures. It also taught us the lesson that a time limit of tolerable delay should be set, after which common measures should be taken to overcome the negative impact. In the project the trainings started by the lack of mapping of good practices in Europe (planned for the 4th month of the project implementation) and also without the training research report (planned for the 6th month of the implementation).

The recommendation is not to wait passively when a partner delaying a product harm the implementation of other connected activities but to decide collectively what could be done by uniting efforts to compensate for the delay.

WP 4

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

Lessons learned in the field of dissemination of information and exploitation of results

The European value of the achieved results of the project directly depends on the successful and wide dissemination of the results and products of the project and this emphasizes the importance of the lessons learned in this area.

Lesson 19: Creative use of social media is becoming increasingly important for successful dissemination of project results.

The planned use of social media in VIVIEN was their traditional use as a forum for informing and presenting news on the progress of the project and the achieved results, as well as announcing upcoming activities and events. Such a use of the social media at the time of project preparation seemed reasonable and sufficient.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, a huge amount of activities and information moved online and social media became an increasingly competitive environment to attract the attention of professionals and the general public. Obviously, ways had to be sought to attract the attention of the visitors to the information published by the project as useful, interesting and connected with the main interest of the public – the impact of COVID-19.

The Lead partner Giolli reacted quickly to this change in the social media environment and organized a Skype meeting as a brainstorming session to find new approaches to our target audience. The two approaches approved were a live broadcast on Facebook, the so-called VIVIEN Mondays, where the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on violence by social isolation was also discussed, and the code word COVID-19 was used to attract more interest to the project's website by opening a new COVID-19 forum. Thus the information about the project was presented with updated information about

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

the new context where the response to violence in social isolation context became even more important.

Practice has proven that our new approach to using social media is successful and brought increased interest to our project messages.

The recommendation based on our experience from this lesson learned is to use social media creatively and to respond to any significant change of interest, looking for how the project can be relevant to the dominating public interest.

Lesson 20: The value of a project website increases with the availability of useful downloadable materials, which usually appear at the end of the project and this requires the provision of such materials as early as possible and its further promotion after the end of the project.

It is well known that repeated or periodic visits to a web page take place when the visitor during his first visit finds something interesting and useful for himself, as well as read a promise that in the future on this page will find new interesting and useful materials.

Unfortunately, the significant delay in the preparation of the products of the University of Parma from the dates announced for their appearance, toward which was shown a strong initial interest, had a negative impact on the traffic to the site. Professionals were interested in reading the report on mapping the best practices in Europe (planned for the 4th month of the project, but prepared only in the 13th month), in the report on training research (planned

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

for the 6th, but delivered only on the last day of the 26th month) and the Collection of the best learning paths (planned for the 20th month and prepared only 10 days before the end of the project in the 27th month). The non-appearance in time of these announced and arousing interest in our project products greatly reduced the interest in our website.

Obviously corrective measures were needed to attract new interest. After analyzing the situation and the COVID-19 pandemic, which in the meantime was attracting everyone's interest, the solution was found, based on the fact of the worldwide proven increased vulnerability to violence of people with disabilities and the significantly increased number of cases of violence against women with disabilities in a situation of social isolation and reduced number of out-of-home support. The solution was to launch a new forum page dedicated to COVID-19. Still, some of the possible periodic audience was lost.

Fortunately, at the end of the project all planned plus additional unplanned products were prepared and uploaded on the website with the possibility of downloading and with additional promotion of their availability which created an opportunity to revive the interest in the project.

The recommendation, based on the negative experience of the delay in the updating the website with new interesting and useful materials, is to look for an opportunity to update a project website in case of delay of expected material, even with translation of foreign useful open source materials. And partners to agree on an obligation to promote the website also after the end of the project.

Lesson 21: International events have a huge potential to expand interest in the project and bring new supporters and partners for future projects and initiatives.

One of the biggest challenges in the full implementation of the VIVIEN project were the two international dissemination events with the achievement of their

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

planned number of participants, significant number of them planned from countries outside the partner countries. The big challenge was to achieve this when conducting both events online and with long duration both as days and daily activity.

For a number of reasons, the implementation of these activities was transferred internally in the partnership from their originally planned implementer, the Eyes on Four Paws Foundation, selected for it as an organization for people with disabilities, fit to present well the disability issues. But working mostly with the blind the organization was with some lack of technical capacity to organize and host big scale online events. The movement of this activity to the leading organization Giolli proved to be very successful, as Giolli was much more experienced in organizing on-line events and could also rely on the very valuable support of the regional authorities in Emilia Romana.

Giolli has done a great job of organizing the full capacity of the partners to identify and invite their contact organizations and individuals from across the EU and beyond, as well as structuring many interesting programs of the International Training and the Final Conference on themes where there was often a lack of sufficient information online.

As a result of the great logistical efforts, both events achieved their planned indicators what led to the achievement of the expected results. The Closing conference with 2 full days of participation was held with 82 participants (above the planned number) from 12 countries, and the International training of 4 days was held with the planned number of 25 participants from 15 countries.

Already during the events at the time of the virtual coffee breaks and after them many of the participants sought contact with the organizers and expressed their desire for future cooperation. In this respect, the international events have also achieved their desired result.

The recommendation is drawn on the basis of what has been learned from this great success of the project – that international events must undoubtedly

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

be organized and held with the active contribution of all partners, not just those officially in charge.

Lesson 22: Dissemination of information about the project results together with useful material for the stakeholders stimulates the interest also towards the other products of the project.

Each project disseminates information about its achievements and results, and practice shows that many organizations and institutions that have not been directly involved in the project and have no specific interest in its subject matter and achievements do not pay much, if any, attention to the information provided. Therefore, such dissemination materials as flash drives with project materials written on them attract more interest due to their usefulness to the recipient and achieve a review of dissemination materials. And the Practical handbook is one of those materials that strengthened the dissemination due to its usefulness for all the 5 main sectors targeted by the project.

From here we come to the main issue - to the obligatory usefulness of the dissemination material for its recipients, without which the probability of being neglected is very high. Yes, we do distribution (except when it is aimed at the general public) mainly to so-called "stakeholders" identified by us. However, these stakeholders also have their priority areas of interest, and if our materials do not fall within them, there is still a danger our information to be ignored.

One of the goals of the project is to transfer project training through the multipliers in their organizations and with the creation of internal capacity of

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

trained staff it to become in-department training, improving the quality of the professional response to violence against women with special focus on violence against women with disabilities, an area in which the project research demonstrated a common lack of appropriate training for European countries, planned by profession and a role in supporting women victims of violence.

On this basis in Bulgaria, where the Istanbul Convention has not yet been ratified, it is planned to distribute special dissemination material - Practical handbook "Training Paths for professionals working for prevention and combating violence and abuse against disabled women and girls". The undeniable usefulness of this material, which also presented the project, increased the interest in the dissemination and contributed to the interest of institutions in cooperation with organizations of people with disabilities and the use of experts with disabilities as trainers, which was one of the achievements of the project.

The recommendation that can be done from this lesson learned is whenever possible to link the dissemination of information about the project and the progress in its implementation with the dissemination of products with information that is specifically useful for the stakeholders.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

Lesson 23. When planning information and dissemination activities, take into account the specific context in each country.

"Tell people what to do, not how to do it," is a famous quote from George Patton. Set all goals, but leave others free enough to do their job the way they think is best.

When implementing the planned distribution in the project by burning DVDs with information for dissemination of the project, the Finnish partner SAMK University objected that it does not want to produce materials that will go in the trash. We were told that in Finland for a long time almost no one uses DVDs. The new computers do not have a device to read them and people are more used to audio files.

Of course, the Finnish partner was allowed to prepare materials that would be used in the country and would lead to real dissemination of information about the project and its achieved results, as well as to transfer products of the project. But this case taught us a new useful lesson.

The project recommendation is to take into account the specific dissemination context in the individual countries of the implementing partnership when developing the project proposal, and thus not to plan activities that are either unfeasible or cannot lead to the desired result in a particular country.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

WP 5

Lessons learned in the field of quality assessment

Lesson 24: Being in charge of other people also means being in charge of their mistakes.

The internal assessment of the implementation and achievement of the expected results and the self-assessment of the quality of the implementation often reveals eventual, albeit small mistakes in the implementation of project activities. It is therefore important that the coordinator monitors the project and that the monitoring is not fully assigned to another member of the team to report on it, as may be the performance quality assessment, which is carried out according to set criteria and presented in a detailed compliance report.

Being responsible for other people means being responsible for their mistakes as well. And mistakes can happen in all activities - due to underestimation of changed circumstances, due to circumstances beyond our control, etc. If we continue the implementation strictly following the planned, without assessing the changed context, mistakes will happen. We expect the coordinators - the lead one, responsible for the whole project and the partner coordinators, responsible for the partnership activities, on the basis of their monitoring to identify mistakes and to take timely actions to correct them.

This is a lesson learned from proven good practice, confirmed by timely correction at various times, when the analysis has shown that literally following what is written in the project will not lead to the expected result or at least will not lead to the best possible result.

The recommendation is that in projects with a staff member specially hired for monitoring purposes, all partner coordinators should continue to carry out their own monitoring as part of their coordination task, and not rely only on regular monitoring reports.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

Lesson 25: Realistic assessment of the possibilities for organizing external group evaluation and of the products and events to be planned for evaluation

The external group evaluation of the project implementation and the quality of the produced materials is a very good tool for independent and unbiased evaluation of the project achievements. But the accumulation of important activities and the delivery of an important product in the last days of the project made it difficult to prepare for evaluation of some of the evaluation objects and impossible to evaluate the last product, this brochure.

There was some difficulty in carrying out the planned group external evaluation. Due to the lack of time to translate the product "Collection of Best Training Paths" from English into the languages of the partners, this predestined for participants in the external evaluation where the Collection was still not translated only experts with fluency in English. At the same time, the brochure "Lessons Learned from VIVIEN", completed in the last days of the project due to inclusion of lessons learned from the late important international events was in translation into English during the scheduled external evaluation meeting, and could not be evaluated in its final version. All this made it impossible for the group external evaluation to cover all products as planned.

The very short possible period for the external evaluation - just a few days before the end of the project - also created tension in its organization. Especially in Bulgaria, where external evaluators failed to agree on a convenient time for an on-line meeting and asked to give their evaluation individually on the basis of the evaluation products sent to them and quantitative and qualitative information about the events held.

Despite the difficulties, external group evaluation meetings were successfully held in all partner countries. But their organization and implementation created excessive workload and tension for the partners.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

The recommendation for such meetings is to plan them earlier in the project implementation, even if one or several of the activities has not yet been implemented, and to seek additional, albeit individual, evaluation of the event completed after the meeting or of the product produced after the meeting.

Lesson 26: The analysis of the feedback should be taken into consideration as work effort by large number of trainings and events.

The feedback is undoubtedly one of the most objective assessments of the extent to which project trainings and events achieve their expected results. In accordance with good practice, at the end of each training, seminar and other event, participants receive evaluation forms and are invited to complete them with their evaluation of the activity that they have attended. Then, based on the returned completed questionnaires, the trainers prepare their analysis of the degree of satisfaction of the participants. This is a usual part of the work effort of the trainers, but by numerous trainings and seminars it is also a significant workload.

In VIVIEN project, an average of 11 trainings and 14-15 seminars were held in each country and the trainers had to prepare an average of 25 feedback analyzes. The analyzes were particularly important where several trainings of the same type were conducted, as the feedback provided a valuable indication of where an improvement could be sought for the next training with a lower assessment of an element. The trainers' analyzes were internal documents, but this did not reduce the time required to prepare them.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

The lesson learned here is that when planning the time needed for the trainings, the time for evaluation and feedback should be also planned in the time for preparation and implementation, i.e. a training of 2 days is not a work effort of 2 days, but more..

The recommendation from this lesson is that all elements of an activity should be evaluated by planning the workload of the implementers. In cases as in Bulgaria, when the trainings were planned to be held in three geographical regions, the travel time must be planned and so three trainings in one country without required travel days and three trainings in a country with two planned trips needed different days. And while preparation and travel time are easier to keep in mind when calculating, it should be remembered that feedback evaluation time must also be considered as several additional working days.

Lesson 27: Quality assessment should not be neglected because it contributes to the continuous adjustment in the implementation of the project.

Aware of the importance of the quality of implementation, in the VIVIEN project was planned an ongoing quality assessment, for which were prepared a Quality Assessment Plan, a Quality Management Plan, an international team responsible for self-assessment of quality in partner organizations was established and training was conducted how to prepare periodic reports using the prepared reporting form for quality assessment by work packages and activities.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

The Eyes on Four Paws Foundation as the leading organization of this work package collected, analyzed and summarized the partners' self-assessments. The lesson learned here was from the attitude of the individual partners to this activity. While some partners such as Giolli, SAMK and B.a.B.e presented timely and in good details reports on the quality of their implementation as well as the Bulgarian partners, the other two Italian partners delayed their reports, and the team of the University of Parma clearly underestimated this activity, sending almost symbolic reports on its activities with significant delays in several cases.

The most interesting is that their attitude to the self-assessment of the quality of their performance corresponded quite accurately to the real quality of their performance or their inclusion in the performance. This once again confirms the importance of this activity as an indication of how the project is being implemented. The lesson learned here is rather from the gaps in implementation, although in general the activity was performed well and achieved its expected results. Difficulties in its implementation have shown that in some organizations this activity is underestimated.

The recommendation formulated on the basis of the experience from the implementation of the project, is that in future projects this activity should be planned again and through it an organizational culture of quality management should be adopted in all partners.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

The importance of proper documentation of lessons learned

The crucial importance of identifying, documenting and re-using the lessons learned for the development of organizations and institutions for more effective and efficient projects become more and more broadly understood. It is a common truth that when organizations do not pay attention to or neglect to learn lessons, they fail. Applying the lessons learned to the processes of the organization guarantees success and avoidance of failures, as we can identify useful lessons not only for our present, but also for our future.

Research in the field is increasing and more and more emphasis is being placed on the importance of properly documenting the lessons learned to ensure their validity so that their recommendations are valid for future action.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

What to be attentive about to avoid mistakes in documenting of the lessons learned

Based on the monograph, A Methodology for Identifying Lessons Learned—An Integration of Case Study Techniques with General Systems Paradigm & Congruence Theory, 2015, Robert A. McDonald

The methodology for studying cases of lessons learned suffers from shortcomings inherent in the social sciences and historical disciplines. There are two categories that are particularly important and make the methodology the most vulnerable. One is related to data errors that occur during data collection, and the other is related to cognitive errors that occur during analysis.

Data errors can arise from two sources - either from data deficiencies or from assumptions made by the researcher while collecting the data.

Cognitive errors are the result of distortions and biases in our thinking as we search for answers to understand our environment. These errors are difficult to guard against. Cognitive errors are caused by incorrect thinking influenced by various factors. These factors may include inner thoughts or feelings that analysts do not usually recognize as affecting their thinking. There may be negative feelings about the problem being studied or the people involved in the problem. There may be a fascination with some part of the problem that distracts the analyst. In the middle there may be events and things that direct thinking in a certain direction.

There are though some other dangers in the identification and analysis of lessons learned that the experts should take in consideration.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

Categorical Thinking Bias. Categorical thinking bias is where the analyst distorts his or her ability to see differences and similarities between facts as a result of placing the facts in categories and paying too much attention to the categorical boundaries.

Rationality Assumption Error. Rationality assumption error occurs when the analyst assumes a more rationale process than may be justified by the data. To avoid this error, the analyst should turn to the systems model for help in identifying the range of multivariate factors that may be influencing the process (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 98).

Tribal-Moral Community Bias. Tribal-moral community bias is a narrowing of the focus of research that results from being part of what Haidt (2011) called a “tribal-moral community [united by] sacred values.” Any profession over time could come to embrace certain values that have a moral underpinning. The members then can come to ascribe to what has become the moral value of that professional “community.” The community could have come to subscribe to a particular philosophy, favor a particular political point of view, or adopt a particular set of religious values.

The lessons-learned analyst often is a member of a variety of communities and is subject to the bias of any one or more of those multiple communities. If the researcher “circles around sacred values” of a particular community, the researcher might embrace specific research whenever it supports the “moral community’s” values, but ignore it whenever it threatens those sacred values.

To mitigate against this bias, the researcher must assess the perspective of his or her own moral communities, make those often unknown “sacred values” explicit, and attempt to conduct research independent of those values—a difficult task (Haidt, 2011).

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's
Rights, Equality and Citizenship
Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

Cognitive Dissonance Bias. This is a bias where the analyst more readily accepts new information that is consistent with his or her existing mind-set and rejects data that are inconsistent with his or her existing mind-set. To mitigate against this bias, the lessons-learned analyst needs to be open to revising initial assessments in the face of new data, even for what might appear to have been definitive explanations (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 99).

Anchoring Errors. Anchoring errors are a collection of similar errors where the analyst latches onto a single possibility and fails to consider the range of possibilities — i.e., “throws down an anchor” where the analyst believes it needs to be. These “anchoring” errors can contribute to serious flaws in analysis. (Groopman, 2007a, p. 65; Groopman, 2007b).

Search Satisfaction Error. This error is where the analyst stops searching when he or she uncovers a major finding, even though there may be multiple causes or parallel causes.

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

What not to forget concerning lessons learned in a project

Lessons learned are important ways of gathering and sharing both formal and informal project knowledge. Lessons learned are processes that include formal and non-formal learning. Effective lessons learned can be embedded in organizational practices, especially through non-formal learning and sharing.

It is the organization's processes—those activities that take in resources, do something with them, and then put out some kind of product or effect—that are central to understanding the organization's performance, the analysis of which is critical to identifying lessons.

Both the statement of the general lessons and the statement of any actionable insights should be formulated. The person who captures a lesson learned also should explain the analytical rationale that lead to the formulation of the lessons.

Let's not forget - the task of documenting the lessons learned is difficult but simple: just clearly state when something is wrong, why it is wrong and what needs to be done and do the same when something

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

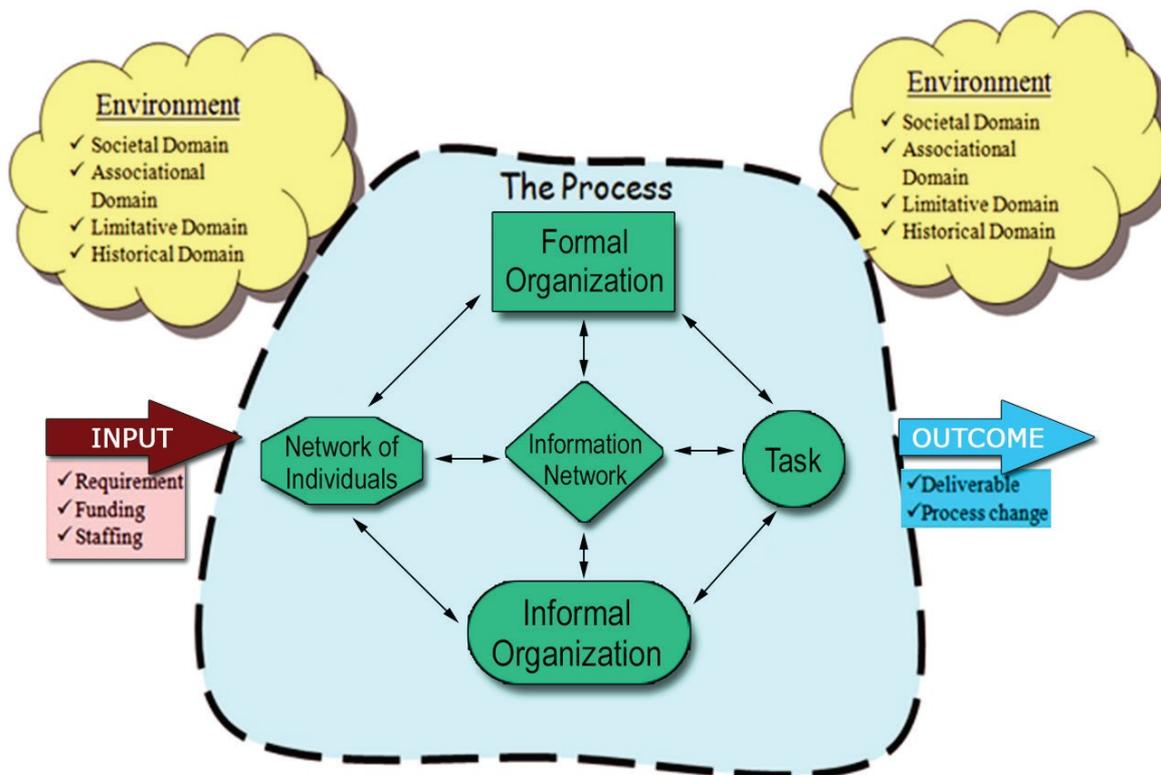


This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network
An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

LESSONS-LEARNED SYSTEM MODEL



11-Nov-12

© 2007 R. A. McDonald

The Lessons-Learned System Model developed by Dr. Robert A. McDonald

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

What is the Difference Between Lessons Learned and Best Practices?

Best practice is something you need to do.

The lesson learned helps us learn what to do and what not to do.

The lessons learned are what you learn from the methods used that led to succeed or fail. This is what you have learned from what you have done in a project, and it can be what you have done right or what you have done wrong. Either way, identifying the lessons learned goes hand in hand with the decision-making process that led you to make the choices you made, as this provides a context for learning. Lessons learned must happen continuously throughout the project. Continue to review the lessons learned and assess whether what you have learned should become a best practice.

Remember that **best practices need to be institutionalized throughout the organization** while the **lessons learned are from a specific project**.

Lessons learned are learned in context and it has been found that what is applicable in such situations is what becomes best practice. Best practices are a recommended way of doing things, a set of guidelines, ethics, or ideas that represent the best way to do something. Best practices are the best way known at the moment, it helps you achieve your project goals on time, on budget and with high quality.

Best practices and lessons learned ensure the success of the project.

*From publications in: Change Management, Connecting Dots,
Principle/Practice*

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)



VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

Summary

We planned the book "Lessons learned from VIVIEN project" as an incentive to understand the benefits of learning lessons learned from project implementation, after in the process of preparing the project proposal it became clear that some of the project partners do not have an organizational culture of official identification, documentation, archiving and subsequent conscious re-use of the lessons learned in the process of project implementation.

Each participant in a project, especially its managers, undoubtedly always learns lessons from its implementation. But if these lessons learned are not systematized into a body of knowledge with the creation of an accessible repository, each time when project staff leaves, some of the lessons learned will leave the organization if they have not become organizational knowledge. Therefore, in order to increase the organisational culture for lessons learned, the short part of theory and practical advice for collecting and documenting lessons learned was added.

In our opinion, the VIVIEN project was a very interesting and quite difficult to implement project, which we were happy to have succeeded to implement in the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We hope that the lessons learned from VIVIEN will be useful for our future projects!

VIVIEN - Project n. 810444 Bulgarian coordinator email: alya.veder@abv.bg

The content of this agenda represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.