CoDeS Mailing 3, June 10th, 2012

1. Did you know? Some questions about Conference in Vienna, May 1-3, 2012

   • The hottest city in Europe, during the period of 1-3 May 2012?
     Vienna, 33°C, and many of us were having only winter cloth along!

   • Number of participants?
     65 and 7 (a teacher for Vienna Waltz, two funny city guides, two artists for balancing our brain and body back into regular conditions, a city council of Vienna and the good soul of the Conference, Irene Krug)

   • The nicest compliment?
     The secretariat of Kardinal König Haus to the coordinator: “Please forward a big compliment to your participants! They never asked for special treatment, were nice and friendly, we appreciated very much!”

   • Participants coming from how many countries?
     16! Austria, Belgium, Catalonia, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Malaysia, Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Korea, Romania, Switzerland, UK

   • How many posters were presented at the interactive presentation (and will be published at CoDeS poster gallery)?
     29 posters, presented, commented and discussed in three groups.

2. Presentations, photo and poster gallery from the Vienna Conference

Presentations, photos and all posters are available at [www.comenius-codes.eu](http://www.comenius-codes.eu). You may find a universe of inspiring examples for school and community collaboration there.
3. Working Conference in Vienna May 1-3, 2012 –The point of view of Internal evaluation
Michela Mayer

There is no doubts that the Vienna Conference has been a great success: the data collected - the questionnaires, the interviews, the tweets - all gave us, the internal evaluation team, the feeling of a real working conference, where the participants had good opportunities for discussion and mutual learning. A more detailed report will be produced within this month by the 2 ‘ENSI Junior researchers’ - Mona El Zoghbi and Rebekah Tauritz - who have collected tweets and interviewed the participants all over the conference.

We can be satisfied of the results of this first conference, but we need now to reflect on what we have learnt as CoDeS and on what we need to do to enrich and improve our work before the next meeting. Thus in the following you will find a few questions, coming from the internal evaluation, asking to reflect on what we have done:

• workshops presentations and posters are the basis for all our future work in CoDeS. These case studies and these posters will accompany us along the whole project and will be dealt with by all our deliverables. Are the cases collected enough for our future work? Are they representative of the countries situations? Some partner country who has not produced any case or any poster (or only one) could start think about new cases, and/or new poster to present?

• what was the quality of the cases and of the posters presented? On the average, people at the conference declared to be very satisfied by the workshops, but had some criticism regarding the posters. What we have learned listening from each other? What looking to what has been presented by the posters and how? many things could be improved to produce a better and more meaningful presentation of our ‘collaboration examples’ and this is the time to reflect upon;

• how many ‘stakeholders’ of the collaboration process have we really been able to involve? This was, from our internal evaluation data, one of the few critical points of the conference: the focus was mainly on the ‘school side’ of the collaboration, and not so much on the ‘community side’. How can we involve other stakeholders? How to involve enterprises, local authorities, technical offices, parents, students? This is the real future challenge for the CoDeS project, and we need to start thinking about what to do and how to do, in every single country. And exchange our ideas.

As CoDeS, we have evidence to have reached the aims stated for the Vienna Conference, and to have demonstrated the strength of the CoDeS network. But, as a consequence of this success, we have now new challenges and aims to look at and we need to follow the way we have open.

4. The Perspective of the External Evaluator
Patrick Dillon

It is a privilege to work with CoDeS. As I said in Vienna, CoDeS is a mature organisation – a network of networks, each one with a long history and tradition, collectively a rich resource of experience and wisdom. My brief as external evaluator is to engage with the CoDeS process, to feel the pulse of the project, to ask leading questions and suggest tools for exploring them. Engaging with the project in this way enables me to work like a biographer, building the evaluation cumulatively and offering critical reflection on the way.

Sustainable development, like democracy, and like the CoDeS project itself, is a journey not a destination. Sustainable development is a contested concept. Contesting the meaning of sustainable development is part of the process through which we develop good practice and deep understanding. When we share ideas and practices through a network like CoDeS we are not looking at uncritical adoption and application but rather at how we can take something that works in one place and adapt it so that it adds value elsewhere. We need to
harmonise new ideas with local ways of doing things, working from within rather than imposing from the outside. In Vienna we started to engage with these questions. Here are some of the big issues that arose in discussion and through our workshops:

- How do we make our systems and structures adaptable?
- What can we negotiate? Who can negotiate? How do we make the process more democratic? How do we open up closed or hidden agendas?
- How do we work with ‘difference’?

On the one hand our systems and structures have to be stable enough to ensure continuity; on the other they have to be flexible enough to accommodate change, i.e. they need to be adaptable.

Different cultures at scales from nations to individual organisations conceptualise things differently and have different ways of doing things. How do we identify the differences and make good use of them? The three keynote speakers gave us ideas and materials that could be used as tools for thinking about adapting our systems and structures to accommodate sustainable practices:

- Much of what we want to achieve in sustainable development and education for sustainable development requires collaboration but often negotiation and decision making happen in hierarchical systems. Harald Payer’s ‘Map of Two Logistics’ invites us to explore the dynamics of organisational systems, to think about how we might move from hierarchy to collaboration.
- Arjen Wals ‘Hybrid Learning Heuristic’ is a tool for exploring some of the tensions evident in Harald’s Map of Logistics, of moving from ‘expert-driven’ sustainability to ‘people-driven’ sustainability.
- Mariona Espinet asks us to consider the possibilities for alternative thinking that arise when we take account of the socio-historical positioning of ideas, ideologies and actions and in so doing how we might move from established ways of doing things to alternative ways of doing things.

You can find more about these tools in the PowerPoint presentation I produced as a debrief after the Vienna conference. It is on the GC21 discussion space. There is an invitation to use the tools to analyse and reflect on your own practice and to share ideas and experiences.


The EU Strategy for the Danube Region EUSDR aims at smart, sustainable and inclusive growth by investing in education, training and the labour market. All 14 neighbouring countries from the Danube River region are included to the project. The steering group of EUSDR is mainly composed by public officers from labour market and education ministries from the Danube region, as well as some representatives from regional NGO’s. EUSDR is build on a macro-regional approach; For ENSI and CODES it is a good possibility to share and mainstream already existing experience and to learn from newly developed projects and structures. We are happy that Codes was selected from EUSDR to cooperate in the role of a stakeholder. Relevant for the collaboration of CoDeS and EUSDR is also ENSI’s experience in the Carpathian Region (see http://www.ensi.org/media-global/downloads/Publications/319/Ghid%20englishWEB.pdf) – it is a precious contribution for partners in the Danube Region.

For more information about EUSDR see: www.peopleandskills-danuberegion.eu

6. www.comenius-codes.eu for all relevant information about CoDeS. Your contributions to the CoDeS-website are very welcome. For uploading your article please contact ch.affolter@comenius-codes.eu

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