

Project Friendly 2008

1st International Young Project Managers Meeting in Brno



Young Project Managers Group (YPMG) as part of ACSA by VUT in Brno organized between 11.-14. September first international meeting of young project managers **Project Friendly 2008**. Supported by SPŘ and IPMA came together five national groups from Germany, Slovenia, Poland, Slovakia and Czech Republic in newly reconstructed rooms of Old Brewery. Sven Arne Jessen, the chair of meeting, proudly represented the sixth country – Norway.



Professor of Norwegian School of Management **Sven Arne Jessen** in his opening speech summarized his rich experience from international projects, advised about different aspects of intercultural cooperation. Project thinking is not even natural for all nations. Working habits are influenced by four factors: ratio of masculinity and femininity, respect to managers, tendency to individualism and perception of time.

Every part of project lifecycle requires different ideal combination of this factors. According to research were on the first fourth places Germany, Italy, France and USA with common features like individualistic approach and low respect to managers.

In programme were introduced participating Young Crews from Slovenia, Germany and Poland. Following discussion showed differences between Young Crews from Middle Europe with higher amount of members



and Germany with better organizational and financial support of national IPMA organization (*GPM Deutsche Gesellschaft für Projektmanagement*). Besides Czech group are all other participating groups established directly by national organisations of IPMA.

Between many professional lectures from NGO sector or science and research stood out IT specialists presentation about sharing and effective use of information in projects. They showed many currently used systems including data input and monitoring of actual progress on task and also database systems.

The morning part of Saturdays programme was dedicated to employment of young project managers. Jan Doležal, CEO of PM Consulting, and Jakub Schůrek covered in their presentations all difficulties. Participants split after the lunch in two groups. One was visiting Moravian Gallery and the other IBMs IDC in Brno, where they learned how project management department works.

Final workshop was focused on the **future of Project Friendly** – the meeting of young project managers. Long-term and short-term priorities for cooperation were set. Strategic networking and network-supporting structures are part of the long-term priorities based on workshops and low cost international projects, *peerexchange*.

The priority for next year is organisation of another Project Friendly meeting, for which we gained support of all participating groups with condition of functional communication channels and staying in touch on international meetings and another opportunities.

Lucie Šilerová, Martin Pešl (YPMG)



Art Friendly Projects—Project Friendly Arts

On Saturday 13th September a group of participants of the 1st International Conference of Young Project Managers in Brno *Project Friendly 2008* left for the Moravian Gallery in Brno to get acquainted with the institution's functioning – how else than in connection with projects. The guest of the action – or in fact the hostess – was a deputy director of the Moravian Gallery, Kateřina Tlachová.

Money, Grants, Projects

A work has been always done in culture institutions, in which young project managers could recognize a promise of projects: theatres produce inscenations and holds festivals – similarly like philharmonics that have concert cycles or museums that organize exhibitions, plan the research etc. The technical term “project” was, however, received by the Czech cultural sector only with the introduction of the grant scheme (including programmes of the European Union).

We meet less and less with the narrow concept that regards projects as something we have to find a grant for. Nevertheless, contributions of projects are still (and thoroughly legitimately) to be viewed as a possibility how to gain financial means for the institution's activities from other than public resources. A similar project management story is taking place in the Moravian Gallery in Brno which hosted a workshop *Arts Friendly Projects—Project Friendly Arts* in its Children Studio.



The deputy director of the Moravian Gallery Kateřina Tlachová introduced functioning of the Czech second largest museum in relation to projects. MG systematizes a work position of the project manager that will be responsible for two big projects



(reconstruction of Místodržitelství Palace and establishment of Dušan Jurkovič Centre in his private villa in Brno-Žabovřesky). In addition to investments, the project is understood here also in terms of projects endowed by the EU money, research, but also exhibitions. Exhibition as a unique, temporary and relatively complex action is literary calling for a project approach. And this approach (although rather implicitly) is being taken in the Moravian Gallery (guidelines determine a production team; organizational structure that concentrates production of exhibition into one department etc.)

Conservatism of Culture

In a discussion, Kateřina Tlachová drew the attention to a phenomenon which is typical for many cultural institutions, especially museums: conservatisms in accepting innovations in management and business.

Culture is not made by managers, but by artists who prefer listening to their inner need to create to listening to managerial and marketing recommendations. Museums as institutions of lifeless art are in a way lucky: there are no live artists in them; there is only art that has no inner needs. In a museum of art the managerial component (an administrative dimension) is not so clearly separated from the artistic one.

One Service, Two Functions, Two Approaches

On the other hand even museums of art fulfil a public service whose need is hardly to be demonstrated by marketing research. This demand that complicates purely marketing/managerial attitudes towards management of a cultural institution can be seen at two levels of urgency: main functions of a museum are preserving cultural wealth and transmitting it to the public. Both functions are in a way in an opposition. In the case of museums of art, preserving cultural wealth stands for care of collections and their scientific elaboration (research). Head of the museum can either prefer the function of preserving and scientific elaborating of cultural heritage or emphasize the function of transmitting the art to the public (exhibitions). Then he can also better understand the philosophy of marketing and management.

This thin line is the way along which the Moravian Gallery as a culture bearer is to be differentiated from

the Moravian Gallery as a company. It is clear to which category the project management belongs.

Project Thinking and Project Tools

In another part of the workshop programme Martin Maryška introduced his concept of implementation and support of project management in the Moravian Gallery in Brno, which he addresses in his diploma thesis research at the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts. The Moravian Gallery needs to bring order into its organizational system that concerns also projects. In the projects, he does not only find a way how to gain financial resources, but predominantly considers them a promise of further organizational development. Project management support includes definition of new processes (project announcement, project coordination, methodological support, project office etc.) and their implementation into the institution's organizational system. Of course, it also requires implementation of project management tools into management of individual projects.

Project management methods and tools – i.e. the things that justify the existence of various manuals and textbooks (simply put, existence of project management as a managerial sphere) – are not saving for any project. This was confirmed by Kateřina Tlachová: "I know the most frequently used project management methods and techniques and when they are required in a grant, I am able to work with them, but frankly, I personally do not feel a need to use them."

Svein Arne Jessen noticed that the very essence of project management lies in a focus on a goal (that holds true for all project regardless of their professional specification). Only then comes the question how to reach the goals (here are to be found the specifics of project management in particular branches). The process of project realization is in fact a process of repeated decisions. A successful project means to constantly choose right alternatives on a way towards a set aim.



Project is a Pledge

Implementation of project management into an organisation is a question of implementation of project thinking. The organisation – by the very fact that it announces a project as a project (gives it a name) – takes a clear pledge, by which it shows that the project goal is so important to be worth an attention and investments.

The excursion into the Moravian Gallery was closed by a visit to a Brno Echo exhibition that is held as a part of the 23rd International Biennale of Graphic Design Brno 2008 (by the way, a flag-exhibition space of the Moravian Gallery).

The workshop had a nice non-project point: Project Management in Culture brought Urose Strel Lencice from Slovenia into the Moravian Gallery where he – at an exhibition of graphic design – by pure accident found his own website awarded by various prizes. (www.moravska-galerie.cz.) Martin Maryška (YPMG)

