

7 April 2009

REPORT - Strengthening our Voice: Motivation & Engagement in Diaconia - 24 March 2009

Background

The Eurodiaconia Communications and PR Working Group asked the Eurodiaconia Secretariat for training in how to better engage their own employees and members working at local level in communications and advocacy activities. To this end, three main areas were identified for exploration:

- The role of motivation vs. practical issues such as lack of time, resources or knowledge.
- Central planning (e.g., by central umbrella organisations) vs. local control of activities.
- How our faith base and church traditions may impact the willingness of individuals to engage in activities other than *direct* service to people in need.

Jacques Leloup of Best Business Consulting sprl (Belgium), independent process communications trainer and human resources coach, was hired to lead this training which took place in Brussels on 24 March 2009.

Eight employees of Eurodiaconia member organizations participated in this training, as well as one secretariat employee. Attendees represented the diversity of Eurodiaconia membership: churches, large diaconal provider organizations and small diaconal services. Attendees also came from throughout Europe: Austria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Scotland and Sweden.

Motivation Model

Mr. Leloup described motivation as the "motor" that moves individuals to sustained action towards a goal. He presented a model that breaks down motivation into three steps: 1) the action must seem like a good idea 2) the individual must feel capable of carrying out the action 3) the individual needs support to continue the action to completion. *See attachment A for a summary chart and attachment C for additional resources.*

Step 1: The action must seem like a good idea. For this to happen, it must fit both one's core VALUES and one's practical and/or psychological NEEDS.

- VALUES are what guide our decisions. Values can be quite diverse, ranging from serving others to making money to doing things efficiently.

- NEEDS could be practical or psychological. As an example of psychological needs, Mr. Leloup described eight needs of workers used in process communication. Everyone has all eight needs. However, some needs are stronger in some people than others.
 - a) recognition of person - - belonging and empathy
 - b) sensory - - feeling good
 - c) recognition of work - - praise
 - d) time structure - - controlling work
 - e) recognition of opinion - - transmitting beliefs, shaping opinion
 - f) solitude - - time alone
 - g) contacts - - diversity, variety and fun
 - h) incidence - - challenge and risk-taking

Step 2: An individual must feel *capable* of actually carrying out the action before beginning it. This is a combination of having the SKILLS and RESOURCES to complete the action and the SELF-BELIEF that one actually can do it.

Step 3: Once engaged in an action, an individual needs support to continue it to completion. This includes having clear GOALS, REWARDS and regular FEEDBACK.

- GOALS that lead to *mastery* (e.g., learning and personal development) are more motivating than *performance* goals (e.g., do a certain number of things). To be motivating, goals need to be clear and attainable. They also need to be communicated in a way that fits the needs, values and self-belief of different actors.
- *Intrinsic* REWARDS (meaning the activity is itself pleasurable and rewarding) are more motivating than *extrinsic* rewards (such as money or praise). Activities that allow some autonomy and personal ability to shape how the activity is done are most intrinsically rewarding. However, insufficient extrinsic rewards, such as poor pay or negative working environments, can be de-motivating.
- FEEDBACK must be regular and constructive.

When all three components of motivation are in alignment, an individual experiences a sense of “**flow**”, as described by psychologist **Mihály Csíkszentmihályi**. In “flow”, the individual is fully immersed in what they are doing and has a feeling of energized focus, full involvement and success.

Applying the motivation model to diaconia: central/umbrella office vs. local services staff

In small groups, attendees used the “motivation model” to explore similarities and differences in the three components of motivation between diaconal workers in central/umbrella offices and those in local services. This could then be used to develop or communicate activities in which local workers will become engaged. *Results are summarized in charts in attachments B1, B2 and B3.*

The impact of core VALUES and NEEDS on local-level communications

The majority of attendees were responsible for communications for their organizations. Encouraging care workers and managers at local level to engage in communications tasks, such as contacting the press or talking to community groups, is a significant challenge. This appears to reflect a perception, on the part of local workers, that communications activities

do not meet their core NEEDS or VALUES. The lack of resources allocated to local PR and communications staff, materials or training seems to be the *result* of this perception rather than its cause.

Perhaps the most important VALUE for local level workers is supporting *individuals* in need - with dignity, respect and hospitality. Being completely focused on specific individuals, they can conduct their work as if "in a bubble", separate from the rest of the organisation. They often do not realize their work is public or understand how support from the public helps make their job possible. Central offices, however, do understand the importance of public visibility - for example, for attracting resources needed for local services, as well as pressuring politicians for supportive social policies. Given this, to engage local workers in raising awareness of their work, **central offices need to make clear how communications activities fit with shared VALUES such as supporting individuals in need.**

A very important NEED of grassroots workers is belonging. Workers can feel very alone facing people's problems and look to central offices for encouragement. Feeling they are part of one big "family-like" effort that shares common values, such as supporting people, is very motivating. **Central offices can capitalize on this need to "belong" to a broader effort in engaging local offices in communications efforts.**

The FEP (France) has had success convincing previously skeptical workers in local services that communications activities are important by showing how they meet their needs and values. Specifically, seeing media mentions of their organization and issues of concern to them helps local workers 1) meet their need for belonging to a bigger movement and 2) their core value of supporting people in need.

The impact of church traditions and theology on local-level communications

Some diaconal workers believe that "the church" should not attract attention. In the past, some state or majority churches were so important or powerful that they *automatically* got attention, respect and resources. There was no need to promote themselves or their work. Conversely, some minority churches have historically been ignored by mainstream media and society. So, they assume that nobody *wants* to hear about their work - - so communications efforts are a waste of time and resources. Slowly, workers in both historically dominant and historically minority churches are becoming more comfortable with the idea that they do need to promote and talk publically about their work.

For others in diaconia, **theological issues may prevent them from drawing attention to themselves and their work.** For instance, Calvinists have traditionally insisted that religion should be a personal, private matter. They value modesty and reserve. Talking about the work of the church in a very public, promotional way may be perceived by some as a betrayal of this core value. Furthermore, on topics such as fund-raising, some Protestants think it is morally wrong for the church to engage in certain activities - - such as running businesses or sponsoring gambling (as some Catholic groups do) to raise money to fund social services.

To overcome these historical and theologically-based objections to communications activities, it could be helpful to **reposition these activities as supporting workers' core values and needs.** For example, if workers resist entering their project in the Eurodiaconia Prize because they fear being seen as boastful, then the prize could be described as an

“opportunity for personal career growth and learning” or “a way to support others by sharing ideas”.

Articulating common values in diaconia

Central offices or umbrella organizations often see preserving what is “special” and “valuable” in diaconia as one of their core tasks. At the same time, it is often difficult to clearly *articulate* these core organizational values and what exactly makes the organization special. Saying an organization is “Christian” is not sufficient because not all Christians share the same values. Furthermore, actions within organizations do not always align with stated values. For individuals, the values one would *like* to have and the actual values that guide one’s decisions are not always the same. The work of the Eurodiaconia Faith in Care Task Force to articulate diaconal values and what makes diaconia social care unique should help illuminate this issue in the future.

Engagement

Once workers are motivated to act then they can become engaged. “Engagement” implies an emotional attachment to the goal or organization. Employees who are most highly engaged think of their colleagues and organization as a family. They feel a profound sense of belonging - - of being part of something larger than themselves.

Applying the motivation model

Unfortunately, there was insufficient time to complete planned practical exercises on how to apply the motivation model to specific, practical challenges.

Mr. Leloup suggested that individuals work through this model for their own organizations to see how it could be applied to specific challenges. Wherever there is a problem, he suggested that the solution can usually be found at the level above. For example, if workers do not believe they are capable of some activity, their supervisory level could help overcome this issue with encouragement, training, or resources.

The next day, 25 March 2009, most attendees of this seminar joined the Eurodiaconia Communications and PR Working Group meeting to discuss goals and activities for the 2010 European Year to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion. Concepts explored in this training were directly applied to these discussions. See the separate working group meeting report for more details.

Attachment A: Motivation Model

Motivation = the "motor" that moves us to *sustained* ACTION towards a GOAL.

Reason to consider taking action:

→Values (e.g., human dignity, efficiency)

→Needs

- Practical
- Psychological
 - Recognition of person = belonging & empathy (relationship)
 - Sensory = feel good
 - Recognition of work = "good job"
 - Time structure = control work
 - Recognition of opinion = transmit beliefs & shape opinion
 - Contacts = diversity, variety, fun
 - Solitude = time alone
 - Incidence = challenge, risk-taking, adrenaline

Why actually start action:

→"Sense of Agency" = feel *capable* of effective action

- Cognition = I have the skills, tools and resources to do it.
- Self-belief = I can do it!

Why sustain action:

→ Goals = that are clear and specific

- Mastery = can learn + have some autonomy and personal ownership in the process - - *MOTIVATING*
- Performance = do x number of things - *NOT MOTIVATING*

→ Rewards

- Intrinsic (internal) = the activity itself is rewarding...because I'm learning, etc. - - *MOTIVATING*
- Extrinsic (external) = salary, conditions, supervision - - *ABSENCE IS DE-MOTIVATING*

→Feedback

- To foster a sense of achievement

In "flow" WHEN goals (clear + fit values/needs) = "sense of agency" *with* regular feedback
→ intrinsic reward = self-motivated

Attachment B1: Why consider taking action: VALUES & NEEDS

Similarities and differences between diaconal actors working in national umbrella organizations or central offices AND diaconal actors working on local level providing services

	Local level (service provision)	Central level (home office or umbrella organization)
VALUES	Support individuals - - care for people with dignity, respect and hospitality. Quality Efficiency	Support groups that provide care - - financially, structurally, with common policies, training, etc. Ensuring long-term operational sustainability. Represent members values - - e.g., in advocacy and lobbying. Transmit "higher level" and "special" values of the organization - - "keeper of the organizational culture".
	<p>NET: Common values are not clear. They should center on serving people in need. Perhaps need to consider how phrase values (particularly "special" and "higher level") to focus on areas of <i>commonality</i>.</p> <p>The central office should support the local level, but the temptation (for all central offices) is to think it exists for itself.</p>	
NEEDS	<p><u>Psychological needs:</u> Belonging , empathy, encouragement Diversity, variety, fun Challenge, risk, excitement</p> <p><u>Practical needs:</u> Help anticipating and meeting future needs (map) Opportunity (platform) to speak out on issues of concern and interest Resources (people, money)</p>	<p><u>Psychological needs:</u> Recognition of opinion Challenge, risk</p> <p><u>Practical needs:</u> Recognition (of expertise, authority, image) by outside bodies: local authorities, media, partners – so attract resources for local level Topical expertise and local knowledge from people "on the ground".</p>
	<p>NET: Local workers can feel very alone facing people's problems and look to the central office for encouragement, belonging and support. BELONGING to a larger movement ("family") is a key psychological need of local services that can be met by the central office. Local services do look to the central office for hope and encouragement.</p> <p>Two ways to instill this. 1) Common meetings where staff in local services and central offices meet and talk. 2) Recognition of the organization's work and the importance of issues it addresses by outside bodies (e.g., media).</p>	

Attachment B2: Why actually START an action: SKILLS/TOOLS + SELF-BELIEF

Similarities and differences between diaconal actors working in national umbrella organizations or central offices AND diaconal actors working on local level providing services

	Local level (service provision)	Central level (home office or umbrella organization)
SKILLS/TOOLS	<p>Practical skills (psychology, social work, etc.) - - required by law</p> <p>Physical infrastructure (e.g., buildings, ICT tools)</p> <p>Organizational infrastructure (e.g., policies, methods, flexible and responsible leadership and decision-making structures.)</p>	<p>Communications - - for training others, networking, etc.</p> <p>Networking - -politicians, partners</p> <p>Management</p> <p>Topical expertise - - in social care areas, regulations, policy topics, etc.</p>
	<p>NET: In most organizations, training on practical skills and policies is well-developed - - both to fulfill legal requirements and ensure quality. In new member states, physical infrastructure can be inadequate - - both for providing care and communications. ESF funding helps support both of these.</p> <p>In many countries, <i>organizational infrastructure</i> can be inadequate. Specifically, leadership and decision-making structures are often not sufficiently flexible and/or pro-active to meet the changing needs of modern social care organizations.</p> <p>Training on other topics, such as communications, is lacking. This is probably because workers don't see how it fits their needs and values. (See section on communications.)</p>	
SELF-BELIEF	Workers need to believe they can do it. They look to the central office for support.	Strong leaders play an important role in convincing others that goals are reachable - - i.e., "we have a plan and know what we're doing".
	Note: There was insufficient time to share on this topic. So the above is from one small group only.	

Attachment B3: Why sustain action: GOALS, REWARDS and FEEDBACK

Similarities and differences between diaconal actors working in national umbrella organizations or central offices AND diaconal actors working on local level providing services

Important note: there was insufficient time for sharing on goals, rewards and feedback. The information below comes from one small group discussion + general discussions on topics related to these issues.

	Local level (service provision)	Central level (home office or umbrella organization)
GOALS	<p>Goals are usually clear:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mastery goals - - e.g., quality, individualized care, effectiveness. • Performance goals - - e.g., number of cases handle <p>Clear goals are particularly important for volunteers. Young people especially need to see that their work has made a difference.</p>	<p>Some quality and effectiveness goals. However, goals are not always very clear.</p>
REWARDS	<p>Both intrinsic rewards (satisfaction from supporting others) and extrinsic rewards (salary, conditions)</p> <p>However, under-resourced, rapidly changing and fearful environments (e.g., of job loss) can be demotivating.</p>	<p>Both intrinsic rewards (satisfaction) and extrinsic rewards (salary, conditions)</p> <p>However, under-resourced, rapidly changing and fearful (e.g., of job loss) environments can be demotivating.</p>
FEEDBACK	<p>Workers really need feedback - - e.g., so they can set new goals. But there is rarely enough time to give it.</p>	<p>Not enough time for feedback can lead to frustration and internal tensions.</p>

Attachment C: Resources

Trainer:

Jacques Leloup

Best Business Consulting

32, rue de Buisseret

7180 Seneffe, Belgium

+32 (0)477.33.17.86

j.leloup@bbco.be

Books and links to resources on process communications (i.e., the eight psychological needs):

Kahler Communication Belgium: www.kahlerbelgium.com

Tabi Kahler Associates (USA): www.tabikahlerassociates.com

Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

Slides from training available in the members' section of www.eurodiaconia.org

Photos:

<http://picasaweb.google.com/diakonianet/SeminarAndCommunicationWorkshopInBrussels>

Slide Show:

<http://picasaweb.google.com/diakonianet/SeminarAndCommunicationWorkshopInBrussels#slideshow>

from Laszlo Dani (www.diakonia.lap.hu)