

Minutes from meeting in Strasbourg – Excerpt –

SNRL Training

The SNRL is one of the French Federations and they represent 350 radio stations out of a total of 600 in France. There is a need for community radio to deliver training as there are 18,000 volunteers and 3,000 paid staff in community radio in France.

There was a need to build a curriculum to respond to needs of people. At present, professional qualifications are only required for paid staff, and also because the SNRL is an organisation that is formed mainly by volunteers.

ORCEL, that is the training body attached to SNRL, carries out the following activities:

1. Training (main activity)
2. Research (production of reports)
3. Expert work/consultancy work (ie. Evaluation and final report for the Leonardo project)
4. Document experiences of community radio activities.

In relation to training, the SNRL has not a physical centre to deliver the training as people doesn't find easy to travel to Paris. They travel to the regions to develop training on a regional basis. In France, organisations have to pay an annual amount to a training fund for their paid staff that can be used for any kind of training. Each paid employee is entitled to 30 hours training per year).

To fund the training, that cost 1000 euro per station, each participant station is asked to bring one paid staff member, and to claim the money from the training fund. With that money, they cover the participation of three volunteers. Whatever money is made, it is reinvested in the SNRL office and staff.

The training is composed of 4 modules:

1. **Funding.** The Department of Culture has 6 million euros in two main funding strands for community radio in France. To access this funding, you need to know how the process works.

To access the strand 1 (maximum funding for station is 40-42 thousand euro), it is only necessary to present the previous year audited accounts and according to the budget presented, the community radio will receive funding. The deadline to apply for this funding is April, and the money is received in December (ie. A station with a budget of 140,000 euros, will receive a grant of 42,000 euros). Whatever money is left after the money is adjudicated to each radio station is available to those organisations that apply under strand 2 (the maximum amount that can be accessed is 25000 euro per station, they apply on May and money is received February next year) . To access this funding, the organisation has to demonstrate that its activities are those of a community radio. Only about 200 community radios in France benefit from this second strand. This is because some are not really community radios (their programming is basically music), others because do not know how to apply for the funding, or even they do not know funding exist, so we feel this is a weakness of the SNRL, that its members do not know how to benefit from all available funding. Stations that applied for this fund are awarded points for their activities in specific areas -these areas and the points change every year.

It is important to notice, that if a station develops specific community content, they will get more points and so more money under strand 2 of the funding, but also they might find other source of funding from local or regional authorities, NGOs, etc.

They held 3 days workshops, Day 1 and 3 are dedicated to the department of education funding and day 2 looks at how to access other funding available at local, regional or European levels.

2. **Administration.** This is about contracts; they should work for the employer (community radio) and the employee (worker rights). There is a need for procedures to protect employer and staff. And in France, this is even more relevant, because the status of journalist is highly protected by the law. If the job description is as a radio presenter but the person is also doing research, and a conflict develops between employer and employee, the employee can present his/her case to court as s/he was a journalist and be protected as such. So, we can see that community radio is

sometimes not changing for the best and that French legislation is very complex.

They also work with stations that are in crisis, to help them to find a way out (ie. Governance, conflict, sustainability issues due to economic crisis). The French government has a fund dedicated to strengthen governability. They work with three stations every year.

3. **Digitalisation.** Last year the French regulator opened licensing processes for digital radios in several French regions. The SNRL prepared workshops to facilitate the stations switchover.

4. **Duties and rights of the Board/Committee of management of community radios.** A lot of changes in governing processes for community radio stations, but the same people seats on the boards of community radios since 1998, when the community radio regulation was passed. There has not been regeneration, and there is a need for new people joining the boards. The people on community radio governance bodies are now faced with problems with contracts, members of staff that do not share their vision as community radio activists and who consider community radio as a first step towards a career on commercial radio. When a worker takes a community radio to court, the judge will not see as any different to any other employer and will apply the law as it is. Community radios in France have had a lot of problems of this kind. So we needed workshops on how to write an employment contract and job description and the board/committee duties as employer.

Comments:

- No volunteer unified/standardised training curriculum at national level. This is because training for staff takes place at regional level. This could be considered a weakness and it has been highlighted on other European projects that the SNRL is taking part. They are also looking at standardising/harmonising job descriptions, as the best way to do this for staffs is a contract stage. Volunteer training takes place at station level.
- They do not work on media literacy, although community radios train volunteers and staff. Many of the SNRL members work in schools or colleges where children and young adults are encouraged to research and to look at media differently –it is difficult to retain young people who access community radio in the schools or colleges, as when they moved

away from these centres, they also move away from the stations. But SNRL has not taken ownership of this concept as Craol has done in Ireland, because each station has its own plan of activities, but there will be recommendations as part of their formal, non-formal, informal learning partnership. They have developed specific training in some stations towards addressing media literacy issues (ie. Antxeta Irratia runs specific women training following a methodology developed in Latin America to empower women called Free Women Radio School).