

Training Report 3 days Introductory Sphere training 22-24. May 2023 in Przemysl, Poland

The 3 days Sphere Introductory training in Przemysl was a success according to Gabriel and Axel.

Why?

- Part of an ongoing massive humanitarian response and therefore highly relevant;
- Well organised by HLA/SCI;
- Venue was one of the best Axel ever facilitated – it was part of the Ukraine response and highly symbolic! The old and historic house is currently being renovated which created some noise but was alive as a long centre for Ukrainian-polish friendship and now a place for various activities such as Polish classes for refugees, children play group, cultural events in the big former cinema inside the building, last year a refuge for hundreds of refugees;
- Active participants from different parts of Eastern Europe – Ukraine, Romania and Moldova willing to learn more about the Sphere Handbook;

How did it become a success?

- Gabriel and I facilitated like in a response, we focused on the people not the plan we came with, without ever interacting with the participants before – this was felt and reflected by the participants;
- No PowerPoint –following the approach: Tell me and I forget, Show me and I might remember, involve me and I learn
- Enough availability of snacks and beverages (coffee, tea, juices, etc.) that helped to keep up the energy of the participants;
- Besides the historical value of the building, the venue had plenty of space and all the resources needed to out into action this kind of methodology;
- We adapted to the dynamic;
- We had a debrief of each day and prepared again in the morning;
- We trusted each other;
- We gave space for the things that wanted to emerge – like the concert of David, the inside first hand stories of the situation in Przemysl by Claudia and by Liubov from Ukraine;
- As we had one of the participants with a basic level of English, language accessibility was key thanks to other participants who translated her opinions and comments, open the space for her to express herself and not to feel isolated;
- We put a lot of effort and attention into creating a good atmosphere. This cannot be done in the a “normal 30min Introduction” but is ESSENTIAL;
- Rafael supported and took great care in the background of pictures and videos;
- The communications team, produced great content of photos, videos and interviews, always taking into account the consent forms;
- The intercultural approach was needed and applied throughout the workshop as we had 4 different countries, cultures as we all as a representant of the Roma community;
- We gave freedom to participants when they needed to work however attention was high and participants focused during all days;
- Introduction of the participants on day 1 was “anti-hierarchical” and we did not know each others positions. This supported the good atmosphere. However, on day 3 we

made an introduction round with position and responsibilities in order to network after we build trust with each other;

- We mixed the groups constantly;
- We changed the seating several times a day. No one needed a table and the circle for seating was ideal;
- We got a tour of the symbolic house we had as a venue by the director. This was perfect for the lunch break and gave further meaning for the venue to the participants;
- Everyone talked – we as facilitators reduced our talking time;
- We are both humanitarian workers and shared our stories and related them to the participants and Sphere;
- We used many new methods to the participants who often reacted strongly that they like those methods and will change their facilitation style;
- It makes a difference to have the physical handbook in their hands, to flip through it and build this relation with the book, it is different from only having it online;
- We used the “messenger feedback method” and each day we gave feedback of the feedback – this was highly appreciated. We bought plant-based milk ourselves and openly said what we can change and what not;
- Making the delivery of the certificates special for them as an achievement and a warm welcome to the Sphere community;
- The facilitators were also aware of the learning atmosphere and some details that make so much difference like organizing materials, chairs, trash and dirty dishes cleaning and disposal;
- Recap was done at the end of the day and by participants in the morning. Energizers were also done by participants. On the first 2 days we nominated “guardians” for time, language access, fresh air, energizers, recap which supported participation and ownership.

Lessons Learned:

- Like Sphere suggest – adapt to the context. Be dynamic and people-centered with the participants and adapt your style and content according to the situation;
- A fixed schedule without flexibility can ruin the event;
- Pictures in the middle of people to symbolise and remind us of the people-centered response were important. However, it would add value if also people of the existing context would be shown as well;
- There is always a high “no-show rate” in those free trainings;
- Big advantage to have a ToT shortly after – participants should be supported and motivated in the weeks after our training;
- I created a google drive with relevant supporting documents which will be shared to the participants – I shared my Email and phone number for further networking;
- We both agree that 3 days are sufficient – it would always be good to have a follow up meeting – maybe something voluntary for 60min via ZOOM to strengthen the network and learning experience;
- There is no need to cover all technical chapters for the sake of covering it – it was better to skip sessions but use the energy that was created to get the most of each session or merge session;
- In this methodology, good management of the work done is important, sticking the flipcharts, paper sheets on the wall so everyone can see the work they have done and it makes easier to recap;
- The venue is a key part of the workshop, preparing it previously and taking care of every detail is so important to create a good learning atmosphere.