

# FoME Symposium 2015



## *Focus on Impact: Advanced Methods and Concepts in Media Development*

**fome**

Forum Medien und Entwicklung  
*Forum Media and Development*

SPROCKLER  
To tell you the truth...

# FoME Symposium 2015

## Focus on Impact: Advanced Methods and Concepts in Media Development



The 11th FoME Symposium, hosted by the Deutsche Welle Akademie on the 1st and 2nd of October 2015, focused on advanced methods and concepts in media development. An audience of circa 150 media practitioners and academics shared their knowledge and best practices in the media development sector. The Symposium opened with a keynote speech by Ben Ramalingam and included some plenary sessions and 10 workshops. On behalf of FoME, DW Akademie invited Sprockler to conduct an evaluation of the Symposium.

### Sprockler



is a new research tool and philosophy for adaptive learning, to be used in project or strategy design as well as for monitoring and evaluation. It focuses on storytelling, as it is in stories that people give sense to the complex reality around them.

Sprockler creates story-based inquiries and invites the storyteller to interpret the story, staying close to their actual meaning and enabling quantification of the stories. It then gives you a visual and user-friendly analysis. In this way, you will be able to access personal stories as well as larger patterns across organisations and communities. It enables you to make meaningful decisions based on thorough understanding of people's realities. You can circle this feedback back to the storytellers, and so close the loop. What makes Sprockler special is its combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection. Sprockler was presented and discussed in a workshop on the FoME symposium.

### Method

The inquiry was set up by the Sprockler team with input from DW Akademie. The inquiry invited participants of the Symposium to tell a story about something or someone they remembered from during the symposium, and invited them to interpret the meaning of their own stories through using special questions, such as bipoles and tripoles.

The inquiry also asked some general questions about the motivation to participate in the Symposium, the insights gathered and the experiences with specific plenaries and workshops. The invitation to the inquiry was sent out to all participants on 22 October and was open for 14 days. A total of 33 people responded to the inquiry, of which 19 people used the opportunity to share their story. The majority of respondents came from Germany/Western Europe, 6 respondents are based outside of Europe.

Therefore the representativeness of the sample is limited. However, the value of the provided information is high and important to learn from.



FoME Symposium 2015

### Links

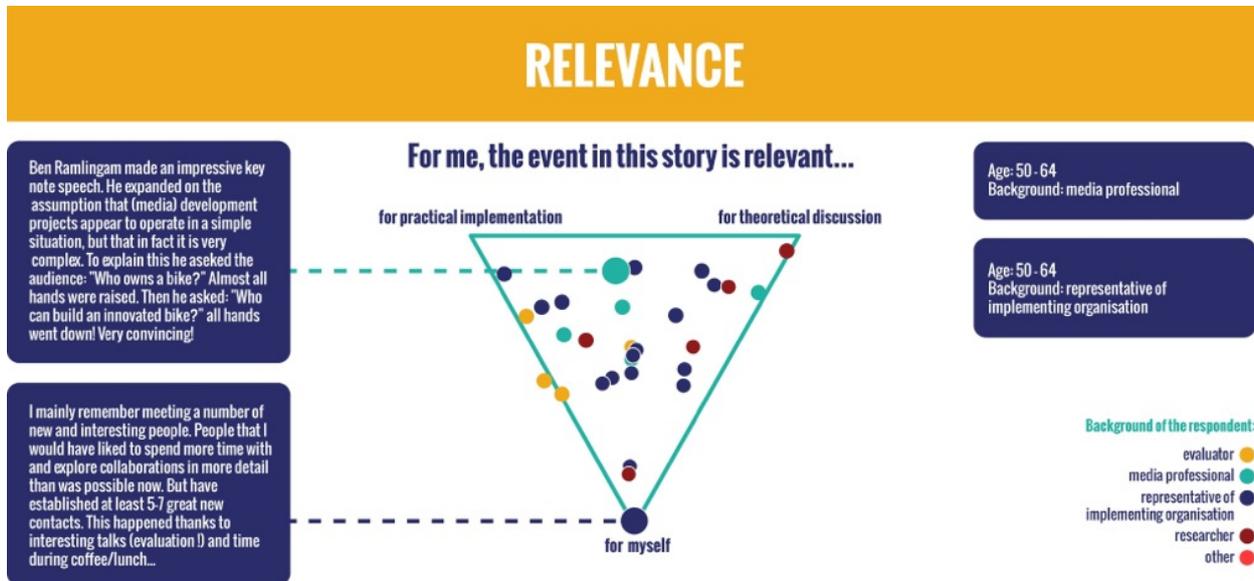
Interactive results:  
[www.sprockler.com/  
FoME2015/index.php](http://www.sprockler.com/FoME2015/index.php)

FoME Symposium  
website:  
[www.fome.info/  
events/  
symposium-2015](http://www.fome.info/events/symposium-2015)

SPROCKLER website:  
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The analysis was done by the Sprockler team using the Visualizer. This functionality is only available offline at the moment, but will be available shortly. In this report we give an overview of the findings. Note, this report is an addition to the interactive response website. You can go to the interactive website by clicking on this [link](#). You can check which stories were shared and which answers were given. When you click on the dots in the bipoles and tripoles, you can read the story that is related to that specific position. In this way you can have a look at the complete picture of how one respondent viewed the Symposium.

This report is not interactive.



Sprockler asked respondents to share a story on something that they remembered (positively or negatively) from during the Symposium and to map the meaning of this story in five related questions.

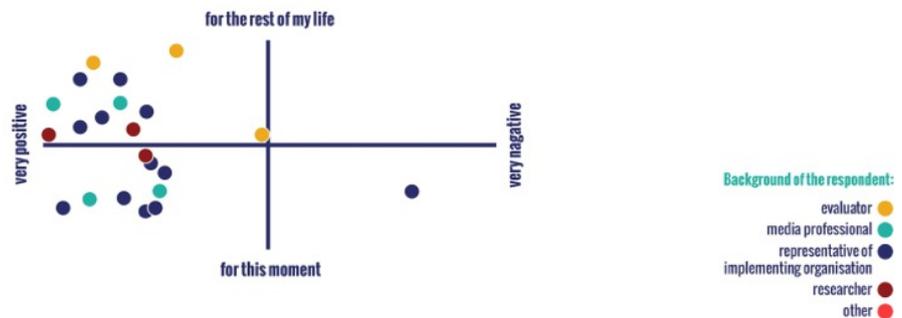
In most of the cases it is a new thought, new tool or new method that inspired people to tell a story. In putting these experiences into a story, the knowledge and insights gained, get more rooted in one's experience. The networking opportunities that the Symposium offered also are a recurring theme in the stories.

In the first meaning mapping question, respondents were asked to indicate why the event in the story was relevant to them. Most respondents indicated that the event that they shared about was relevant for their work, both theoretical as well as practical. Thus indicates that the Symposium offered 'food for thought' for the media development community.



## TONE & REMEMBER

The tone of voice of this story is...  
How long will you remember this story?



Most of the stories shared were positive of tone – only one story was indicated to have negative tone. Positive qualifications come from many different reasons, such as the enthusiasm of the participants, the interactive methodology used in the workshop or the information that was shared. It is interesting to look specifically at tone of voice in combination with the question how long people will remember this story and in combination with how unique such an experience is to them.

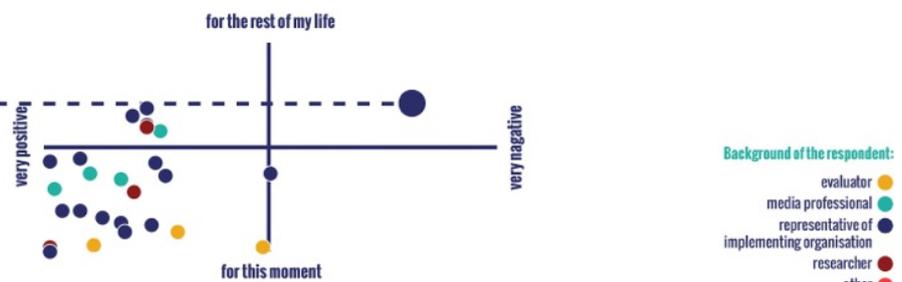
Most people indicate that they will remember this story, some of them even for the rest of their lives. This can be seen as a positive stimulus for the FoME organisation. In times of scarce funds to attend conferences and symposia, the impact of a positive learning experience is likely to contribute to a positive decision to attend next years conference. These trends could be included in future inquiries. We did not observe special pattern differences when comparing data for age and professional background.

## TONE & UNIQUE

The tone of voice of this story is...  
How unique are the things described in your story at conferences?

We saw the presentation of Butterfly Works about how they developed a multimedia game for a soap called "C'est la vie". Although hearing about the development process was interesting and also revealing about the methods chosen, the presentation left me with a shallow impression of having heard a lengthy commercial break. If this was because of the presenters overwhelming enthusiasm about the project that left no room for more factual or even critical reflection or if this was because the presentation left the idea that this project was never seen before (there are many likewise examples) or that going digital itself would change the society (which is not true). The impression of a too one-sided and far too positive, advertisement-style presentation was deepened by the following presenter, Julia Manske, on how to cope with digital change, whose embracement of online media and methods was almost unbearable. I remember it because this part diminished some of the other parts of the program with a deep understanding of the issues media development faces.

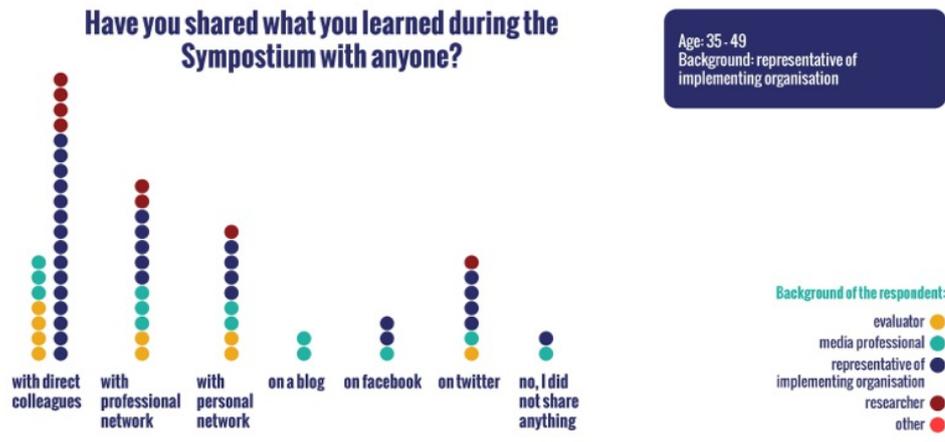
Age: 35 - 49  
Background: representative of implementing organisation



In addition to the general image, Sprockler allows you to keep an open eye for stories that score a bit off the general track and take the wisdom of the minority seriously, as probably more people can relate to that experience. In this respect it is interesting to take a look at the only story that was interpreted as having a negative tone. Reading the story, it brings understanding for the reasons to interpret this as a more negative experience:

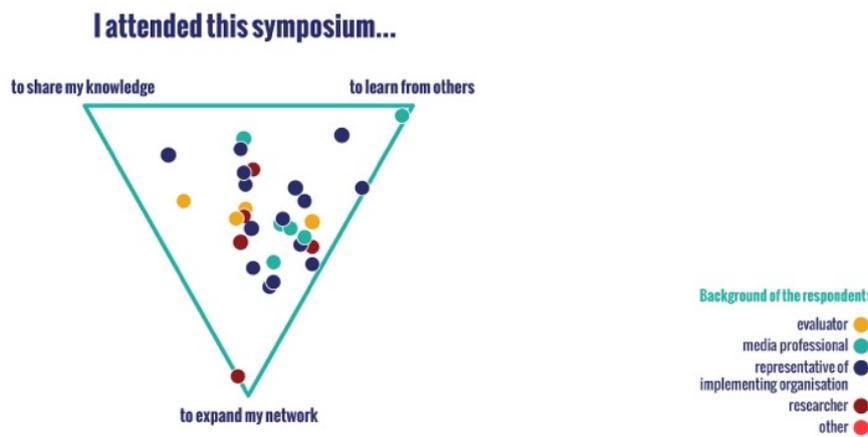
“the presentation left me with a shallow impression of having heard a lengthy commercial break”. When we follow the story also in the bipole asking how unique this experience is for the person, stresses this understanding: This same person indicated that this is not a unique experience at conferences in general. It could give the signal to the organisation to give instructions to the speakers to allow and stimulate critical thinking and discussion in the workshops.

## SHARING



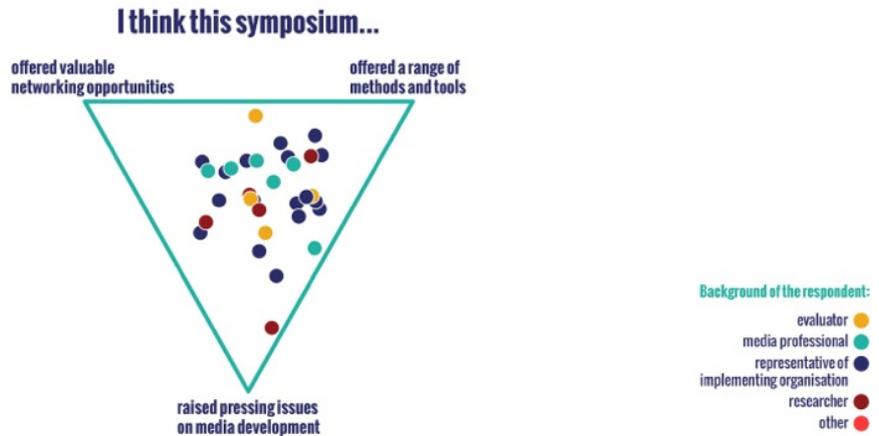
All but two respondents indicated that they shared their learning with others, mostly direct colleagues or other people from their professional network. The majority of people shared their learning at least via two or more different ways. From the face-to-face sharing was done mostly through colleagues and twitter was used most in social media. Keeping in mind that all but one of the stories was about a positive experience, this indicates that the Symposium did have quite a positive resonance in the media development community.

## MOTIVATION



Most respondents had multiple reasons to attend the Symposium. The results of the tripole that specifically asks about this, shows a slight tendency to ‘learning from others’ and ‘networking’ as opposed to share your own knowledge. This is also reflected in the stories. Almost all stories relate about some knowledge that was transferred or an insight that was gained.

# GOALS



The aim of the FoME symposium is to put pressing media development issues on the agenda, to increase knowledge and further improve the work quality of practitioners and academics in media development. When we look at where the responses were placed, there is a concentration in the heart of the triangle, reflecting that most people think the symposium nicely balanced these aims. This is almost the same image as we get in the earlier question on reasons to attend the FoME Symposium. We interpret this as a sign that the Symposium delivered what it promised to do, and that the respondents got out of it what they were looking for.

# PLENARY



The key note speech of Ben Ramalingam, which introduced the issue of complexity related to media development, seems to have been a good choice: it was the topic of 5 out of 19 stories shared; references to the speech also occurred in the insights people had, and in the recommendation to expand the issue of complexity in future symposia. We asked people to share the insights they had as a result from the plenaries. New insights were on complexity, the design and running of media development projects and *“the possibility to think the other way around... don't think in mass statistics but in the “positive deviants.”*

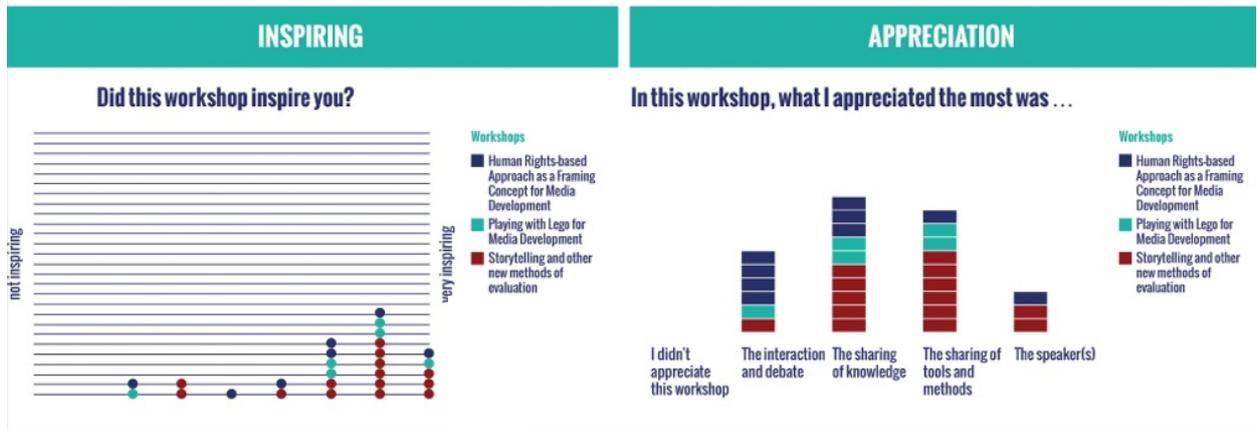
*“Starting a project without necessarily knowing how it will go and end up, but leaving it to the process and working with end users to determine this journey. Essentially, the concept of user centered designs.”*

These insights can be an inspiration when organizing the next edition of FoME. An overview of learnings and insights can be found in the addendum to this report.

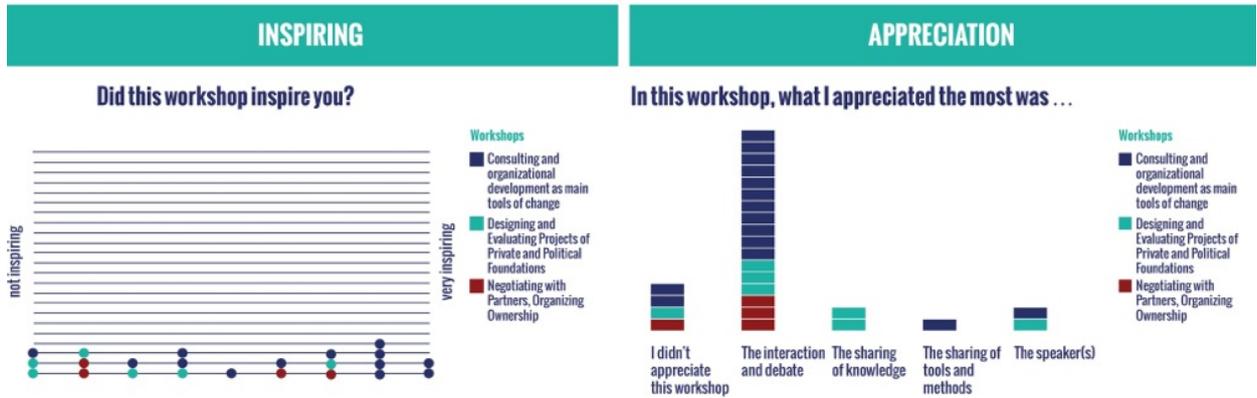
The Symposium offered a total of ten workshops in three workshop rounds: two rounds on Thursday 1 October and one round on Friday 2 October. The number of respondents is too low to have a sensible feedback on each workshop. We just leave the results open for your own conclusions.

May not come as a surprise, but a good part of the respondents (20) to the inquiry had attended the workshop on Storytelling and other New Methods of Evaluation. Possibly these people were more intrigued than others to experiment with this new tool...

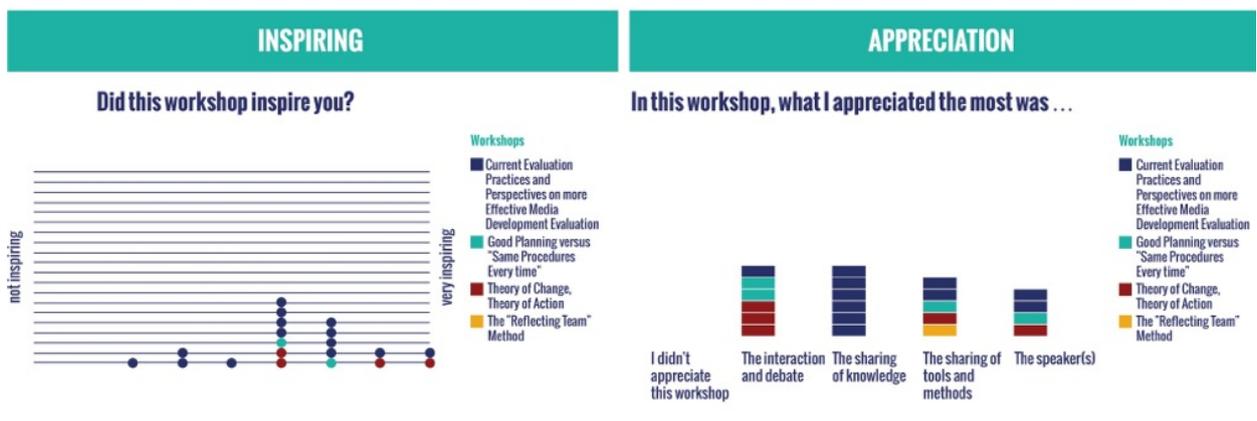
## FIRST ROUND



## SECOND ROUND



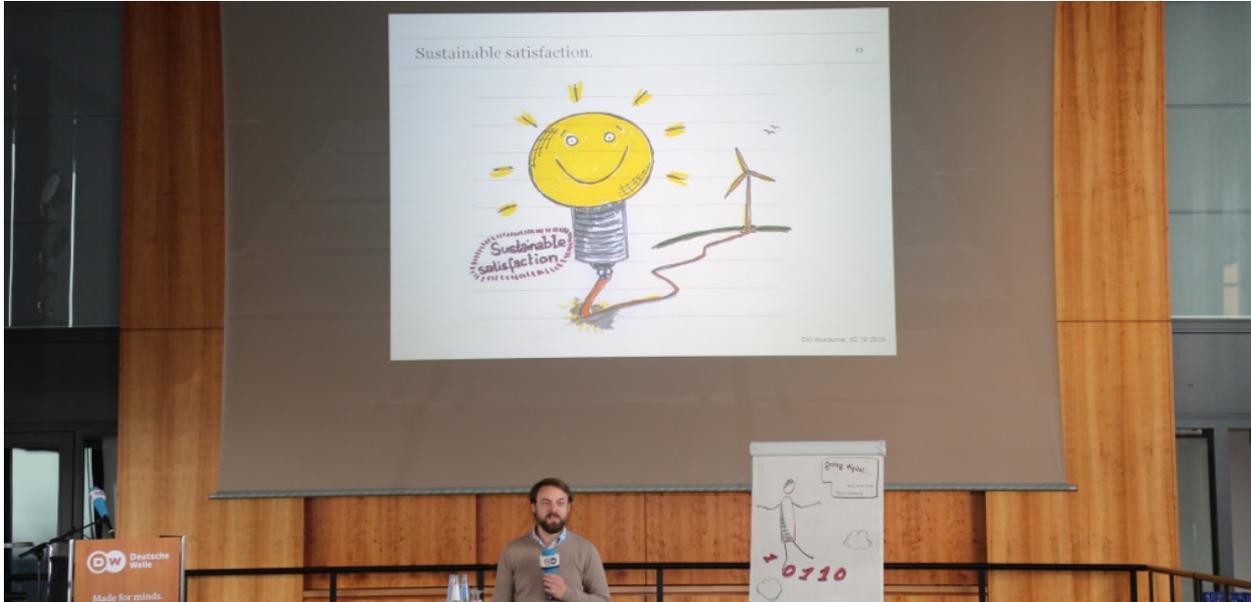
## THIRD ROUND



## Recommendations

Most recommendations provided by the respondents are related to the workshops. More time for discussion, more and better instruction to use audio visual materials, or offer more time to really work: *“For interesting new tools - provide true workshops: A presentation combined with an opportunity to test, practice, interact”*.

An overview of recommendations is added in the addendum to the report.



## Conclusion

Based on the inquiry and the analysis we have done, the Sprockler team comes to the conclusion that the 11<sup>th</sup> FoME Symposium has managed to offer a varied programme that has adequately catered to the needs of professionals and academics working in media development. The key-note speech on Complexity by Ben Ramalingam was a very good choice that has stimulated thinking and debate in the media development community. Complexity and emerging practice have the interest and are of concern to the media development community.

The Symposium offered a good networking opportunity. It allowed professionals, academics and donors to meet and discuss on current projects in a warm and accessible atmosphere. This is conform the aims of FoME.

The response rate of 22% is not uncommon for an evaluation of a symposium or conference. Still, the limited representativeness remains a challenge. To remain innovative in evaluation practices, we would like the organizers to take into consideration that different results could be made when the evaluation would be conducted during the conference. Participants can then also benefit from listening to the stories of others, although the content will mostly reflect the conference. The benefit of evaluating after a month is that participants have been given time to have some distance and will be able answer on a higher analytical level. Reliving a special moment after one month, and as thus repeating its message, adds to the consolidation of the memory.



## APPENDIX

### STORIES

Ben Ramalingam gave a very nice key note about complexity, wherein he presented his view on complexity, which is very close to our own perspective. So this was a good opener. It was a pity that there was insufficient time to further interact with him afterwards and that in many of the following sessions the concept of complexity was wrongly explained/used by speakers.

I remember the keynote speech of Ben Ramalingam. He explained dealing with complexity with a very simple example: he asked the audience who owns a bike. All hands were raised. Then he asked who could innovate the design of a bike. No hands came up. It was a perfect example to show that something that looks very simple, can be very complex when you need to innovate it or change it

The "serious play with lego" was an interesting workshop. The people had a lot of fun, it a participatory and creative opportunity to get in contact and discuss serious questions and challenges. And the presenter was really convincing. He loves to play with lego and the people in the workshop had a lot of fun.

I remember positively the Situation when the consultancy Workshop 4 took much longer than was planned. All the results that had been written on the papers were posted on the Windows with the view to the river Rhine. We heard the summaries of all the Groups - and nobody left early.

Ben Ramalingam made an impressive key note speech. He expanded on the assumption that (media) development projects appear to operate in a simple situation, but that in fact it is very complex. To explain this he asked the audience: "Who owns a bike?" Almost all hands were raised. Then he asked: "Who can build an innovated bike?" all hands went down! Very convincing!

Many positive things.

workshop on human rights based approach. in the introduction the moderator asked: who applies a HRBA? show of hands, nearly everyone. yet, there was a lively discussion on advantages, challenges and what it actually implies. very different conceptions were presented by different organisations. rather at the end, a human rights lawyer said: "when I entered the workshop, I thought: why are they asking, if we adopt a human rights based approach. of course we use a human rights based approach." she explained that she now saw that it is not a given, but that you could have very different approaches in media development. for me as a journalist, human rights was a new field and different perspective. we had an excellent discussion on human rights-based approach to media development in that workshop. it was especially rich b/c of the variety of disciplines and perspectives.

I really enjoyed the Lego-Workshop. It was amazing, to see how this method works. It's a funny and creative method and the participants had a lot of fun by building the "nightmare boss" or the most important features of media freedom.

I was positively impressed by the enthusiasm of the participants. I also was surprised to see such event organised in Germany since the country, rightly or wrongly, is not well known as one that cares about events outside her borders.

I was very happy with the workshop about the impact of Evaluations by Jessica Noske Turner. It was an interesting moment, because we shared the findings of her assessment of 47 media-development evaluations. Jessica went further than sharing her findings. She also shared new tools that she developed. That is what really moved me, because it gave us a perspective for action.

I mainly remember meeting a number of new and interesting people. People that I would have liked to spend more time with and explore collaborations in more detail than was possible now. But have established at least 5-7 great new contacts. This happened thanks to interesting talks (evaluation !) and time during coffee/lunch...

I remember the very inspiring methodology of one workshop, where there were several tables with one "resource person" and a large paper each. Then there were several questions and each group documented its answers on the paper. For the next question, the groups changed. It was a really nice method as it ensured interactivity, collectively developing the answers, seeing other people's perspective and discussing with a new group each round. Like this, the results on the papers were creative and often funny.

The key note by Ben Ramalingan was greatly inspiring, reassuring and challenging, which I am now reading. His story underpinned my own personal view on what our world needs and how we need to differently approach the way we work. Embracing complexity has far reaching consequences for planning, monitoring and evaluating. These were unfortunately insufficiently deepened. Ben's message strongly resonated in some other presentations, like those by Han Rakels, Bernadette van Dijck and by Jessica Nose-Turner, but in many other cases old-school thinking - sometimes differently packaged - was dominant and the term complexity was frequently mis-interpreted. Ben (and the other presenters that resonate with him), sketched a new future where there is much to gain and to learn. Worth 2 days of conferencing in itself !!

I remember the interesting documentary that was produced by the BBC and which was followed by an interesting presentation about Sprockler. And how nice it would be to use that tool to measure the impact of that documentary. We need stories and evidence to understand better what works. The key note speaker - Ben Ramalingan - and the following panel discussion, showed that we still have a world to win to understand what works and what doesn't and how dependent this is on context and people. We need new tools to measure impact, so that we get rid of false assumptions. I also remember the interesting encounters over coffee and lunch.

Guy Degen made me visualize press freedom with Lego.

We saw the presentation of Butterfly Works about how they developed a multimedia game for a soap called "C est la vie". Although hearing about the development process was interesting and also revealing about the methods chosen, the presentation left me with a shallow impression of having heard a lengthy commercial break. If this was because of the presenters overwhelming enthusiasm about the project that left no room for more factual or even critical reflection or if this was because the presentation left the idea that this project was never seen before (there are many likewise examples) or that going digital itself would change the society (which is not true). The impression of a too one-sided and far too positive, advertisement-style presentation was deepened by the following presenter, Julia Manske, on How to cope with digital change, whose embracement of online media and methods was almost unbearable. I remember it because this part diminished some of the other parts of the program with a deep understanding of the issues media development faces.

Fantastic LEGO-session with Guy Degen! This way of facilitating creative sessions was new to me and I hope to learn more about it. It was also a great opportunity to get to know other participants.

Lost in conversation: One of the two Digital Dimensions discussion groups dived deep into their topic and it took several (and more and more insisting) reminders to get the group back into the main auditorium. Mission accomplished!

I met a DW Akademie member who I planned to meet the next day. As she didn't have her business cards she held out her conference badge and asked me to photograph it with my smartphone so as to remember her name, which is also her email address. I remember it because it is a simple way to exchange contacts, which I had not thought of before, and it reminded me of how much a part of my daily life technology is.

I remember well Jessica Noske-Turner presenting easy yet convincing tools for M+E.

The symposium was a very enriching experience. I found two statements quite interesting. One was at the opening, if I recall well, that: " I am working on my thinking and I think its improving". I also found much interest in another statement by Celine Herbiet when explaining the design thinking concept and process by Butterfly works that " None of us is smarter than all of US", she also mentioned that " When we start a project, we do not know where it is going and we work with the end user" -as such the participants in the process are core in developing the human centered designs. These statements remained outstanding for me!

## INSIGHTS SHARED

The Speaker explained very clearly how complexity theory can be applied to development

that a good design process is very important, that it is not Always possible to formulate clear end products, and that it can be a lot of fun

Varieties of projects work on the topic.

not new, but an important and good reminder: complex problems need complex project designs..

- new information about organizations, opportunities for networking, enriching discussions at the walls

The cartoons were great. I like this way of picking up theoretical issues and big discussions coming straight to the point and making it easy to understand and to lough about. It was a good idea to close the plenary with this presentation.

The possibility to think the other way around... don't think in mass statistics but in the "positive deviants"

groundbreaking new ideas about how we run our projects.

As human beings we are not do unique. All living organisms have evolved and adapted over time in history. Adaptive learning is our human nature. More natural ways of dealing with our 'complex' challenges is what we need. But we will have to deal with (get rid of) strong convictions and vested interests and need a lot of courage to do things differently.

looking at media development from a different/ crucial point of view that does absolutely make sense!

How far away we are from implementing the insights shared by Ben Ramalingam - there is still a lot awareness raising to be done!

Complexity, overview of do's and dont's, or rather ideal and reality.

I believed in DW values and I loved to propose to open a DW akademie - branch in Sudan. For what I believe its needed to be involved in Sudan. I hope that Mr.Peter L. With others in DW , can support this. Regards Mohamed Awad Farah President Sudanese Film Making Association 00249123005848

There are many ways to mess up a media development project. We know all the mistakes. And we repeat them.

It was a good opportunity to find out more about other organizations as well as to engage in discussions with other participants. The other plenary sessions were not interactive enough and sometimes even boring (except of Butterfly Works)

New considerations regarding project developments (holistic approach/inclusiveness) as well as monitoring and evaluation.

The best ideas come from co-development of tools - mixing expert knowledge with beneficiary knowledge seems to have the most practical impact, not one or the other (expert knowledge only or beneficiary knowledge only).

Starting a project without necessarily knowing how it will go and end up, but leaving it to the process and working with end users to determine this journey. Essentially, the concept of User centered designs.

Good examples by Butterfly Works for design thinking approaches and small pilots

## RECOMMENDATIONS

more time for reflections and discussions

Try - once again - something new

Stream the conference on the internet, make interaction with people on the internet and the people meeting offline possible

continue using interactive formats invite relevant partners from south

Many thanks to all organizers and speakers - it was a very inspiring and valuable event!

They should try and include people who benefit or have benefited from the programmes to come and talk about their experiences and suggest ways delivery methods can be improved

Ensure that all workshops are directly related to the main theme of the Symposium.

- Dig deeper in 'complexity' - it is THE big thing for the future - and build on such a major theme (in other works, mainstream it in all the sub-sessions) - Provide more time during the workshops and make sure that speakers and moderators and on the same line of thought (in some cases this was clearly not the case and differences in expectation) - The flexibility to move around, interact, network was great. Keep it or even create more time for this! - Add a poster session, for micro-presentations/interactions on cases, tools, models, researches, opportunities, ...

Keep the workshop character, a lot of space for discussion and interaction, more an exchange than a lecture, keep the open and friendly atmosphere.

Organise more intense and focused networking, knowledge cafe was nice but too steered, maintain the flexibility, more time in workshops

For interesting new tools - provide true workshops: A presentation combined with an opportunity to test, practice, interact. This would require more than just 30-40 minutes. It would be interesting if DW/CANECO would apply this Sprockler tool in a media/development context/project and feedback the results at next fome !

I guess more visual materials can be more positive like video materials. Only in one workshop we got this. "Butterfly media" It was very affective.. "Seeing is believing".

I liked the "marketplace/poster session" method - quickly learn about MD projects and resources. Only dont keep the misleading names (WeShare, WeDebate)

Talk about socio-economic frameworks of media development.

Facilitators should know how to conduct a session! Maybe DW Akademie could offer a prep-workshop on visualization, structuring sessions, methods of presentation. The session on dealing with partners, led by ROG was one of the most terrible sessions I've ever been to. Total chaos! Luckily the participants had some interesting stories to tell. The Open Space Session (Yoko Ono) should have a minimum of preparation (i.e. Metaplan, Flipchart etc).

I really appreciated the structure of FOME 2015. Some of the workshops (like the one on Evaluation) raised a lot of interest and could have lasted a bit longer.

More and clearer explanations in every session/workshops how they are planned to work and what is expected from participants.

Have sequential rather than parallel workshop sessions, as most were of interest but occurring at the same time.

It was my first experience of the FoME symposium. It was all new learning for me and I would say, they should keep it up!

1) I'd like to see more discussion on incorporating technological development into programme implementation. There's scores of new digital tools and techniques out there, and scores more technologists trying to introduce them to the media sector. What's been missing from our process is a way of incorporating the management of innovation – how you go from concept and research all the way through to launch and evaluation - into our daily work. 2) The other thing that concerns me is the rise of private sector investors from the tech sector in media development and conventional aid and development. Figures like Bill Gates and Pierre Omidyar bring a different set of expectations to the funder-NGO relationship, and raise issues regarding freedom of expression, privacy, accountability and independence.

Go for a variety of approaches and methods as in this symposium, choose the same participatory approach, invite more other international donors and implementers to learn and exchange experiences.



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