Practices and principles for collaborative academic projects: results of a survey

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I. Introduction
How can distributed collaboration succeed in American higher education? What are the best inter-institutional practices to study, and which pitfalls to avoid?

By 2016 we now have access to an entire generation of collaborative projects. Academics have attempted, and sometimes succeeded, to build software, archives, media, resources, and shared spaces together, using digital technologies as enabling platforms for work at a distance. Non-academic projects have also occurred, of course, and some of those are relevant due to the use of their materials within formal education and informal learning: Wikipedia, Librivox, or Linux.

In launching the Digital Liberal Arts eXchange (DLAx) it seemed prudent to explore this wealth of recent history and current practices. We decided to anchor our research on the groundbreaking work of Yochai Benkler (Harvard Law School, Berkman Center for Internet & Society). In two major books, The Wealth of Networks (2006) and The Penguin and the Leviathan (2011), Benkler analyzed collaborative digital projects from Linux to Wikipedia, and from them derived a set of structural principles. We translated those principles into a survey instrument to be directed at collaborative project leaders, then corresponded with professor Benkler to fine tune the questions.

Applying that instrument involved selecting a set of current or recent inter-institutional initiatives. We chose a mix of academic projects and some non-academic but education-related efforts, the former to look for lessons learned that could be directly applied to DLAx planning, the latter informing by analogy or points of similarity. During July and August of 2016 we interviewed project leaders or representatives. The work that follows is based on those responses.
II. Principles
We organized our set of Benkler’s principles under four rubrics. These headers represent questions of process, human management factors, organizational governance, and organizational ethos.

For each interviewee we described these principles, then asked subjects to reflect on how they described (or did not account for) features of their collaborative work.

In what follows we have arranged and edited responses to remove unnecessary repetition. When respondents’ answers were better suited to other questions they have been moved accordingly. We do not name specific respondents or institutions, unless identification was unavoidable and reflects public knowledge.

A) Process questions addressed the social interaction among participants, looking to questions of framing, communication, and work segmentation.

Communication We offered the argument that communication among participants must be multimodal, continuous, grounded in some degree of shared organizational culture, and provide ways for participants to share information, troubleshoot issues, and resolve disagreements.

Every respondent agreed with this idea in full (“Communication is the ultimate make or break piece”), and detailed the different technologies and practices their collaborative effort used for communication. Nearly every project relied on individual and group email, along with listservs and even a newsletter. Several used Slack successfully, and that reduced email traffic. Several used wikis, including, obviously, Wikimedia projects. Two used IRC channels for a subset of their population. At least one admitted to relying on a weekly phone call. Some used videoconferencing, specifically Google Hangout and video-enabled Skype. Facebook appeared to have some utility for at least one project, specifically its instant message and discussion forum functions, Messenger and Groups, respectively. Facebook also had the advantage of being very popular for general usage, as well as being seen as having some emotional or personal resonance. Twitter also had some utility.
There was a sense that communication would not succeed organically, but required facilitation and strategic commitment. Communication should occur on both public and private channels, yet respondents highly valued transparency. For one group communication occurred in three distinct modes: “sharing information, news, planning… celebratory, personal content. Also, meta-communication about how to run the project, about values…”

In organizational terms here was no desire for a single communication leader; rather, respondents valued broad involvement in information exchanges. As one put it, communication

[c]an’t be ceded to a centralized figure. Power can’t be ceded to a single individual for resolving disagreement. Needs to be as level as possible for communications.

This can lead to great complexity, especially when multiple populations, professions, or other discourse styles are involved. Participants sometimes have to learn how to socialize with non-colocated colleagues, although those skills are probably growing among the population. Conversely, a diversity of communication sites can lead to incoherence or people feeling left out; participants were encouraged to track certain sites, or were addressed by “push” communications (i.e., newsletters).

Face to face communication, while often difficult and expensive to arrange, was highly valued, be it for informal meetings, workshops, or conferences.

A communication failure, or the perception that a project has a communication problem, can have a chilling effect on participation.

**Framing of the enterprise** The way an organization’s leaders and participants situate the nature of their collaborative effort should be vital to shaping how participants interact and work. From the first connection of person and project, this framing will inflect their expectations.
We presented two major organizational frameworks to our respondents, asking if participants view their enterprise and participation in it as based on a co-op paradigm or through a transaction model.

All agreed that enterprise framing was vital, although they offered different, sometimes overlapping, at other times complementary models. Framing should be clear and participation aligned accordingly. Models included professional development organizations, community organization (sometimes based on open source software paradigms, otherwise as a network), transactional (described various as “sales”, “vendor”, “consultancy”). One respondent insisted in seeing their model as a “system”, which is an intriguingly general way of describing multiple framing models. At times respondents described their model as decisively one, and not others, as in one that is “all based on community feel and not a market feel”. Another co-op supporter wanted to avoid business themes because of the perceived possibility of someone using “funding to buy influence”. In contrast, another preferred the transaction model, choosing to spend money for one service because the provider “takes seriously [its] mission.” Similarly, one found that “[f]unding is often easier to get in a service bureau model”. Once an organization has settled on a clear focus, it can then can fruitfully collaborate with another entity framed in a different model, as when a co-op joins a vendor to work a project together.

Respondents were open about advantages and disadvantages of each. For instance, the transactional model appeals because “People seem to want to just write a check”, yet can also backfire (“Be wary of becoming a reseller”). The co-op model is good for sharing resources, but might not attract enough participants who want to contribute.

We found overlap in some groups, whose representatives described themselves thusly: “While we are professional and have a business side, like to keep it framed as a community focus.” For one the overlap was intentional and strategic: “There should be some symbiotic relationship between the open source model and the vendor model”. One respondent saw models too intertwined to untangle: “those aren't clean alternatives, and aren't even usefully opposed”. One argued that an enterprise should “be framed differently to different audiences”, as “a co-op model [is] necessary to get certain types of people to participate”, while the vendor framing appeals to funders.
Some respondents argued that framing was not only important, but worked best when it was maintained in a consistent way over time. If an organization changed the frame, it often lost participants. Two failed projects transitioned from co-op to transaction or the reverse, and suffered major, mission-critical losses as a result. A third project did not fail in that transition, but did experience a major schism and deep reorganization along the way.

**Modularity of tasks** What is the size of the smallest meaningful task a participant can engage in? Benkler finds that the personal or institutional cost of cooperating can be lower if the tasks can be broken down into small modules, allowing for people to contribute meaningfully without a huge expenditure of time. For example, people are historically more likely to edit and contribute to single articles rather than entire books, as we saw in the difference between contributions to Wikipedia and Wikibooks (Benkler 2006: 101).

Respondents agreed with the principle, but did not reveal a shared modular scale. All saw participants co-writing a shared document, or contributing to an application. One described the benefits of “Break[ing a coding project] into smaller pieces (e.g. sprints for a week or two) which is more palatable than something that will take months or years.” Another spoke of scaling down tasks to a level that allowed for “manageable cooperation”. Tasks shouldn’t be too small as to be meaningless or menial; instead, a minimum scale principle appears in this phrase: “[s]mall but meaningful tasks”. The smallest example that respondents surfaced was correcting a typo in a Wikipedia entry, which is meaningful in that context.

**Modular tasks should not be arbitrarily assigned, but connected with participants:** “People need to be interested in and have expertise in the tasks.” They should also make sense from an institutional perspective. As one respondent observed, “tasks need to benefit their organizations but also speak to duties and responsibilities to community and to those less resourced”.

B) Human management factors address how each organization structured participation in terms of participant motivation, agency, reputation, and competing work.
**Awareness of motivations** We asked respondents: what are the leading motivations that drive people to work with you, and how do you know them? Motivations can range from compensation, reputation, intellectual challenge, belief in goal, desire to increase skills. We followed this with a return to a previous principle: how do participants’ motivations interact with your framing of the enterprise? For example, one can have a thoughtful balance of paid labor alongside volunteer contributions if a participant is aware of the various reasons why someone might be willing to contribute.

As with the framing principle, respondents agreed on the vital importance of the concept, but offered varied answers to how it played out in their enterprises. Motivations included:

- The “[d]esire to develop a specific research project”
- Exploring “how to increase your capacity to innovate more”
- Mentoring, both “people wanting to mentor or be mentored”
- A sense of service
- Improving a specific aspect of one’s profession
- Working within a “[t]enure and promotion system that considers giving back to the community as a contribution”
- “Elevat[ing the] professional profile of staff”
- Developing relations with funders
- Working on a national or global scale
- Learning technical skills
- Institutional reinforcement, such as having collaborative project participation included in annual goals for review

A Wikimedia survey revealed a set of motivations driving editors to contribute, worth identifying separately. They included personal self-expression, a desire for perfection, recognition, interest in an article’s topic, enjoying a sense of responsibility, and working with an audience.

Respondents also shared assessments of drives that discouraged participation. Another study surfaced reasons why women would not want to edit Wikipedia, including time conflicts (as one of our respondents put it: “Life has a way of getting into the way of things”), a lack of confidence, being conflict averse, fearing their content was more likely to be deleted than men’s, misogyny, and a sense of being unwelcome by the community.
**Agency and autonomy** Respondents considered the balance between individual autonomy and organizational responsibility, oversight, and accountability. We asked two questions: how do you encourage people to participate in a way that respects their agency and autonomy? How do you find the right balance between providing enough control over tasks to allow for contributors to meet their needs for interesting, creative, purposeful, and challenging work, while funneling energy to address specific tasks that need doing?

Respondents acknowledged the existence of these continua (as “a balancing act” or “constant calibration”), and offered ways to respond to them. Most spoke in terms of emotional work and group facilitation. Several saw keeping this balance working well as a leadership responsibility; who gets to lead is sometimes driven by financial interest in a transaction-model enterprise. One offered a fine phrasing: “give [participants] enough boundaries so they feel supported but not so much that they feel boxed in”.

Some offered tactical advice, such as “[e]ncourag[ing the] most successful members of working groups” or “thank[ing leading contributors] publicly.” One encouraged participants to think not just of their individual goals, but to link them to the overarching purpose and benefits of the project. Another advised a mentoring strategy that “pair[s] experts with novices”, the former helping the latter understand the nature of the agency/autonomy calibration. Several have published codes of conduct or similar guides (NumFocus; Digital Library Foundation). One respondent recommended a community process of “convening people together who are invested and getting them to talk about what is important to them, and talking about how to prioritize work to solve larger problems…”

Negative responses raised different issues. One reviewed a failed organization and saw its failure to get the balance right as a contributing problem, in that decision-making shifted up to leadership, draining autonomy from participants. On a related note, another group was concerned that if their organization grew over time, and their leadership became centralized, that some participants would not be able to communicate and participate as they would like.
Two other respondents argued the opposite, in favor of tilting the balance towards leadership and away from autonomy. As one put it, “[g]ood will only go so far; you need governance, a way of ensure that people contribute.” They feared a lack of direction would mean the project became “a repository [or] a dumping ground... rather than [a] shared [resource]. Don’t want to be a dumping ground.” (Bamboo) Another saw participation tending towards the long tail, with only a small minority establishing their leadership bona fides by extraordinarily high amounts of work. In this case a strong leadership group was the logical outgrowth of a project working at a very large scale.

**Reputation** In order to better understand how participants related to each other, we asked respondents about the structures they used to reveal and share participants’ reputations. This was based on our understanding that systems allowing one to develop and share reputation can motivate participation and cooperation. Present day examples include games, social media, and badges.

The collaborative projects each offered different reputational structured. For two of the reputation was determined solely by the action of participation. “Repeated exposure to other users through work... You get a sense of who people are through what they do.” For another, face to face presence, include conference presentations, were the leading ways to establish a reputation. A fourth formalized things to a degree by supporting personal web pages that could (but didn’t always, depending on the user) display personal information and data about collaborative work. A fifth mentioned monetary payment as an indicator of reputation, but it was not clear that that information was shared.

Leaders can help grow participants’ reputation by recognizing them or celebrating achievements. This can be tied into the project's arc through time, as when leaders “[a]ppel... to sense of legacy... even if it is only for a short duration.”

There were comments about challenges and failures. One noted a tension caused by a perceived “[m]ismatch between individual reputation systems within systems and the actual systems for measuring activity and performance in the real [i.e., academic] world (tenure and promotion; staff performance eval[uation])”. To succeed projects would have to translate internal reputation measurements into institutional ones. This challenge is compounded by the
multiplicity of academic communities, such as the different cultures of information technology departments, libraries, faculty, and senior administration. Observers of failed projects noted that reputation was not well displayed in those groups. For example, one noted that “[p]articipants weren’t really recognized.”

**Host perspective** We then shifted attention to the institutions hosting participants, asking: how does an institution or corporation allocate human resources to your collective project? Put another way, how do you structure the choice of participation? For example, IBM encourages workers to spend time on Linux. Do participants in your projects view their contribution as an assignment or as a volunteer action? We followed this up with asking about the measurement of value (ROI, hourly work, reputation, sense of common purpose and benefit, professional development, professional/disciplinary service) that participants bring to a project. How is participation in a collective activity justified to upper management within participating institutions and corporations?

Respondents offered numerous ways to make their case to host institutions. Several stressed formal communication with institutional leaders (department or unit heads, deans, vice presidents) that explained and celebrated a participant’s efforts. For one, investing staff time in a multi-institution and national project was a way to learn how to better serve emergent community needs - i.e., what another campus was experiencing at the present might be headed to one’s one school shortly. For another, having an institution’s representative working with a distributed organization served the dual purpose of staff development and accessing greater expertise (the latter echoing the open source software community’s admonition that one should access experts beyond one’s local domain). One collaborative reported that participation largely flew under host’s radar, so there were few communications to those institutions.

Some host institutions found direct benefits in the collaborations, such as when a successful project gave credit, publicity, or, for businesses, business back to the host. Professional development and networking can be seen as similar direct benefits. The host should be able to see short- and long-term benefits, as well as how the project assists the institution, especially on a local level, according to one respondent. Working on important, large-scale issues, such as standards or professional issues, may or may not satisfy a host.
Issues arose with balances between institutions. One respondent saw very uneven participation within a troubled organization, with some host organizations contributing to it at far greater levels than others, and wondered if that led to a vicious cycle of downward contributions. Another raised the topic of hosting, as when one institution could serve as the collaborative’s central node; this could lead to political problems. It is possible, according to one observer, for inter-campus groups to succeed wholly as peer to peer entities without a leading host, especially in early days. One solution to these political challenges is, according to another respondent, the establishment of a strong project leadership.

C) Governance principles cover how a community functioned in terms of norms and degree of centralization.

**Community Norms** How does a distributed organization create and maintain community norms? Establishing and enforcing community norms, especially with respect to fairness, can provide non-legalistic means of encouraging participation.\(^1\)

The methods were as diverse as the values they conveyed. One group shared an ethos of aiming for “high quality” collaborative work. Another saw participants holding a mix of views, some universally held (“free access to documentation and source code; lowering barriers to use”), others subscribed to unevenly (conflicts over the internal importance of financial contributions).

Some discussed and promulgated community norms in an open and sustained way. Another saw norms arising largely offline, when participants met and interacted in person. Two others imported norms from the broader movements to which their projects saw themselves as belonging. A fourth established community governance documents, and incorporated norms therein.

**Regulation and centralization** The next topic explored the balance between centralized organization and decentralized work. We posited that, according to Benkler, self-regulation can be achieved through community development and enforcement of community generated rules.

\(^1\) This topic relates closely to several others, namely enterprise framing and communication, so we have removed some redundancy.
Respondents described related yet distinct approaches. One saw an organization shifting from a conversational relationship between leadership and participants to a more top-down dynamic, which ultimately sapped engagement. In contrast, another relied on participant-staffed committees to accomplish administration, and that succeeded. A third described an ongoing negotiation between participants and leadership, one that continually re-asserted the organization’s values, in order to build and rebuild trust over time and leadership succession. A fourth saw the central leadership having a role in maintaining participant continuity over time, having to take steps to incorporate new members and supporting veterans.

One project offered a more centralized view, starting with fundraising among campus leaders, then using the new finances to build and staff - full time, with professionals - a central office. They deemed having a certain resource pool, centrally held and managed, as essential to the mission’s success.

D) Organizational ethos covers the way participants thought of themselves as members of the organization, including questions of fairness, trust, empathy, and shared values.

**Fairness** We posited that collaborative projects’ participants are more likely to remain engaged and motivated if they perceive the outcomes, intentions, and process to be fair. Do participants’ different motivations lead them to assess others’ participation as fair? We provided an initial example of comparing how people treat volunteer and for-paid work, then followed with this question: is there a tacit agreement, or a social contract that shapes the perception of fairness?

Respondents were unanimous in agreeing that fairness was vital to the success of their respective enterprises. As one put it, “Everyone needs to feel that their contributions matter...everyone [should feel that they are] on an equal playing field.”

A lack of fairness can harm participation. One respondent described a segment of their collaborative that focused on high-status, resource intensive projects, which “le[ft] everyone else [feeling themselves to be] second-class citizens. Visions diverged... Community fell apart.” For another group, simply put, “[c]entralization took down the sense of fairness.”
**Trust** We asked how trust played out in each project, wondering if collaborative work over time deepen participants’ sense of trust with each other. Complementing that, how does the institution build trust? Participants should know one another well enough to develop a sense of trust.

Many responses were versions of answers to previous questions, which we’ve discussed above and below. One answer stood out, a collaborative that believed “[t]rust can grow in a group that works over time.” For them, this became clear when they reached a “milestone: enough trust to write a collaborative grant.”

**Empathy and humanizing one another** To what extent do participants express empathy towards each other? We know that cooperation can be triggered by humanizing the collaborators with whom one would be working. Additionally, providing a way to understand and meet the needs of others is, for many, a core motivation (see above). At a deep level this means humanizing colleagues and collaborators. What helps build empathy among participants?

Respondents agreed, and offered several methods to help participants humanize each other. One group had multi-specialty teams meet together over time, working on projects, which allowed them to see each other as human beings beyond their technical specializations. The same project saw a wave of related interdisciplinary centers start up at the same time, and believed people helping each other through that process deepened their sense of each other.

Another project saw a similar pattern of humanization occurring through team work over time. They had one project group focused thematically on access and inclusivity, which furthered the process of humanization. A different project emphasizes human interaction as a key theme: “Giving voice and opportunity for individuals and groups of individuals to share is important.”

**Shared values and mission** Our final point connected with earlier principles, and asked respondents to what extent do participants have a common set of values and a shared mission? We pursued that with: do you agree that this is important? How did you create this at the start? How do you sustain this vision over time, especially as new people enter the project? How do you see a sense of shared mission enabling collaborative work?
All agreed that shared values were important, and implemented them using the methods described above. One response stands out, comparing a new organization to a business startup. After several iterations and projects, members start to feel a sense of identity, almost organically.

III. Recommendations

We can offer the following recommendations, based on the preceding discussion.

1. DLAx participants should openly discuss the organization’s balance between central regulation and individual contributor’s autonomy. Some form of formal leadership is needed, but can only be constructed through the full participation of the project’s community. The resulting calibration should be codified and promulgated throughout the community.

   It is likely that the leadership’s regulatory role will grow over time, especially as new members need to be brought up to speed, experienced participants recognized, and the project’s scale increases.

2. A policy about the DLAx-host institution relationship needs to be established and publicly shared as soon as possible. This should help build a sense of fairness among participants, while easing potential political tensions among institutions.

3. After an initial period of pilot projects, DLAx should have a sense of scale for the smallest practical work unit. The minimum modularity needs to be identified and discussed throughout the community.

4. Framing should be explicit and supported by participants. Participants should be sounded out as to which model best suits their understanding of the project, and which seems most congenial to their work in a distributed environment. Once the frame is selected, promulgated, and openly recognized, the organization needs to hew to it for at least the medium-term future. The frame is where a sense of shared mission begins to appear.

5. Communication is enormously important. It should follow Benkler’s model of being multimodal, open, and continuous. We also recommend that DLAx as a whole explicitly
commit itself to fine communication practice, and re-commit to that in the future; a communication code or best practices document might be well suited to this. Technologies should be selected for their likely use by participants; surveying participants would help determine this. The resulting communication platform - regardless of specific technologies - should be a welcoming and transparent venue for participants to express themselves, keep up to date, and facilitate the project’s growth. A survey mechanism should be put in place so that the organization as a whole, and especially its directors, can formally check in on attitudes and ideas. An interview mechanism might serve DLAx well, especially in understanding the motivations of new participants.

6. A reputation strategy needs to be deliberately selected. This could be out-sourced to a commonly accepted third party platform or enterprise (Facebook, Google+, PBWorks, etc.) or maintained as part of DLAx. For the latter, each participant could have their own web page on the site.

7. Once framing, communications, and reputation mechanisms are in place, the project should use those mechanisms to help participants best work with each other. The organization needs an explicit commitment to an ethos of fairness, peer humanization, a shared mission, and mutual trust. DLAx can use communications and reputation mechanisms to check the status of those values in play.

Appendix: survey instrument and respondents

Respondents include:

- Digital Library Federation - Bethany Nowviskie, director
- DuraSpace - Debra Kurtz, CEO
- Eduopia- Katherine Skinner, executive director
- Hydra - Tom Cramer, co-founder and steering group member
- NITLE - Chuck Henry, president of the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR)
- Num Focus- Leah Silen, executive director
Survey instrument:

I. **Process**
   These questions concern how the collaborative enterprise is structured.
   
   **A. Communication:** How does communication work in your organization? Communication among participants must be multimodal and continuous, be grounded in some degree of shared culture, and provide ways to share information, troubleshoot, and resolve disagreements. Does this describe your practice?
   
   **B. Framing of enterprise:** Do you frame the project more as a community building activity or as a business? This context should shape how people will enter into the work, inflecting their expectations. Put another way, do participants view your enterprise and their participation in it as based on a co-op paradigm or through a transaction model?
   
   **C. Modularity of tasks:** What is the size of the smallest meaningful task a participant can engage in? Benkler finds that the cost of cooperating can be lower if the tasks can be modularized, allowing for people to contribute meaningfully without a huge expenditure of time. For example, people are more likely to edit and contribute to articles than entire books, as we saw in the difference between Wikipedia and Wikibooks.

II. **Human management Factors**
   These questions explore how a collaborative strives to help people interact productively.
   
   **A. Awareness of motivations:** What are the leading motivations that drive people to work with you, and how do you know? How does this interact with the framing of your enterprise? One can have a thoughtful balance of paid labor alongside volunteer contributions if a participant is aware of the various reasons why someone might be willing to contribute. Motivations can range from compensation, reputation, intellectual challenge, belief in goal, desire to increase skills.
   
   **B. People crave agency and autonomy:** How do you structure the balance between autonomy and responsibility/oversight/accountability? How do you encourage people to participate in a way that respects their agency and autonomy? Providing control over tasks allows contributors to meet their needs for interesting, creative, purposeful, and challenging work, and yet there is specific work that needs doing. How do you find the right balance?
   
   **C. Reputation:** What structures do you use to reveal and share reputation? Systems that allow one to develop and share reputation can motivate participation and cooperation. Examples include games, social media, and badges.
D. **Host perspective:** How does an institution or corporation allocate human resources to your collective project? How do you structure the choice of participation? For example, IBM encourages workers to spend time on Linux. Do participants in your projects view their contribution as an assignment or as a volunteer action? Further: how do you measure the value (ROI, hourly work, reputation, sense of common purpose and benefit, professional development, professional/disciplinary service) that participants bring to your project? How is participation in a collective activity justified to upper management within participating institutions and corporations?

III. **Governance**
These questions address formal aspects of the organization.

A. **Community Norms:** How do you create and maintain community norms? (If needed, specify: nonlegalistic means of encouraging participation) Establishing and enforcing community norms, especially with respect to fairness, can provide non-legalistic means of encouraging participation.

B. **Self regulated:** How does the balance between centralized organization and decentralized work play out in practice? Self-regulation can be achieved through community development and enforcement of community generated rules.

IV. **Organizational Ethos**
Here we delve into the identity of the collaborative, based on participants’ perceptions.

A. **Fairness:** Do participants’ different motivations lead them to assess others’ participation as fair? Participants are more likely to remain engaged and motivated if the outcomes, intentions, and process are fair. For example, compare how people treat volunteer and for-paid work. Is there a tacit agreement, a social contract?

B. **Trust:** How do you see trust playing out in your group? Does collaborative work over time deepen participants’ sense of trust with each other? How does the institution build trust? Participants should know one another well enough to develop a sense of trust. What do you do to help build and maintain trust? Example: informal discussions, f2f meetings.

C. **Empathy and humanizing one another:** To what extent do participants express empathy towards each other? We know that cooperation can be triggered by humanizing the collaborators with whom one would be working. Additionally, providing a way to understand and meet the needs of other is for many a core motivation. At a deep level this means humanizing colleagues and collaborators. What helps build empathy among participants?

D. **Shared values and mission:** To what extent do participants have a common set of values and a shared mission? Do you agree that this is important? How did you create this at the start? How do you sustain this vision over time, especially as new people enter the project? How do you see a sense of shared mission enabling collaborative work?