Community media and Media Literacy – Presentation (thesis)

Compared to the classic media (newspaper, tv, radio) CM adds an aspect to building ML: **the switch from consumer to producer.**

Besides access, media analysis competence and criticizing media it's additional aspect of usage of media and adding the creating of media resp. media products as the 4th column of ML [Dieter Baacke]:

| media criticism | media studies | media usage | media design |

which means on one hand the usage of communication technologies (such as needed to produce radio and audio segments or programmes) and on the other hand the creating of media content in a collective environment. That is how CM differs from the idea of the new media where a single person can create content to publish in the internet, social web etc. This communal experience of media creation and production leads in turn to creating bottom-up organisations with their ethos, rules and statutes based on this collective approach and response to media. With collective checks and balances in place, information dissemination can be checked and verified, while still emanating from a range of grass roots and not statutory sources.

The need for training is obvious: there is a huge range of practice in the CM landscape from informal, mentoring to structured training concepts -> in some cases this a decision made by the people of the community radio station to ether work with mentors and do a step by step learning by doing but or if they work with institutional trainings - but usually it's because of the lack of resources if there is no regular media training at the stations. Even that's why networking is very important to spread knowledge, competences and resources.

What's that for? Generally: To empower people to use media following their own interests but for an audience.

This working group is asking for the link between ML and critical thinking of citizens. I would say of course there is! From my experiences of coordinating the daily actual programme of Radio Corax I can say, no one who was working in the editorial staff of this department – as volunteer or internship - went off without a new perspective of the media work and with an idea how to contribute to societal processes through communication. And this what's it all about if we talk about the training and the switch from consumer to producer – it's the need to express ideas, to raise questions and to find and frame a stance to take part in the public discourse – and to reach the audience.

The accountability of what is much more relevant with community media, where people are named and are accountable for what they say. There are advantages of being anonymous, especially in non-democratic states, but in western democracies these advantages are far out-weighted by named and identified people having their say. Community media makes people accountable and is better on areas like balance and bias and it also encourages fair-comment rather than the nameless sources of rants and gossip, which can happen on social media.

Not only creating and producing media could change the points of view of producers and audience. Media situations are creating communication and through that potentially change conditions:

Conclusion: ML is long time seen as a competence to use media and to adopt them to be a competent consumer. ML is one of the democratic competences or one could say democracy literacy and so CM is activating and empowering people through teaching them how media works and how to use it. For this to happen non-commercial and volunteer based community media has to be recognized and supported by law and with resources in order to guarantee a sustainable existence and support the work of high quality media literacy training.