

### **Section 3: Leading Sub-Research Themes/Sub-projects**

#### **3a) *'Front stage' and 'backstage' managerial and emotional labour in a comparative international research project***

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The aim of this chapter is to examine some of the issues involved in leading an international sub-project which engaged in comparative qualitative research across several countries in Europe, and to draw some lessons from that experience for future project management. Whilst building on insights from previous scholarship about collaborative research (e.g., Priest et al. 2007; Kuhn and Remøe 2005a; O'Connor et al. 2003; Bournois 1998), it seeks to centre relations between the structured dimensions of a large research project, the research as a process, and the researchers working on the project. The chapter, which considers both expected and unexpected management issues, is organised along the themes of managing demands, opportunities, and constraints and risks. The discussion focuses on different types of project demands, the various types of actors that sub-project leaders have to engage with, expectations about independence and dependency/control in academic work, and various constraints and risks related to planning, time-management, personnel and resources, language skills, ethical issues, and research quality – all crucial topics in leading international sub-projects. The availability and realisation of opportunities, including academic freedom, career progression and prestige, are also considered.

The chapter seeks to highlight tensions and challenges related to managing known demands and expectations versus contingencies and unexpected events. It also refers to particular challenges related to comparative research. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of backstage (Goffman 1959) managerial and emotional labour (Hochschild 1983), which is still a relatively neglected issue in scholarly literature on management in the academy (see, however, Isenbarger and Zembylas 2006; Ogbonna and Harris 2004; Bellas 1999). Research managers engage in emotional labour not only to display socially expected and acceptable feelings (Hochschild 1983), but also to process and negotiate their own feelings and reactions in relation to colleagues, organisational processes, and institutional power structures. The chapter begins with a section on how project management success and failure is talked about. It is rooted in the author's own experience<sup>1</sup> as project leader of a work package within a large project funded by the European Commission (EC). It is especially relevant to Social Science and Humanities researchers who plan to embark upon comparative research collaborations, whilst also speaking to those who are more experienced in managing collaborative projects.

### **‘Control-framing’: front stage successes versus backstage challenges and possible inadequacy or failure**

When I was asked to contribute to this volume with a chapter on leading a sub-project within a large international research project, I was both pleased and apprehensive. Pleased, because I thought I might have something to say due to my experience, and apprehensive, because I felt obliged to talk about my experience as a work package leader of a collaborative, comparative

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<sup>1</sup> For feminist discussions of the links between experience and knowledge-claims, see Harding 1991; Collins 1990; Smith 1987.

research project spanning several European nations and researchers as consisting of hard work, enjoyment and collective achievement, mixed with disappointment, ethical concerns, and unexpected challenges. While these issues may be addressed in academic terms which easily objectify (and therefore create distance to) projects, processes and researchers, they are also deeply connected with interpersonal relationships, emotions, and subjective experience. During a large research project such as the one in which I participated, it is a requirement from the funder, and therefore an imperative for the researchers, to establish and report at regular intervals on milestones, deadlines, outputs and achievements which provide outward evidence of success. Such evidence, produced for an external audience, generally focuses on positive elements. In a sense the evidence may be ‘touched up’, in that any problems and challenges that may have occurred are likely to be treated as ‘internal problems’ particular to the project and therefore dealt with ‘backstage’ (Goffman 1959), i.e., they are not shared with the external audience. However, if the meeting of deadlines, or the delivery of milestones or outputs, are at stake, internal problems may have to be addressed in intermittent reports to funders. If so, the project leader might decide it ‘looks best’ if they are framed<sup>2</sup> as contained and isolated problems that are being dealt with via specific measures that have or will be taken to rectify a problematic situation or issue. Such problems are then talked about in a ‘detached’ academic style, designed to indicate the project leader’s control of the situation and to avoid revealing all the difficult individual, interpersonal and organisational aspects of problems that occur over the duration of a long-term, collaborative project. This type of ‘control framing’ is also likely to conform to expectations held by the funder, who has legitimate expectations that problems will be dealt with and solved in ways which do not compromise or diminish the overall scientific and socio-economic value of the project. In turn, this type of role expectation and role performance

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<sup>2</sup> For the notion of ‘framing’, see Benford and Snow 2000.

effectively hides the emotional and managerial labour that is invested in solving problems that occur due to formal project constraints linked to financial resources and reporting deadlines, as well as to other project constraints including individual characteristics, interpersonal relations and organisational structures.

EC-funded collaborative research projects in the social sciences have generally been organised according to a model of work packages, or sub-projects, which are led by work package leaders. The overall projects, consisting of several work packages, are led and coordinated by a leadership of scientific managers and sometimes in addition a research coordinator. Despite their central role in delivering knowledge to the European Union, relatively little has been written to date about how work packages function and the challenges they face. A pioneering work in this regard is *Building the European Research Area: Socio-Economic Research in Practice*, edited by Kuhn and Remøe (2005a), which addresses issues such as European added value, the European dimension of projects, transnationality, the role of English as lingua franca, interdisciplinarity, and policy relevance (Kuhn and Remøe 2005a). Kuhn and Remøe also contributed to their own volume with a chapter on 'Challenges for European Socio-economic Research' which discusses the importance of project design, project performance, and documentation and dissemination of project outcomes (Kuhn and Remøe 2005b). According to Kuhn and Remøe (2005b: 271), the work package format is frequently complained about and work packages 'are considered to be responsible for all kinds of problems'. Much of the problem is, according to Kuhn and Remøe, due to the establishment of work packages very early on in a project (in fact, during the research funding application stage), and challenges usually arise in relation to communication, research management, comparative research methods, and documentation and dissemination of research outcomes (ibid.). In short, problems occur due to insufficient planning as well as to the

(inflexible) structure of work packages. While some problems may thus be related to the specific organisation of EC-funded projects, most challenges are, however, likely to apply to a wider range of international research collaborations. Moreover, although improved planning at the initial stages may alleviate some problems that may be expected, identifiable and manageable, a range of unforeseen and unexpected challenges are also likely to arise during the course of a long-term collaborative, international research project. The existing literature on socio-economic European research identifies expected problems as related to project communication, research management and comparative methods (e.g., Kuhn and Remøe 2005b), but there is less focus on unexpected problems that may arise during the research process and which may function as either opportunities or threats to the project as a whole, to project leaders, or to individual researchers. This chapter therefore seeks to illustrate and discuss the importance of managing both expected and unexpected events in sub-projects, and it situates the management of tasks both in the front region or front stage (externally visible) and in the back region or backstage (internal; hidden from the outside) (Goffman 1959).

As stated earlier, the chapter is based on my own experience as a work package leader within a large, international, collaborative, comparative research project. As such, the discussion is written from a personal, particular standpoint, subjectively colored and informed by my own 'situatedness' – that of project leader, academic, feminist, colleague and individual. I want to explicitly recognize that the ways in which I write about and interpret the events and processes described herein may not be shared by others involved in the same events and processes. I also want to acknowledge my own shortcomings as project leader; in particular, my managerial style of decision-making through discussion and consensus-building, which may have stood in the way of more efficient, authority-based decision-making. My intention in writing this chapter is,

however, to share my experiences with you (the reader) as they may be useful for current or future project management. The remainder of the chapter is divided into three main sections: managing demands, managing opportunities, and managing constraints and risks.

### **Managing demands: from front stage expectations to backstage realities**

This section focuses on managing demands, and provides an overview and discussion of different types of actors and the demands they pose to the management of work packages or sub-projects. The four-year research project in which I was involved was funded by the European Commission's 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme. Each work package within the project was required to establish its own aims and objectives, research methods, milestones and deadlines, and expected research outputs ('deliverables' in EC jargon) and deadlines for these. Each research activity had to be linked to one or more specific months in the 48-month calendar of the project. Although each work package had been detailed to some extent during the application stage to secure funding, a significant amount of work had to be done on detailing work package content after the funding had been allocated. Although we were bound by what became referred to as the 'project Bible' (the project document on the basis of which funding had been given by the EC), we also had considerable leeway in designing the details of our planned work package research as this had not been fully specified in the 'project Bible'. Already at the outset of our research, we had to deal with the constraints produced during the application stage, including the amount of funding allocated to each work package and the main research focus and content of each work package. However, opportunities also arose because funding had been awarded to work packages that had yet to work out the details of their research. At times this could mean work packages

were able to exceed the promised research and deliver more, while at other times they could fine-tune and adjust, or even lower, the external and internal expectations as to what and how much research was to be delivered.

The EC expected individual work package and full project reports every twelve months, which had to include documentation of the research progress so far, as well as detailed plans for the subsequent twelve months of research. These reporting requirements are not specific to the EC - virtually all research funders have versions of these. (One of the most useful documents during the entire project period was a simple calendar which detailed project months against calendar months. The project had started in February 2007 (month 1), and project month numbers therefore did not coincide with calendar months). If any changes were to be made that affected previously stated deliverables or deadlines, the work package leader was expected to write up a rationale for the change in a way which demonstrated that the overall quality of the project and its promised deliverables would not be negatively affected. In 'my' project, one such delay occurred when a researcher was unable to take up her post at the planned time due to visa issues, something which I had no control over. Other delays occurred due to the heavy workloads of the main researchers in the work package, who were also substantially involved in non-project related work such as institutional management, administration and teaching, and even other large research projects which competed for their time.

The issue of *what* to deliver to the EC varied considerably across work packages in the overall project. While some work packages delivered lengthy individual country reports as well as comparative reports, other projects delivered fewer and shorter reports, perhaps in combination with other types of research output such as conference papers and journal articles. We spent considerable time and effort on writing substantial research reports which were of much value

for the subsequent writing of books, book chapters and journal articles – but these more ‘academic outcomes’ tended to be published after the project as such was completed. Lengthy research reports may, at the same time, be less useful in furthering academic careers than journal articles, so the time spent on writing them should be weighed against potential benefit. The value placed on such reports by universities or other research institutions tends to be low. In ‘my’ work package we thought that the EC might ‘like’ to receive long research reports which gave evidence of our extensive research and knowledge production, but it is also worth asking who read all these reports, perhaps apart from our EC project officer and the external reviewers of the overall project. In hindsight, it would have been useful to receive clearer guidelines on the type of deliverables preferred by the funder, and to consider developing overall project-specific guidelines for the format, size and content of outputs expected from all the work packages (rather than each work package making these decisions in isolation, which led to significant differences in the types and extent of outputs delivered).

Internal communication among ‘my’ work package researchers was at times challenging, with researchers working and/or living in three different ECropean countries, all with their own work and family obligations. E-mail was the most important tool of communication, but it was also vital for the project that researchers were able to talk to each other in person via telephone meetings or at in-person project meetings. Due to the work and personal commitments each of us had in our own countries, including teaching duties and child care, as well as because of budgetary issues, it was difficult to arrange frequent in-person meetings where we could all come together and focus solely on the project. It also did not help that countries have different school holidays. It therefore became important to arrange work package meetings during the larger, yearly project meetings held in various cities throughout Europe. The overall project was also



able to support work package researchers with some funding to cover child care costs during project activities. This was especially helpful during periods of fieldwork when a researcher based in one country had to travel to another country to conduct research interviews.

As a work package or project leader, you have to deal with a number of different actors and stakeholders in addition to the overall project and work package researchers. Personally, I did not have any direct contact with the EC project officer in Brussels, as this was the responsibility of the main project coordinator who also forwarded overall project and work package reports to the EC. However, the writing up of regular work package reports, in addition to project deliverables, was a substantial task which involved both academic and administrative skills. Presenting the work package progress in a professional manner, and demonstrating the success of the work package project over the course of its duration, became one of the main activities. As such, working to 'please the funder' became an important part of my own as well as of the collective mindset in the work package and in the overall project, not least because the EC could threaten to withhold funding for the next twelve-month period if our performance was found to be unsatisfactory.

The EC itself also appointed external reviewers who would comment on progress and achievement during the project and after, and they would also evaluate the project according to pre-set categories:

- 'Good to excellent project (The project has fully achieved its objectives and technical goals for the period and has even exceeded expectations)'
- 'Acceptable project (The project has achieved most of its objectives and technical goals for the period with relatively minor deviations)'

- ‘Unsatisfactory project (The project has failed to achieve critical objectives and/or is not at all on schedule)’<sup>3</sup>

As a collective of research managers and researchers, we were concerned with who the EC would appoint as external reviewer experts: would they behave as critical friends and offer constructive and useful feedback, or would they take a less constructive role? In addition to commenting on the project as a whole, the reviewers also gave evaluative comments on each work package. Each external review report we received was scrutinised for positive and negative comments. To work package leaders it seemed that a certain pattern emerged, where one or two work packages would receive rather negative comments one year, with more positive comments being given the following year. In all, each work package can be said to have been the ‘victim’ of negative comments at least once during the project. At these times, the overall scientific management, including the scientific directors and the steering committee, was an important source of support for the work packages that received the more critical comments. More than once, it was noted that the external reviewers had based their negative or critical comments on either misunderstandings or a lack of information, and at times it was felt that the reviewers had singled out particular work packages in an unfair way. Nonetheless, the external reviews were important to us in many ways, including our standing vis-à-vis the EC as our funder, our project officer in Brussels, the internal respect awarded to each work package leader and, not least, our academic reputation in the outside world. We all breathed a sigh of relief when the final external review awarded us the ‘Good to excellent project’ status. In turn, we would be able to use this mark of quality in future funding applications.

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted from the official template for *Review Report of FP6 Projects*.

The external advisory board, appointed by the project itself, provided yet another source of feedback. Although their comments were at times useful, they were of much less significance than those of the EC-appointed external reviewers. Their views would be imparted to the project officer in Brussels, but they did not have a formal role that would impact on our project funding. Their opinions mattered, however, as they would form views about the significance and quality of our project and therefore also impact on our external academic reputation. The actual role of the advisory board was probably equally unclear to the project researchers as to the advisory board members, and it could perhaps be argued that the external advisory board remained an under-valued and under-used resource (see Griffin in this volume for further discussion of this issue).

So far I have only briefly mentioned the support provided by the overall project's scientific directors and the steering committee to work package leaders and researchers. However, in a large project such as this, spanning sixteen partner institutions and more than forty researchers from many European countries, it is crucial that the top leadership has considerable academic and managerial expertise and that they place value not only on their own project or work package contributions, but also on the success of the project as a whole. In the project in which I worked, the directors worked hard at, and succeeded in, providing an open and collegial atmosphere that was conducive to discussing problems at work package level. There was a constant focus on solving problems in the best way possible, with the necessary support given to work package leaders. As work package leader, I was also member of the scientific steering committee of the project, and thus participated in some of the difficult discussions that were held about the quality and timeliness of project outcomes and about challenging interpersonal relationships that at times threatened to undermine progress. Advice and interventions included go-betweens who sought

to negotiate differences when called for. The main burden for the overall project in this respect was, however, put on the scientific directors who were responsible for the overall and daily running of the project.

As work package leader, I was responsible for leading a team of researchers located in three different countries, consisting of a mixture of experienced late and mid-career researchers, researchers who had recently completed their doctoral degrees, and doctoral degree students (with a core team of six researchers providing major input to the project at various stages, and additional researchers performing more specific and limited tasks). As mentioned before, a significant amount of planning of the various work package project stages and parts was done after the EC had allocated the funding to the overall project. The core team of work package researchers was therefore able to discuss and influence the research process, including the planning of fieldwork and design of interview guides, and the structure and content of research reports. Members of the research team could thus have more ownership of the work package, which had a positive influence on their motivation and engagement with the project. As work package leader I had a major role in all project stages and parts, including planning, design, data collection, analysis and report writing within the work package, as well as the planning, administration and reporting of project progress to the overall project coordinator (who in turn passed this on to our project officer in Brussels). In terms of fieldwork, analysis and reporting, I was the main person responsible for one of the three countries in our study, as well as for the cross-country comparisons undertaken after our individual country studies. These combined responsibilities gave me a positive sense of influence, authority, control and ownership, but they were also burdensome to carry over a contracted four-year project period. The overall success of the project depended not only on my effort, but that of the project team members. Colleagues in

my work package team were responsible for the fieldwork, analysis and reporting from the two other countries in our study. Research in one of these countries, where colleagues lived and worked on a permanent basis, went relatively smoothly, while research in the second one, in which none of us lived and worked permanently, was fraught with more difficulties. Some of the challenges I experienced in relation to managing researchers are addressed in the section below on managing constraints and risks.

Comparative research across several nation-states is in itself very demanding, and can put considerable strain on an international team of researchers. Nation-states differ along historical-cultural, socio-economic and political dimensions which all have an impact on contemporary social-scientific analysis. An ideal situation might be for a cross-national, comparative project team to include scholars who are experts on the relevant nations, research topics and academic fields. Unless such experts have been recruited at the planning stage of a project, however, it may be difficult to include them later as they may not be available for a long-term commitment on an EC-funded project. Importantly, an international project also provides younger scholars with the opportunity to become precisely such experts. If younger scholars are willing and able to take on the task, they can provide an excellent solution to the problem of not having already established national experts on board. However, the many challenges involved in the research process itself may also pose obstacles to their success in developing expert knowledge and status, perhaps especially when they are working within national and cultural contexts with which they may be unfamiliar. It takes time to develop knowledge about state, regional and local practices which may influence one's research topic in intricate, and not immediately obvious, ways. For example, funding streams available to civil society organisations may be very complex and difficult to comprehend for outsiders.

Until now, this section has dealt with the different types of actors and stakeholders that work package leaders have to either manage and/or work with, including work package team researchers, the wider project's scientific leadership and the research coordinator, the advisory board, the funding agency, and external expert reviewers appointed by the funder. The work package leader also has to deal with her own institution, including the institutional research office and finance office (as well as external auditors), her departmental finance officer and administrators who may offer budgetary and secretarial support, the head of department and other colleagues. The availability of institutional resources can be crucial to the success of a large international research project; in particular, 'my' work package benefited tremendously from the support of local financial and administrative staff in the department where I work. Keeping track of and reporting expenditure to the funder are complex tasks which are best done by designated finance staff rather than by academics. The availability of local administrative staff to support the project in various ways is a further advantage, in particular in the production of professionally formatted reports to external audiences such as the funding agency, the scholarly community, and non-academic end-users. Project partners who do not have such support can find the sheer administrative burden of an international project too daunting and/or may simply be incapable of delivering what is required, for instance because they find it impossible to gain access to the person who is supposed to provide an important signature.

As the European Commission, in common with many research funders now, expects research to be disseminated to both academic and non-academic audiences, the work package leader also has to engage in disseminating research outcomes to different types of end-users. In front of any audience it is perhaps most important not to succumb to using EC jargon when presenting

research findings, including terms such as work package, milestones, deliverables, and 'end-users'. Such terms are best left to internal, administrative and managerial usage.

Last, but not least, work package leaders and researchers have to relate to research participants. Personal rapport with participants is of utmost importance in qualitative research which may include participant observation and interviews, and obtaining trust is a crucial aspect of establishing such rapport. That a project is funded by the EC may find different resonance with different types of research participants, depending on their own experiences and political convictions. In two of our country contexts, we also found that being a foreigner and an outsider to the phenomenon we were studying, was helpful in making interviewees talk rather openly about conflicts, tensions and disagreements they had experienced. Displaying agreement with feminist identities and politics, from an academic and/or activist perspective, was also a useful researcher's tool to establish rapport.

As with any research, it is of crucial importance to follow ethical guidelines established by the social-scientific community, including the provision of information sheets, consent forms, protection of participants' anonymity, and data protection procedures. Moreover, it is good practice to inform research participants about any research findings when they become publicly available, and how they can be accessed. Problems may arise in collaborative projects where research communities in different countries vary in the extent to which they have articulated ethical guidelines for social-scientific research. Moreover, members of the public who are recruited as research participants may be unfamiliar with formal ethical procedures such as consent forms, which may be experienced as intrusive rather than as protective measures. The European Commission has recently developed more detailed ethical guidelines for research

which may lead to greater congruence in ethical practices among European researchers (see Dench, Iphofen and Huws 2004; Pauwels 2007; European Commission 2010).<sup>4</sup>

### **Managing opportunities**

The position as work package leader carries with it a number of opportunities to enhance one's own academic career, leadership experience, interpersonal and communication skills, as well as professional and personal networks. Working with experienced colleagues over a period of several years can potentially enrich one's interdisciplinary and subject-specific knowledge, and provide one with new and valuable theoretical perspectives and empirical knowledge that may further one's research career and be useful in one's own teaching. The work package team of researchers can similarly enhance their academic careers through their involvement in the project. The potential academic freedom provided by large, collaborative projects is also of significant value when such freedom is under threat by increasing pressure on researchers from public and private funding agencies who wish to steer, if not control, the content, output and dissemination of the projects they fund.

Participation in international, comparative projects is particularly useful to enhance one's intellectual capital (academic knowledge) as well as one's social capital (scholarly and personal networks across different countries), and may lead to involvement in future collaborative projects. It builds experience in project management and provides transferable skills that may be used in future projects and/or in institutional management roles. Being part of an international collaborative project which receives overall good reviews also adds to one's own academic

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<sup>4</sup> See also the establishment of EUREC – the European Network of Research Ethics Committees, at <http://www.Eurecnet.org/index.html> [accessed 25 October 2012].



prestige and career progression. If, on the other hand, one is part of a project which does not receive overall good reviews, one needs a strategy to minimize the damage. For instance, it may be important to highlight the specific work package or parts of the project in which one took part, if these received individual reviews which exceed those of the entire project.

There is also the sheer intellectual pleasure to be had from participating in research projects. Importantly, research project funding provides one with the opportunity to satisfy a deep-seated yearning for knowledge about issues one cares for. Equally enjoyable are the discussions amongst colleagues which lead to new and profound scholarly insights, and the imparting of research findings that find resonance with attentive and keen audiences. The publication of journal articles and books are also sources of pride and pleasure, as is being invited by colleagues to participate in new international projects.

### **Managing constraints and risks**

Budget, personnel and time are three major factors in research projects that provide both opportunities and constraints. Comparative, international research is expensive, such as when data production and collection consists of time-consuming and labour-intensive, qualitative fieldwork. Moreover, financial and timing limitations, as well as the willingness and capacity of researchers to undertake fieldwork in different countries, may make it difficult to hire the ideal researcher for one's project.

An important feature of the work package I led was that several of the researchers were located in a university-based research centre where they had to charge their working hours against specific projects, while other researchers on the work package were located in a university-based

research centre which did not require them to account for or charge a particular number of hours against specific projects. At the early stages of the project, I was working in a self-funded, university-based research centre which depended entirely on external funding. An opportunity came along, however, to move side-ways within my institution to a position that combined research and teaching. In this new position, which was university-funded, I could work on the project as many hours as I wanted without charging them to the project, provided I also performed my departmental teaching and administrative duties. This proved to be a significant move in many ways, not least because my time was dissociated from direct project spending and the remaining funding allocated to the research centre could then be used to support researchers that remained in the centre and continued to work under rather challenging conditions. As researchers who work in self-funded research centres must charge high hourly rates, their time management is very challenging and it is also more difficult to deal with unexpected events that may delay the reaching of milestones and delivery of project outcomes. As work package leader, it is therefore important to take the institutional affiliation of researchers into account not only during a project, but also at the planning stage when as co-applicant you have a say in determining the size of funding sought.

A valuable lesson I learned (well-known to those who routinely recruit personnel) is that previous academic qualifications, other formal skills and research experience (on paper 'the perfect candidate') do not necessarily translate into an individual's suitability and capability to perform a particular research job. In this instance, the researcher was also recruited because it was desirable from the viewpoint of the overall research organisation, as well as because it solved a practical problem (the need for a researcher with a specific language proficiency). While paper qualifications indicated that I had secured the participation of a researcher capable

of working independently but under supervision, meeting deadlines and writing good-quality reports, the hiring of the wrong individual in this instance provided me with several years of worry, some sleepless nights, and emotional turmoil. Indeed, writing about this experience still invokes bad memories of extra work and emotions of hurt and anger (see Griffin 2013 for an insightful discussion of the question of blame in collaborative research). As work package leader, I tried to solve the problems through repeatedly offering extended deadlines, combined with increasingly detailed supervision and support, but these strategies proved insufficient as tools to secure the delivery of timely, good-quality research reports. On reflection, this proved to be the most challenging managerial task I had ever undertaken. On the one hand, as work package leader I wanted to be supportive and appreciative of the effort that was being put in and also encourage and motivate further work, while on the other hand it seemed preferable to terminate the researcher's participation in the research process as that might prove more beneficial for the project. In the end, it became possible to limit the participation of the researcher to a specific part of the work package, thus creating the opportunity to hire a replacement who could work on subsequent parts.

As work package leader, I also took on significant responsibilities for analysing and writing up research findings from that particular part of the project. Other researchers on the work package were fully capable of independent and collaborative academic work and delivered good-quality research on time. The fact that I could rely on them to do the job they were responsible for provided a much needed balance to the difficulties I was dealing with elsewhere. In our working lives, we do not simply perform our designated tasks, but involve ourselves in interpersonal relations with individuals who are colleagues and who may become friends. When tasks run smoothly, such collegial friendship is unthreatened, but when academic reputations are at stake

and tasks are being ignored, side-lined, or poorly performed, friendships may suffer and the extent of one's emotional labour required increases. In such situations, it is especially useful to seek advice from more experienced colleagues who can provide much needed support for one's role as research manager.

Due to this experience, I was keen to ensure that our new researcher would not only possess the necessary qualifications and experience to perform the research, but also that she or he would be able to work as part of the research team and deliver the necessary milestones and outcomes. A lot of emphasis was placed on securing personal recommendations from several academic sources for a highly competent and capable researcher who could be relied on. Although the recruitment was successful in this sense, however, events that were external to our project put severe limitations on the researcher's capacity (not capability) to deliver the agreed research. At the time of recruitment, the researcher gave the impression that she would be available to work twenty hours per week on the project. Because she also took on another job, which turned out to be extremely demanding and time-consuming, she was actually unable to work on the project as much as initially agreed. Albeit a less frustrating and much less emotionally demanding experience, it was challenging to yet again have to live through several months of uncertainty about whether the work package would be able to deliver its agreed milestones and deliverables to the EC on time. Adjustments to the number of project hours worked and extended internal deadlines were some of the strategies used, and these were combined with continued faith in the researcher's willingness and capability to eventually deliver.

Another valuable lesson learned through these challenges was that as work package leader, it is crucial to have access to all the data collected by the various researchers on one's team. If any concerns are raised about the quality of the data collected, about their analysis, or about the

writing up and reporting of research findings, it is necessary that all password-protected data files are located on data storing facilities that you have access to. Furthermore, the data must be in a language accessible to you as project leader. Therefore, if data are to be collected in languages you are not proficient in, it is important to factor translation costs into the planning and budgeting of the project. For me, this was a lesson learned in hindsight, which meant that we had to apply for funding for translation costs when the project was already well under way. Such funding was secured from two of the institutions that employed us as researchers. Had we not been successful in obtaining additional, external funding for the translation costs, we would have had to ask huge favours from colleagues working within the wider project who were proficient in the foreign language, or from family members or friends.

Another risk event that occurred unexpectedly was related to the matter of ethical standards in scholarly research. A team-member had written parts of a work package report chapter as well as another project-related output which had been submitted to an institutional repository. Upon reading some of the original sources, I became aware that insufficient care had been taken to acknowledge these sources in the writing of the outputs. I saw this as a potential threat to the work package's ethical integrity, and also to my own professional ethical integrity and reputation. I therefore deemed it necessary to change the insufficient referencing used in the report, and to require a re-write of the project-related output. The entire process was challenging to manage, both at a professional and at a personal level, as several colleagues at different institutions were involved who had close academic and personal relations. It became necessary to seek professional advice from senior, more experienced colleagues at my own institution, and a great deal of emotional labour also went into handling this difficult situation. I felt it absolutely necessary to be true to ethical principles established by the scholarly community, and to ensure

that my own credibility and reputation as a researcher could not potentially be undermined, either directly or indirectly. Moreover, I felt that the researcher in question, although junior in relation to me as work package leader, should take responsibility for re-writing the problematic sections in her work, and that this would, over time, also be beneficial to her own academic practice and standing. At the same time, my own regard for her as a researcher and as an individual continued to be one of trust and high regard because she was a highly conscientious and hard-working individual, and I did not think her omission was intentional. My actions risked undermining any trust and regard she might have had for me, but I felt I had to jeopardise this for what I saw as the greater good. Senior colleagues at another institution were also involved and sought, in my view, to protect the researcher by suggesting that the offence was minor and could be dealt with more informally. It is certainly possible for academics to professionally disagree on such matters. However, it is also likely that there are cross-cultural differences between countries in Europe in terms of how serious referencing omissions are viewed, and thus whether they should be dealt with as plagiarism offences or not. This is an area that requires greater scrutiny as well as guidance at European level. A research project focusing on the prevention of plagiarism by students ('Impact of Policies for Plagiarism on Higher Education Across Europe'), is currently (2010-13) supported by funding from the European Commission.<sup>5</sup> Plagiarism by researchers, however, also needs to be addressed at both European and nation-state levels. On a personal note, I still find it difficult to write about this particular experience; my professional and emotional labour has thus continued beyond the lifetime of the funded project. Such longer-lasting consequences remain unarticulated in relevant research.

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<sup>5</sup> See <http://ippheae.eu/> [accessed 25 October 2012].

## **Conclusion**

The ideal situation to be in when managing any research project is to have engaged in extensive and detailed planning before any budget is proposed and negotiated and before the research proposal is finalised; to exert strong academic and managerial leadership; to employ highly engaged, enthusiastic, reliable and productive research staff; to be able to draw on administrative support as well as support from finance officers; to be able to produce meaningful, influential and valued output; and, finally, to have a good time! In reality, research projects are often managed and conducted under significantly less than such ideal conditions. The structures within which research takes place may at times be sufficiently flexible to allow for negotiations and deviations from original plans, but structures may also be highly inflexible and less open to unexpected changes. In particular, constraints regarding human and financial resources and time, as well as demands from funders and other stakeholders and actors, make it important for project leaders to be able to manage and negotiate both expected and unexpected processes and events. The academic and personal rewards at stake are high in leading international, collaborative research projects, and both known and unknown constraints and risks may jeopardise the realisation of such rewards. In this chapter I have discussed examples of constraints and risks related to planning, time-management and deadlines, human and financial resources, language proficiency, academic independence and supervision, research quality, and ethical concerns. In reports to funders, such constraints and risks may either be hidden or described within a frame of 'control' intended to demonstrate the (continued) success of a project. I have argued that research project managers must perform 'front stage' managerial and emotional labour which conforms to external expectations, whilst also performing 'backstage' or internal managerial and emotional labour which is often invisible to the outside world and requires a great deal of effort.

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