Han over

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Abstract.

In 2016 a society's educational project is handed over from its initiator to a new committee.
The society presents itself being a truly international organisation consisting of a network of loosely bound volunteers. It is aiming to promote the highest levels of knowledge, research, education and clinical practice in its branch. Currently it is counting over twelve hundred members from many countries. The annual meetings are attended by over 3,000 delegates gathering to network and to share scientific and educational developments.
The project is an online learning environment developed to offer global free of charge branch related expert education.

In a ten-year time span the content of the online learning environment ads up to over one hundred chapters and cases, with over one hundred more currently in progress. The initiator and chief editor of the learning environment decides to handover the project. The society's council appoints a new committee.

During this action research, all participants have contributed to explore answering the research question how to change the way of organising to shift the focus from technical and content development to continuity and global implementation of the project in given context.
It can be concluded, these committee members first need empowerment to organise themselves before being able to shift focus.

Therefore, a narrative depicts empowerment; it is one out of many possible scenarios, offering a fictional event for having a discussion.

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Preface and acknowledgement.

Handover
the giving of control of or responsibility for something to someone else
(Cambridge dictionary; http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/handover)

When my client plans handing over responsibility for an educational project to a new committee I wonder if I can still do a master thesis research in the organisation I have been working for in the past seven years. I can.

Working with people in a dynamic world is what I like most. Although it is not an obvious choice to attend the course Part-time Master Business Administration at the Rotterdam School of Management (RSM) from the perspective of my profession. My roots lie in the creative branch where I have been working as a freelance artist and filmmaker for over fifteen years. When crisis sets in around 2009, this branch is hit hard. A lot of people I have worked with disappear from the stage.
Time for some serious change I thought.

The learning curve at RSM is steep; in the second semester, I start to feel a bit more at ease. Climbing Table Mountain during the International Project in Cape Town, South Africa is a metaphorical peak. My brain feels packed with new connections. Due to personal circumstances, I decide to pause a year. My husband advises me to frame my grades and look at them every day as to remind me to finish what I have started. Splendid idea!

During this year, I assist my client in preparing the handover. The new committee starts exactly when I enter the third semester at RSM which enabled us to learn from each other from the start. I would like to address deepest acknowledgement to all committee members for their participation in this research; to Ton Roodink, tutor and coach, for teaching me so many things and the way he does that, I will miss drinking his cappuccino; to Lucas Meijs, co-reader, for his inspiration; to my peers Iris and Remco for all encouragement and friendship; to my family and friends, for their love while putting up with missing a fair deal of quality time due to my busy schedule; and last but not least to my beloved husband, for his absolute support in any way.

It has been a pleasure and a gift to make this journey.
Enjoy reading what I brought back from it.

Conny van Wijngaard – de Vugt

Happy New Year.

In January two thousand and sixteen I am carbon copied in an e-mail that Simon received from Patrick, wishing him and his family a very happy New Year and thanking him for raising all the important points related to handing over the responsibility of coordinating the society's on-line learning environment.
Simon has developed this tool for students, fellows and experts in the society's specific medical field of expertise.
Patrick is secretary general of the society. He is a male of average length, looks to me somewhere in his late fifties occupied as a medical expert and professor with various responsibilities in one of the largest hospitals in the United Kingdom.
The society presents itself being a truly international organisation consisting of a network of loosely bound volunteers. It is aiming to promote the highest levels of knowledge, research, education and clinical practice in its branch. Currently it is counting over twelve hundred members from many countries. The annual meetings are attended by over 3,000 delegates gathering to network and to share scientific and educational developments.
I am carbon copied in this message, because I am related to this project as a freelance Jack-of-all-trades kind of person working closely with Simon.

A brief history on developing this online learning tool.
Simon is in his early seventies, has an engaging personality and a slim somewhat statuesque figure of above-average length. He is a medical expert and professor emeritus living in one of the largest cities in the Netherlands, and an active member of the society since end seventies.
In the mid-nineties, he and colleagues at the Medical Faculty had developed an interactive CD rom consisting of theoretical background and case studies based on self-assessment for students. During the creation process, it appeared that involvement of a pharmaceutical company as a sponsor and privacy regulations concerning the images used let to distribution of the CD rom in a rather limited circuit.
His idea to create a global accessible and free of charge online learning environment originated from experiencing limitations regarding distribution and updating of a CD rom combined with technical developments that internet applications had gone through in the meantime.
Therefore, when the CD rom required an update in two thousand and six, it seemed only logical that this multimedia project was transferred into a web based learning environment with the potential to reach out on a global scale.

To do so, he brought his idea to the society which offered the ambition and a growing network. The development of the online learning environment started as a joint project financed by the hospital and the society to be taken over by the latter.
In a ten-year time span the content of the online learning environment added up to over one hundred chapters and cases, with over one hundred more currently in progress. And although still very committed and highly motivated Simon felt it was time to step down and make room for a younger generation to engage in this project.

At the annual meeting 2015, we present our concept business plan subtitled 'from technical development to continuity' and at the end of that meeting Simon announces he wishes to step down.

In the new year e-mail Simon makes inquiries with the Educational Committee and Council about the objectives, structure and responsibilities of the new committee. Patrick answers a few of Simon's questions while taking the opportunity to introduce the chair and co-chair of the new Online Learning Committee who are recently appointed by the council.

"I am copying in Anand & Heleen as our new Chair and co-Chair, so they can consider your comments and start to get up to speed with all that has happened over the last year or so and all that is planned / in place for online learning.
It would be really helpful if you could put together a dossier of documents on e-learning that you have shared with us over the last couple of years as a guide for Anand and Heleen, as they prepare the way forward for this new committee. I am sure they would also appreciate being able to contact you for advice."

To me the introduction of the new Chair and co-Chair comes as a surprise.
I haven't been aware of the action taken at council's level in the timespan between the annual meeting last autumn and this first week of January. Reading the e-mail thread backwards, I learn Simon put me in carbon copy of a longer correspondence in which he is acquiring information about the new committee. I guess I was expecting Simon to plan his succession himself.

Although my interaction with Simon is based on an informal verbal agreement I feel long term committed to this project which originates in the evolution of my role in the past six years.

In 2009 Simon hires me as a freelance content editor. I expect the job to end in a few months. The project needs more guidance and I share my knowledge with Simon. Over the years my responsibilities grow. The last annual meeting Simon promotes me by introducing me to his colleagues as project/content manager of the online learning. The title doesn't mean much to me; I guess every person is a manager in some aspect and I am more the Jack-of-all-trades kind of person. What matters to me is that it shows we acknowledge each other in our fields of expertise which means we interact as equals within our working relation.

Picturing Simon as an extern advisor to this committee, I wonder what this would mean for my future involvement in this project. The new committee will not be under any obligation at all to continue working with me nor will they be under any obligation at all to leave my responsibilities as they are now.
Open to what new plans would bring, I wish myself a Happy New Year too.

Shacking hands.

Schein's analyses of the interrelations in helping shows me what is missing in the way a project like this is handed over; it is necessary to acknowledge the imbalance that exists in this helping relationship (Schein, Helping: how to offer, give, and receive help, 2009, p. 35).

Council does not consult Simon when appointing the new chairs that will take over his position and Simon did not consult the new chairs to learn their needs before putting together the handover file.

"The reason the helping relationship has to be built rather than just being assumed is that, although the imbalance is clear, the social economics of how to fix it are not." (Schein, Helping: how to offer, give, and receive help, 2009, p. 35) It is crucial to involve all parties to determine the boundaries and requirements of assistance that is asked and offered from all persons involved.

As expected Simon asks me to assist him in putting together a handover file. While working on this document, Simon expresses his feeling to be relieved some younger people will take over the amount of work that, as he feels, still must be done to complete and sustain the project. When completed, the handover file is a quite extensive document referring to all, in Simons eyes, relevant documents stored in a folder in the cloud that is used for the projects content creation and content review.

Handover file

To discuss the handover file with the chair and co-chair of the new Online Learning Committee Simon invites Anand, Heleen and me to meet each other in person. The meeting takes place on February 29th in a room at the hospital where Simon has been working most of his life.

Anand, chair, flies in from Switzerland, continues his journey by train and is picked up by Simon who lives in the same city as the hospital is in. It is the first time they meet each other. They arrive at the hospital by car. Heleen, co-chair, living in the Netherlands, arrives after a three-hour journey by train. She knows the hospital from the time she was working there with Simon. I live only a fifteen minutes' motor bike ride away from the hospital and am the first person to arrive at the hospital.

The hospital has daylight in the hallways and in every room, which makes the rather large building feel light. White walls with blue doors and a sandy coloured floor add to that experience.

Soon Simon and Anand walk into the hallway. Anand is smart casual dressed and for South-East Asian standards probably above average of length. After greeting each other in a slightly formal way we wait for Simon to get the key to the room. Heleen arrives a bit later when the rest of us is already seated in the room. She is a relatively small casually dressed woman with a smiling face.

I remember us sitting down at a rectangle of large white tables, creating a formal and distance atmosphere. Simon sits across from Heleen and Anand sits across from me. I am at the left side from Simon with a window to my left.

The computer screen showed the online learning environment which was projected to the wall, next to the door at the right side of Simon.

Simon serves coffee, tea and cake while making polite inquiries on how the traveling has been. He switches to the presentation, showing several chapters and cases expressing the importance of the completion of the content and explaining how students are supposed to work with it. Anand and Heleen are listening. After lunch the handover file is being discussed. Anand brings in a few examples of other learning environments.

A report of this day is send to all by e-mail and after processing all comments it is filed as a summary of discussed priorities for the near and distant future categorised in nine bullet points *(Appendix I)*. One of the points goes back to the business plan presented in two thousand and fifteen; offering accreditation for courses that are completed by the user.

During the six months towards the annual meeting e-mail communication builds the relationship between the coordinator who steps down and his successors, especially between Simon and Anand related to the discussion of implementing accreditation. Simon receives a message from a colleague from Canada, that had visited a colleague from Haiti: "I think you will be pleased to know that the society's online learning environment generated great interest. Our Haitian colleagues specifically asked whether it would be possible for people who complete the curriculum online to obtain a certificate confirming this." He forwards this message to Anand and Heleen with the remark: "See below. It is an incentive to look seriously at CME". Anand replied: "Sure, I think getting credits for taking courses will create more interest and we should look into developing it further. Many web based learning portals manage this." And he adds an example of a website that offers accreditation at $10 per course.

Heleen does not reply to this thread.

When I open the website, Anand is referring to, I am not sure how to interpret his association with this; is it related to the interaction design, the interface design, the process design of the shop, the pricing, or any combination of this?

History of the idea to implement CME accreditation:
At a breakfast meeting in 2015 in Spain, Simon and I discuss the business plan with Patrick secretary general, Tomas, Enzo, former secretary general. We discuss two main issues, first the need for financial sustainability, for the project's annual support solely depends on one pharmaceutical company. Second, the need to shift focus from development to implementation of the tool to grow the number of users; not only externally, but also within the society itself where various other committees engaged in educational projects should use and promote the website as envisioned in the aim to reach out on a global scale. Analytics show 1200 visits from January to April, 4200 visits from May to August. Patrick, council representative, adds the suggestion to explore implementation of CME accreditation as a way to generate income through the website as well as to grow the number of users further. All four men at the table immediately react enthusiastic to this idea the society would be able to offer its members high level international valued accreditation. At that moment, I do not feel at liberty to react from the heart and mind, thinking: aren't we discussing financial sustainability and effective implementation of this tool within current budget? To me CME is yet another new development requiring adaptations on technical level, on the level of content creation and on organisational level. Who would be willing to pay for this investment? I keep my thoughts for a discussion with Simon somewhat later that week. Simon is positive it is more than worthwhile to explore accreditation.

Another example is from a mail thread that is related to the symposium which is planned to take place at the annual meeting. It will be the moment the new committee will officially introduce itself as Simon's successors.

The program will have a time slot of ninety minutes; one of the five presentations will be on CME accreditation. Simon uses his network to conduct an inquiry for detailed information and for a speaker on the subject. The mail thread of that is dated four months before the scheduled symposium. The replier suggests to take Simon's inquiry to their board meeting next week. Simon asks Anand and Heleen for their input: "Shall we wait for his reply or would you prefer to submit a provisional programme as outlined

recently to the program committee with an open option of a CME lecture?" Anand replies: "I am trying to check if someone from our field of work with CME experience will be willing to give a talk at the annual meeting."
Heleen does not reply to this message.

When meeting face-to-face, people communicate through two communication systems at the same time; analog communication (non-verbal) and digital communication (verbal and, for example, sign language) as described in (Willemse, 2012). Willemse states that 85% of total communication consists of analogue communication.
Simon, Anand and Heleen met during one day months before, and here analogue communication and explicit metacommunication (communicating communication and the relationship) is completely lacking in this email traffic, therefore interpretation of the message is rather impossible.

Question and answer do not match, and therefore the message is unclear. What exactly does Anand mean to say with his reply? E-mail correspondence alone is clearly insufficient in relation to interpretation of what is said if the person and context are unknown to the sender.

In the board meeting, one of the board members is selected to speak at the symposium. The speaker also informs Simon on the subject thoroughly during a meeting at the speaker's office in Belgium a few months later. Anand, Heleen and me are informed in carbon copy in every step of the way.

Preparing the meeting

On the Friday night before the annual meeting, Anand, Heleen, Simon and I meet in a small restaurant in a city in France. We all travelled separately to our hotels during that day. Although Simon and I are staying in the same hotel, that I booked for both of us, I turn down his invitation to travel together by train. I prefer to travel by motorbike, so I can enjoy the trip and clear my head - as I have told him before, travelling to an annual meeting in a city in south east Germany. Simon argues that riding a bike makes it impossible to do some work during traveling. While laughing, I reply that that is exactly the kind of preparation I prefer prior to meeting dozens of people in a four days' timeframe while keeping track of all technical and managerial tasks at the same time. With a huge smile, he asks me what my husband thinks of the fact that I am riding hundreds of kilometres on that machine, all by myself. I tell him my husband is a biker as well and simply wishes me a safe trip. We laugh and it is settled; we will meet each other at the hotel in France.

There is another reason to travel solo though. The ride provides me the opportunity to think through this handover of tasks to five new committee members in connection to my historically evolved role as a freelance Jack-of-all-trades in this project and my new role in the new future being a student researcher writing a master thesis.
The meeting in February does not immediately mark the start of a work-relation between Anand, Heleen and me. Since I did not hear from them since February, I call Heleen in August how she would like to prepare for the meeting. During our call, I offered I to visit her as I doe sometime later. I went to see her in the hospital in the city where she is living and working, a two-and-a-half-hour ride from the place I live and work. Meeting face to face does change our relation. Now I feel less hesitated to contact her by mail with all sorts of questions and suggestions to which she always responds in a way that helps both of us doing our job.

I intend to seize a moment with Anand, Lucy, Eva and Angela in the coming few days if I can. The official timeframe to meet is limited to this one annual meeting scheduled on Saturday from 4 pm to 5 pm and that will not be sufficient to get to know each other. I remember the moving landscape voiced over by my thoughts.

The restaurant where Simon, Anand, Heleen and I meet that Friday night is in the city centre. It is noisy because the façade of the building is wide open; expanding indoor space and the terrace. Chatting people are sitting everywhere around the table where we are seated. In the background, there is music which is mixed with the sound of traffic driving by. Conversation is interrupted by a frequent request to repeat that what is said. The agenda for the days to come is discussed. Most input is given by Simon who has prepared most of the meetings to come; we behave according our roles in given context – Simon is mostly sending, the rest of us is mainly listening.

The next day Simon and I attend a meeting of an educational project where the online learning environment is used. We leave early to be in time for the symposium. Anand, Heleen and the speakers are at the hall, when we come in and the projection on the screen is showing the program. Each of the presenters show the audience why and how online learning and so called blended learning are important contributions to current and future education and how this adds a new dimension to processes and workflow. According to Simon's estimation, the audience is counting approximately hundred and fifty people, Patrick being one of them.

The meeting

The symposium is immediately followed by the first committee meeting. Simon invites two of the speakers to attend the meeting.
In the conference room, approximately ten meters wide, eight meters deep and five metres high, everyone takes place at tables forming a rectangle leaving a space in the

middle from about four metres wide by two metres deep. One of the dark grey plated walls gives access to the room through two wooden doors. The glass wall opposite of that is fully covered with dark grey curtains hanging down from the ceiling and blocking daylight. One of the two white plated walls connecting the grey, carries a projection screen almost as large as the wall itself.
Anand and Heleen are seated at the head of the table facing the entrance of the room. Anand opens with welcoming the unexpected guests and starts a round-call. Heleen introduces herself, stating her name, field of expertise and places where she works, then two new committee members, Lucy and Angela introduce themselves, an ex officio member that is a representative of other educational projects within the society, new committee member Eva, former coordinator Simon, the first of the two guest, me, the second guest, and the chair himself closes the circle. I remember giving a brief

presentation showing what currently is published in the online learning environment and what is in progress.

It appears minutes of this meeting do not exist, I checked with Simon and Heleen. My notebook says the agenda items are rearranged to three points: starting with CME, which is discussed in detail if I remember correctly. It is decided to look into CME criteria within the learning environment. Second a brief discussion on the scheduled breakfast meeting with sister societies the next day, and third exploration of content update; starting with content review, the labelling of the level, scheduling the updating process, creating a time path and assign who will be doing what.

The item "task list" that has been sent prior to the meeting, is not discussed at the first meeting.

Anand sends a tasks list to all committee members, and cc to Tomas (leaving chair of the overall education committee), Irina (new chair of this committee), Patrick, and the senior operating officer (at the company hired to take care of the society's secretariat). The task list implies there will be a lot of changes for the people already involved. It will have implications in workflow and re-assigning tasks for Simon, the students and me. According to the task list, the students that currently are involved in uploading (copy/paste the content of the presentations) will no longer be needed once a review system, as used with journals, will be implemented. All the task: managerial task discussing strategic matters, co-writing proposals and reports, and content related tasks will be reduced to content management. That is: contact IT if applicable, redraw illustrations on authors request, upload content and update the committee four times a year. One example of how this is communicated is the comment discussion related to the task "adding updated illustrations (only if an additional benefit is seen)". I comment to clarify: "The most important benefit will be avoiding copyrights and/or transfer (messy) tree structures constructed in PowerPoint to neat (interactive) pictures". Anand replies to that: "If old figures were OK earlier and nothing new is being added by authors, we can leave them as such. Chapter will be replaced anyway and we can leave it to authors if they want new figures." *(Appendix II)*

I ask myself if my comment is misunderstood. I refer to consistency and quality in design of the project, something Simon thought to be important as well, and to the quality level of the individual picture.

I regularly receive illustrations that do not qualify for uploading; because the image is a hardly readable scan or too low in resolution or depicts a legend in another language than English, or the image looks more like a sketch to me when it is constructed with shapes (a tool in PowerPoint), or the image needs to be anonymised, etcetera. Simon gives me the mandate to take care of image processing and redrawing, acknowledging doctors do not have the design skills I have. Moreover, for didactic reasons he often takes the role of chief editor and suggests the author to ask me to redraw complex flow diagrams transforming them into animated graphics that build up the total image or show sequences when clicking through.

The comments function in the text editor is not suitable to exchange such thoughts with the committee.

Parallel, a discussion how to manage separate budgets evolves in the mail text between Anand and myself. Angela and Eva reply with their suggestions of new content in the same thread. Heleen and Simon do not reply.

The first committee meeting does not seem to be a suitable place to take this topic a step further either.

I wait and see how things develop from here.

After the meeting Lucy walks over to me and we go down the escalator together. She asks me about my work related to this project. In a shortest down-the-escalator-pitch I have ever done, I describe what I am currently involved in. When we reached the lower floor, we shake hands and head our own way for our next program items.

The next day there is a time slot of about one and a half hour prior to meeting a sponsor. Anand, Simon and I sit down at a table in the exhibition hall of the congress centre and have a coffee. Synchronic with the level of coffee in the cups the conversation drops. Simon goes of saying he is to see if he could catch some people by walking around. I remember starting a conversation with Anand asking him about his field of work. He is engaged when telling how he is using state of the art technology in his field of work in his laboratory. From my perspective, he seems to work on a very high level of abstraction. Later that week I learn his intelligence enabled him to enter university at a very young age.

Anand and Simon do not connect. Where Simon is trying to share his views by convincing others with reasoning, Anand is keeping his thoughts to himself but acts upon his views, making it rather difficult to connect with him.

This can be described by the pattern of their orientation mix, as explained by Van Dinten & Schouten; every individual is subdued to a constant interaction with the world he or she is living in where development is a continuum teaching which patterns to trust. Pattern recognition sculpts a natural bias, defined as orientation. Four orientations are defined; self-referential, social, rational, open. (Van Dinten & Schouten, 2011, pp. 39-57)

Amit and Simon both are men who explain the world from their own self-referential and rational perspective of what they see as reality.

During the rest of the days Simon and I still work together like all previous years, meeting with authors, reviewers, initiators of other educational projects. Seeking for new content and other opportunities to get people involved aiming at a growing number of users for the special section in the online learning environment. Simon is coordinator of the steering committees initiating this section targeting resource limited countries. In all other meetings, he makes sure he introduces the new chairs as his successors, doing all meetings with them together. It allows the new chair and co-chair to start building a relation with important stakeholders like the sponsor.

Back home I am still insecure how to plan the next months in terms of workload. Moreover, working on my thesis proposal, I start doubting if it would be even possible to set up a research project in this unstable configuration of interactions to which I do not feel connected as I used to.

My teacher, who becomes my coach a few months later, shows me that what is chasing away the freelancer in me, can become even more interesting for the researcher in me. During our conversation, I realise I am not able to identify myself as a researcher, yet, I'll have to learn how to get there:

Problem definition

To define the problem, I start investigating emergent changes that are dealt with, such as technical developments of the open source application, depending third party soft- and hardware, user demands, privacy requirements that differ in every country, and a dynamic field of mostly voluntarily involved individuals to work with. All society members and authors, reviewers and translators from sister societies are medical experts. They often live a life with quite busy work related schedules and more educational projects that demand a part of their own time, that is shared with family and friends to take care of.

When it comes to actively promoting the learning environment the committee lacks a sustainable and allocated IT and management budget that fits the ambition as well as long term strategic plans to implement the use of this website on a global scale, both threatening its viability in a serious way.
The budget is dependent on the sponsoring of one pharmaceutical company. Outside Simons proactive attitude to get people within the society and from sister societies involved, and more over to keep them involved, in contributing to and spread the use of the online learning environment, no formal strategic plan exists.

The committee's mission, as defined in the remit, can be summarised as a commitment to develop and promote the online learning environment in multiple ways: as to serve the society by facilitating and connecting members and other societies through the platform, to develop and expand the online learning environment by formulating a strategy for its extended use, uploading digital content related to other events of the society. All items aim to maximise the learning environment's use. *(Appendix III)*

Initial research question

All the above information leads me to my initial research question:
How to change the way of organising to shift the focus from technical and content development to continuity and global implementation of the online learning environment within an organisational context of various emergent changes and where its existence is dependent on a body of volunteers that is loosely bound by shared medical expertise and a society's mission statement?

And based on the field of research, what I have learned so far, what I still would like to learn, the position from which I am involved as a freelancer and will be involved as a researcher I feel the methodology that would fit best is Action Research.

Methodology

For Action Research is defined by Eriksson & Kovalainen as a methodology "where the research question is obtained from the practical, everyday life of business. The researcher is actively engaged with and works within business in order to help solve specific problems, develop some parts of business or organizational activities, give insight to strategic questions and make businesses work more efficiently." (p. 165). It finds its base in interaction and inquiry with people. Furthermore, it consists of a

variety of methodologies pursuing action and research at the same time (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016). Which makes this type of research very applicable in an organisation that has no physical office and existing in a dynamic context where the workload on the agenda is directly linked to the input of six voluntarily committee members. All input is mainly communicated by e-mail, as none of the committee members is living in the same city, or even the same country.

Having both my positions, researcher and freelancer, intertwined allows me to establish a close interaction with various participants on a variety of processes simultaneously. Which allows all participants and myself to fully use the carefully planned moments of video conferencing or physical meetings.

Sending invitations

In march I send out the first invitations requesting for participation in a more formal format of an informed consent. *(Appendix IV)* The informed consent is returned with a signature by only two of the participants, the others consider it to be just an invitation. The invitation is send to Angela, Heleen, Pauline, Samah, Simon and an author who did not answer on March 10th, and to Anand, Eva, Lucy and Patrick on March 22nd.
From all positive replies, I plan the agenda in the sequence I roughly have in mind, making sure the chairs and the secretary general are planned in a way I can take some input from other participants with me when speaking to them. Subsequently I calculate my budget.

An informed consent explains what kind of participation they are invited to get involved in, enabling to start with an open visor and see how interaction can grow in given context. Action research focusses on involvement of participants in acting, researching and learning through joint involvement and shared responsibility (Van Nistelrooij & De Wilde, 2008).
Working in close interaction will be the biggest challenge since people involved hardly know each other and a mail application's inbox is substituting a physical meeting place. E-mail is almost purely functional in language and tone, therefore face to face conversation will be an open, yet firm intervention enabling researcher and participants to build interrelations by getting actively involved with this research; sharing responsibility in the aim to solve the problem as defined in the research question above.

Nice to meet you.

Samah

Using the change offered and for my own convenience, I start this journey close to home. March 17[th,] I meet Samah, a medical expert from Sudan.
She happens to be in the city, conducting a medical research project and joins a brainstorm with Simon and me a few weeks earlier. We meet in one of the hospitals coffee corners and discuss the curriculum of one of the society's Schools in which she participated. Simon wants to explore whether the online learning environment could replace part of the curriculum, to prevent the School, that lost its long-term sponsor, from closing. In return, the online learning environment would gain quantitative and qualitative value from the society's perspective. Simon and I write a proposal from this conversation and his own experiences and send it out to the School coordinator.

We meet again in the same place. The coffee corner is U-shaped. At the entrance, large glass doors, the left side of the U, and at the bottom side it provides room to order drinks and food. And from the bottom side to the right side it provides space filled with high tables and low tables; round tables. And a row of square tables with one chair opposite to a long green coloured bench mounted onto the wall. Next to the bench another entrance with glass doors and a section with four-person rectangle tables in it. Although I am half an hour early, Samah is already there. She is seated on the bench directly next to the right side entrance. Samah is a small slender lady compared to myself, I am a tall women for Dutch standards, and approximately late thirties I guess. It is quiet in the coffee corner. After I get her and myself a coffee I sit down and thank her for her time. I explain to her why I invited her in the context of the committees aim for global implementation of the online learning environment. That I would like to bring in her experience and thoughts as a user and as a teacher.

Simon, who was teaching at the society's School last year for a period of two weeks, introduced the tool to her and her colleagues. She is enthusiastic about the interactive sessions with Simon and about working with the cases. She explains how diagrams help her and her colleagues understand complicated issues.

She is training residents herself using the online learning environment, and tells me some people had trouble accessing the site using the general login Simon gave her. I tell her it should be no problem to get in the regular way, especially since recently an automated login procedure is implemented.

We have a little brainstorm on how she would be able to help promoting the online learning environment by presenting its online cases at regularly held meetings visited by approximately four to five hundred attendants, she estimates. And at her centre they could start using it teaching about two hundred students a year. She advises me to ask Simon to contact her director. "Professor Simon had a coffee with him once, in the hospital". I write down the director's name. "Why not introduce it in the library for example". In her country, the English language is the common language for study materials. Samah also provides feedback on the content "it is a bit too much little details but they can skip it".

Her story pictures a very driven lady: "I can sacrifice my life for things I think that are most important." And with a big smile she admits her husband is nagging she never calls, because of all the consultations she must answer.

She is happy to go back home soon.

> By the time we say goodbye, the place is filled with people and therefore very noisy. Something to keep in mind choosing the next location. During our meeting, Samah is open. She makes it easy for me to see what feedback I could take back with me. And by the way she is addressing me, I can tell she recognises my entwined position, freelancer and researcher, which is a substantial intervention. We would never have had this conversation together if it wasn't staged in the context of this research.
> As goes for all the meetings during this journey.

Feedback to the committee

During a committee Skype meeting in the third week of March I put in Samah's feedback. It is summarised in the minutes that Samah uses the online learning tool for training residents, that she will try to get her network interested and that she is positive on providing feedback on the process. No action has been attached to it. A week later I have a telephone call with Simon and I ask him if someone in the committee will contact Samah about her input. He asks me to ask Angela to do that.

Angela

A few days later I meet Angela in a small restaurant in a town nearby. I have met Angela during annual meetings for she is an author of a few cases. Angela is in her late thirties, tall and slim and she has an open and friendly personality. We do not actually know each other though. Since September, she is one of the new committee members, the commissioning party. She responds with enthusiasm to my invitation that we can perhaps have dinner together and suggests a few restaurants of which I pick one. I am looking forward to meet her.

The restaurant is situated in a three-hundred-and-fifty-year-old building that used to be the city hall. It counts about fifteen tables. The place has white walls and white square pillars carry the roof. One of the walls has two high windows, each flanked by two high white cabinets full of wine bottles.

I choose a table near the first window. The music of the restaurant is not too loud and the tables do have some distance between them, which will make it possible to have a

conversation without having to worry about background noise on the recording or neighbours listening in.

Teaching experience in a general hospital

Angela enters early. Coming from the hospital she works in she has travelled approximately one hour. She immediately takes an active approach and asks me a lot of questions. We end up analysing the previous Skype meetings the committee had and informing about the last one that she was unable to attend. She asks me if the quality was better as with the ones before. I tell her the quality was slightly better, but that Lucy couldn't get in. We both agree that a Skype call is a handicapped way of having a meeting. She states it withholds you to react directly to each other due to the faltering image and sound. And I fully agree with that.

Talking about implementation of the online learning environment in education, she admits she has never used the tool herself. Simply because she uses her own presentations and never thought of it in the two years she is teaching, but: "I think I will do it differently this year". She thinks it is best to give her students a number of chapters to study and to do some cases together, which will give the class an interactive character. In her experience teaching is a rather one-way activity; her talking and them listening. And while speaking of that she names a few colleagues she will be asking to do the same. Angela explains how young doctors are stimulated to make their own case presentations as it is an important part of the curriculum they are in. So, to her it seems only natural medical experts use their own presentations once they start teaching. Another reason for that is lack of time to go through the chapters and cases to select suitable study materials for their lessons. It takes more time than using a presentation you already presented before. Working in a general hospital means she and her colleagues are working longer days than that they are being paid for. All other activity, like research and engagement in educational projects, is all extra time. She just returned from a diabetes project in Shri Lanka and that is something she wants to stay

involved in as well. And changes in her private life have made her redistribute her spare time in favour of people important to her. Nevertheless, she is going to give it a try to promote the use of the online learning environment amongst her colleagues.

Here I decide not to bring up Simon's request if she could contact Samah to inform on the promotional progress. Simon receives feedback regarding this decision. Let's first see how individual committee members handle the potential of the online learning tool and investigate the need to promote it within their own network. And see if some sort of strategic action with the potential to reach out on a global scale can develop from there.

Seen from an action researcher's point of view, asking Angela to start working with the feedback of Samah at this point in time would infringe the fact that our conversation empowers her to get actively involved from within her own context. She is planning to take action and therefore she takes up shared responsibility regarding promoting the online learning environment.

To Angela working on the content side of this project is what she prefers, because she is learning from this herself. Last month, she has finalised a case which has been reviewed by Heleen and Eva. She send it to me for upload and since it was at the original request from Simon, he was in CC. He told me to hold on and he reviewed the reviewed case, sending Angela a list of comments. He hasn't quite stepped down yet.
She knows Simon from the time she worked as a fellow with his colleague Corine, who happens to be the current treasurer of the society. Simon motivates her to apply for the new committee. She did and received an e-mail she was accepted as a member.
Angela sees this committee membership as an opportunity to keep involved in learning herself as well and in reading up-to-date literature. She used to be involved in research, but that is hard to keep up with for her now. Because in a general hospital income related productivity is top priority.

How to stay informed
Angela feels unexperienced compared to the other committee members. She feels she could use a bit more steering: "I think we need to get some better job descriptions to clarify what everyone would like to do and is doing and can do..., that is the first issue, that you will address people, if you receive a case and that is then it might be alternating with sub-teams within... you just received a case, you will be next. But not with CC's to everyone, because you go crazy receiving all those mails..." "Yes", I answer her laughing, "I know that feeling…"
She feels workflow should be more structured. She refers to the task she is requested to do, reviewing a case which is placed in a forum within the online learning in a specific

In the first half of the evening I consciously steer back the focus within the domain of the research question, in the second half of the evening I let go and I listen to stories how she is involved in her professional life as a doctor and in her private life as a person. For the first time, I realize how trust grows in interaction between content aspect and relation aspect. The double roles of freelancer and researcher are getting entwined more and more. The conversation in itself is a huge intervention creating a context in which a relation can be created.

course folder for one of the society's Schools. She has no idea who will judge her review and what will happen after that. She presumes I do have a role in that and I have to tell her I haven't. And I explain to her I only wrote a how-to-use-the-forum manual, and that I recently inquired with the School coordinator making inquiries how the students have been instructed and if they are using the forum.

Forum discussion

Since this forum idea came to Simon's mind, he has put a lot of effort in it to get it started in a group of Russian speaking users, for he and the school coordinator of that School felt it would benefit the Russian speaking students.

A good forum needs an active moderator with vision and strategy how to keep it alive. I have shown Simon examples of software related fora; issues are posted by active users and subsequently answered by active moderators within a short amount of time. I express my doubts if the online learning could generate such traffic if moderated on a voluntarily basis by a medical expert who committed herself to translate every English post to Russian and back. A concern which is later shared by the School coordinator, Lena, in an e-mail early February: "The students are not very active, but we need to remember that Russian/English courses may be useful for Russian speaking people from all previous Soviet Union and Russia. Another question is how to bring the Russian speaking sister Societies to use this educational course." Simon asks me by e-mail to facilitate the Russian coordinator. Anand replies there is no need to, for login is automated now.

I explain Simon, Anand, Heleen Lena and Ilona the Russian forum is not under automated login, for three years ago it was decided to place it under a specified course with predefined users so student progress could be monitored and Russian presentations could be uploaded into this course. Which means all School participants from the past three years do have a specified login and are able to access this forum.

In August I visit the forum, no replies and twelve visits since Angela posted her case review. Simon sees this forum potential from another perspective, as a consultation tool. We discuss the subject during our meeting on April 21st.

Inviting Simon is very different for me than inviting all other persons, for we have been meeting each other so many times in the past seven years. Every meeting is automatically a business meeting, even in private space. At first we meet at his room in the hospital, and in coffee corners, in my studio, and now in his home where he has created a place to work in the living room. There I have met his wife and two of his three adult sons, when they were at home too.
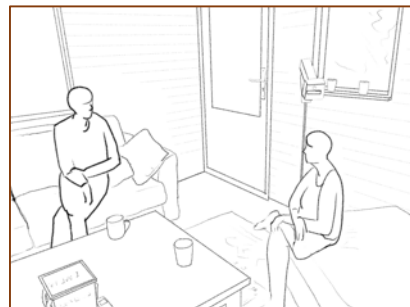
I have invited him to a place where I feel at home and where he has never been before; our garden house at the allotment. After he arrives at the parking I walk toward him to guide him through the allotment park. Our conversation starts out completely different from usual, we discuss what we see and this evokes personal memories with Simon. The garden house is twenty-five square metres, with a bathroom, kitchen, bench and a wood-burning stove that is warming the room.

While drinking coffee Simon switches to business, the current forum issue: "But… uhm… I would like to keep a few of the things we build on track, things that do have potential. I admit there are a few initiatives that are not very successful. And then, of course, at a certain moment you must simply quit." "Or transform…" "Or transform. But, you see, with this forum that is now initiated, Lena is supporting this and Ilona, that woman from

Armenia, is very committed too and immediately translates, you have to use this and bring it to a certain level of development. You told me long time ago; forum communication seems like a good idea, but often it doesn't work and you do need an active moderator."

Simon expresses his disappointment about Anand telling me not offer special service, facilitate new codes to participants of the last three years, for he states this should be Lena's task. Simon has to admit the forum is no longer his responsibility alone, in fact he is overruled by Anand, who is responsible for the budget since the handover. I tell him my services for this forum are paid from his budget. I know Simon has started this forum project two years ago and I do understand his feelings. I ask him to discuss the subject with Anand and Heleen. "Dialogue is the only way to come to a decision how to proceed with this forum activity." Simon feels Heleen should team up with Anand and that he should pull back. He expresses the intention to call her next week.

Simon and I approach this forum idea from opposite points of view; he favours to educate what people do not use, I favour to increase impact of what people do use. According to my role as a freelancer I have provided numerous how-to-use-manuals. We discussed this forum idea before; I searched the internet for medical fora, all hits consist of patients-seeking-doctors-advise type of communities. As it seems, a network of medical specialists is not per se a community which will favour a forum type of communication. Setting up a specialised forum and keeping forum traffic alive would take a lot of effort. Did he learn the context of this group's needs when he was working with them? Simons tells me that this group has been complaining about technical problems when he was there and that he did not succeed in addressing these problems.

Samah and Angela tell me, their network is formed by (expert) colleagues they study and work with. Samah for example, told me she is using her telephone for consultations constantly, either calling each other or through WhatsApp where she is in a group of over two hundred contacts. I have fed this information back to the committee in the skype call of March.

Decision making process and interaction
I tell Simon that from what I see, Anand is acting in a directive way in all communication and that it makes me wonder how decision making is organised within these society's committees. Simon explains that usually the chair is guiding, and members will carry out different tasks. "But it depends, here we are with two chairs and four members and of course you could defend that we should all work together." I agree that is defendable.

Later, when I ask him if he would like to send a message to the committee members, he answers we created the handover file. To my question if he knows whether every committee member has read this file, he is silent for a while and repeats his intention to call Heleen soon.

We talk for about an hour and in almost all surfacing stories Simon expresses some sort of lack of interaction with his colleagues. He refers to the meeting in February 2016 where the handover file was presented to the new chairs, to meetings and correspondence with the chairs of the educational committee, and to meetings and correspondence with School coordinators and tutors who are persistent in using their own presentations in the various curriculums that do not have a predefined educational target. "We are still battling to convince council and community that this (implementing online learning) is a sensible course of action. Of course, we have had a strong head wind in the past, for promises made that could not be fulfilled. […] That is a factor, but not the only factor; because there simply is resistance regarding blended learning. Both from the side of the tutor and from the side of the participant, because it requires activity, pro-activity." I take him back to the origin of this project; the online learning is developed as a service to engage in self-assessment. And I ask Simon if he expected just offering this service would generate a lot of user traffic. He admits he did, especially in resource limited countries where he thought this format of high level education would be of help. And that is where time comes in. Over the years Simon has received feedback from various people the content offered would not quite match the needs of medical trainees and doctors in resource limited countries.

Stepping down?
Then, one of the experts in this field, Eleanor, publishes a book that is written in the perspective of the levels as healthcare is organised in those countries. Simon teams up with her and other experts engaged in these countries. They form a steering group that will develop an online learning section with resource limited specific learning material in five different languages. In December 2015, three months after he announces his resignation as coordinator, but before his successors are introduced, he applies for sponsorship with a large pharmaceutical company. Simon acts in the moment, because his long-term contact of that company, who always has been supportive with the online learning project, is to retire in a few weeks.

> In this conversation focus of this research shifts from changing the way of organising to finding a way of organising. How does this directive chair relate to the perception of hierarchy in this committee? From my experience hierarchy hardly exists within voluntarily organisations I have been involved in. Lucas Meijs' concludes in his research "Management of volunteer organizations" hierarchy related to function is based on sanctions and (differences in) rewards. Volunteers carry out and govern their tasks based on mutual agreement; "largely based on personal relationships, shared values and norms, and limiting voluntary work to the more attractive and less demanding tasks." (Meijs, 1997, pp. 57, 146)

He receives the unrestricted grant. Which means Simon stays on as head of the steering committee, actively developing the multi-lingual sub-project within the online learning project. And for this, he has his own allocated budget to spend. At the annual meeting in France a pilot is published with two multi-lingual chapters and six vignettes.

Pauline

I follow up on Simon's suggestion to speak to Pauline. She is an expert living and working in a city at the west side of Belgium. She is a former fellow of Simon and one of the first authors that contributed to the online learning and she has been an active participant in the assessment study which results were published last year. And because Simon works with her, I have met her several times at annual meetings.

Feedback from one of the authors

When I arrive at the hospital on April 24th it appears to be a huge area full of buildings and parking spaces. The address I was given is in my navigation, but it gets lost in this area. I park my bike on the pavement near the parking garage, take off my motorcycle clothing and put it in the cases. I start walking and asking around until I find an information desk where they look up her room for me. It is in the next building. The elevator takes me up to a hall with offices, one of this is hers. I am still half an hour early, and her secretary lets me in and brings me fresh coffee.
Pauline rushes in directly after a meeting. She seems busy and her story confirms she is, for she is the kind of person that never stops working.

Although she has spent a lot of time contributing to the online learning, she tells me she has never implemented it in the curriculum of the hospitals educational program. She gives three reasons for that: in Belgium, a formal education for this field of work does not exist, for general education the content of the online learning is too much and to high level, students do not like to engage in self-assessment if it is not mandatory. Is this an argument not to offer the option to study in the online learning environment?
Furthermore, she suggests labelling of the target groups, because it would be hard to find your way in the current format. Pauline agrees to instruct her trainees to study the chapter growth and to take a survey as feedback for the committee.

Heleen

Warm welcome

I take Pauline's suggestions to Heleen by mail and refer to it in our meeting May the 5th. Heleen invites me for lunch at her home, and I am looking forward to meet her there away from the hectic of a hospital office where our meeting would likely be interrupted by telephones ringing and colleagues demanding some attention.
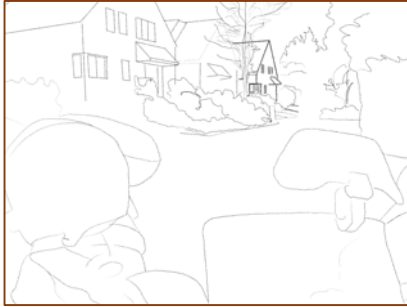
I arrive at her home, a free-standing house at the end of a dead-end street. I am soaking wet from heavy rain. Heleen opens the door and immediately gives me a big smile when she notices my wet gear. She asks me if the ride was ok, and I tell her it was beautiful weather until half an hour away from here where it started to rain. In the hallway, she opens a wardrobe closet, she tells me the doors are always closed because the rabbit likes laces and other stuff.

The rabbit sits between its large rabbit home opposite to the wardrobe and a glass door that is keeping it out of the living room; it is nibbling some cardboard to shreds and it is watching me getting my wet suit off. I suggest not to put those wet clothes in the wardrobe to keep dry clothes from getting wet. The wardrobe is flanked by the toilet and wooden stairs going up and down. Heleen leads me two small stairs down where I can put everything to dry. Half way down, the two window recesses are filled with various African artefacts. Back in the hallway, I see the rabbit sniffling at my helmet on the floor next to the front door; I guess my helmet is rabbit-teeth proof so I leave it there.

We enter the living room. Heleen walks to the left, into the white kitchen to make coffee. The kitchen has several windows providing a panoramic view to the street. Opposite the entrance a dark wooden dining table where I put down my bag. The right site of the floor is the living room with French doors flanked by high windows, which connect the garden with the living room. When seated on the bench you can still enjoy the garden. This floor of the house is full of daylight which reflects on countless African artefacts. Ten years ago, they moved to their current residence.

Heleen tells me she and her husband practiced medicine in an African country for four years, returning to the Netherlands in the early nineties, because she accepted a job in the hospital Simon was working. We discover we moved to this city in the same year and that she and her husband have lived not far from where I am living now. We exchange memories and information about the places we both know and naturally start talking about the current connection we have: our involvement in online education.

From the time she was working with Simon, Heleen has used the CD-rom for her teaching. And now this content is uploaded to the online learning environment she still enjoys working with the cases that she knows from the CD-rom. She thinks it makes it easy for her to work with these specific cases, because they have been built around some of her patients from that time.

"Yeah, then you think; o, that was that patient and it becomes more lively for you so to speak. And of course you have to, I think… by working with the online learning and case

histories at a certain point you will know this case is suitable for interns, this case is a bit too advanced and this one isn't quite suitable. Because it varies."

Heleen questions the remarks of Angela and Pauline regarding labelling the level of difficulty. She is asking my feedback on how these courses are currently organised as specific user groups where study progress can be monitored. Over the years, I checked with tutors of several specific user groups and they do not use this functionality. Monitoring and/or statistics per specific user group would be the only reason to create a user specific group. She illustrates my findings with her experience doing an interactive online case for a group of students in East Europe last month where only a few people had visited the website prior to her interactive case presentation.
Johan and I always take care of creating and sending personalised login codes and documentation on the login procedure; this service has impact on the project's budget. Simon and I have discussed the fact that only few participants are able to login during a case presentation session a number of times before. The user specified login procedure has been simplified, Johan now sends a user specific code and I send a step-wise manual. But this only works if low user response is related to the system and not to behaviour. I can think of so many factors that can be of influence. I tell her Simon has never been able to answer my questions though; how is it that it is due to the system's login procedure, or perhaps participants do not prepare for this lessons, or tutors do not guide their students to prepare using the online learning…
Heleen will ask Angela and Eva to work with her on simplifying the student course that can be published in the public accessible part of the site where it will be globally accessible for all students after applying through the automated login procedure.

Maintenance of all courses (consisting of a variable composition copied from the published content) will be simplified related to user administration, keeping statistics and content management regarding content update, which is in fact a cost reduction. And in terms of time reduction, committee members will no longer need to spend time facilitating and following up on tutors from societies Schools, universities or other organisations and can simply refer to the website. As goes for tutors of all target groups, Heleen states. She sees tutors do have an important role in stimulating their students, fellows and residents to use this online learning tool.

Advocacy
It can have consequences for two important other questions the committee has: how to promote the product to whom and how to value the product targeting what criteria? How to reach out to students and their tutors? To take that idea one step further up the target group, it raises the question how to motivate (young) tutors to use the online learning in class where they teach students?

In this context, each user could theoretically refer to many. Two hundred in one year, if Samah is going to use the student courses' interactive case history to teach groups of people as she was brainstorming about during our meeting.
Which brings this action to the level of co-creation of value. Counting unique users will no longer be a representative criterion to determine the value of the product.

The importance of promoting the online learning tool has never been discussed in the committee. Heleen acknowledges it is an important issue that needs to be discussed and what subsequently needs to be worked out in a promotion plan. She states she did not have a clear vision on the use of the tool before entering the committee and she believes others hadn't either. I can confirm Angela didn't either. She too questions the role of the society's board in supporting activities regarding funding and promotion, especially within their Schools.
From Heleen's perception content creation is much easier to handle compared to the organisational side of this project. "… how to handle this, what exactly it is you have to handle and how we should do that… I feel it is difficult to discuss this with Anand… All this is still a bit vague for me."

The reach of her position
One of the things that do play a role in that is that she and Anand have been appointed co-chair and chair by the executive board and never met before that. Their first meeting is with Simon and me in February 2016, the day we discuss the handover file, the second meeting is at the annual meeting and subsequently two Skype calls follow, where she too, has trouble to understand what is said due to technical hitches and the chair's accent.
Heleen is thinking aloud when she says she will contact him either by mail or phone or both. Time goes fast in relation to things that need to be prepared, appointments that need to be made and other tasks. And she feels she isn't overseeing what position the committee and this project have in relation to all other committees within the society. She is planning to investigate this during the upcoming annual meeting.
During the more than two hours we have been talking, I provide her with as much information as she requires. From historical perspective, from financial perspective, from organisational perspective; explaining her how this committee relates to the education committee, which relates to the board.

Heleen intends to contact the chair of the education committee to invite her to meet at the upcoming annual meeting.
And she does, she contacts Irina by mail, who replies positive.

Since Heleen is at home here, she is absolute relaxed. And her state of being influences me; it takes only a few minutes before I feel tension, that always exists before I enter any planned meetings, drops. Being able to relax, it feels very natural to discuss more difficult subjects or to ask questions, as both of us did. Some important issues regarding this committee's organisational level have been addressed; lack of shared focus, lack of short- and long-term planning, missing interrelations. I notice the researcher can discuss interrelations by simply providing requested information the freelancer knows in such a way that it will empower the participant to act upon. A similar process has happened during my prior meetings.

Heleen spends a couple of hours a week carrying out the committee's tasks; during weekends or her weekly day off. The hospital she works for has recently entered in a cooperation with a private organisation specialised in a certain medical condition. At first this seemed to create a fruitful interaction, but it appears the private organisation is aiming at pulling her and her colleagues in. This creates tension and she can't oversee what consequences it will have for her job. She and her husband both work in the medical sector and are parents to two young adults, one of them still living at home. I meet their youngest when she comes home after school. She is being helpful to check the weather for me when I intend to leave and advises me to avoid the rain by taking another coffee. This advice brings a smile to all our faces and Heleen makes us another coffee. After I drink it, I leave.

Patrick

A few days later, on May 9th, I leave for the UK. The next day I meet Patrick, the society's secretary general. Two days later I will meet Lucy early in the morning. The schedule offers the opportunity to plan a few bike-trips in between and after the meetings, therefore my husband travels with me. We take the overnight ferry. The next morning, we travel for a few hours to one of the bigger cities in UK where we arrive at midday. The address where I am expected to meet Patrick later that afternoon is located on the biggest campus site I have ever seen; I need to make inquiries twice to find the right building. We park the bikes and we take off for a walk. The campus appears to be a huge academic city in a city where each building houses experts and students in a specific field of expertise. A short walk away from the meeting place we find a small park where we sit down and enjoy watching people and grey squirrels interacting. In my head, I hear various statements from all people I have met so far and I am picturing what I think is important to give back to Patrick. I decide to quickly read back the text of the conversations. I decide to see what he is giving me from the perspective of the board and to provide feedback if I see fit it will empower a dialogue with the committee and to be careful not make myself into a messenger of some sort.

I am beginning to see what kind of practical and powerful but gentle intervention a visit can be.

About twenty minutes to four I announce myself at the reception of the university building, with walls of dark brick stones. Patrick's secretary comes down and we need to go to the hospital building nearby. She leads me through numerous corridors in a white plastered building where daylight is entering almost every space. We turn left at the statue of a white rabbit seated and take the elevator up. Through the left door and there Patrick's office is. It is approximately five metres long and four metres wide, with white plastered walls, from the wall opposite to the entrance a daylight comes in through high placed panoramic windows. The door is flanked by a low metal chest with drawers and a table following the corner till it reaches a high bookshelf filled with books. In the middle of the office a round table with four chairs where we sit down. Patrick sits down in the chair opposite to me, he is wearing a white shirt striped with small blue lines. I notice by looking at the clock hanging next to the door, it took me about twenty minutes to walk from the university office to the hospital office. X

A visit means to have a conversation where the collocutor takes time to discuss his or her observations and reflections with the visitor. It enables to discuss and therefore learn about interrelations and how these are organised. Some discussions tend to put me in the position of a consultant; I prefer to focus on empowering participants to strengthen interrelations in given context. Schein states it is important to observe the interpersonal processes as group results are based in interaction between interpersonal and task level; though it is not necessary to intervene based on those observations unless there is evidence these processes damage the effectiveness of the group. (Schein, 2005)

Being critical

Patrick opens the conversation and first explores the boundaries of it. He is the first one to express his concern about critical passages that the reader can track back to the organisation. I assure him it is by no means my intention to harm anyone, on the

contrary, I see this action research as a possible tool of empowerment.
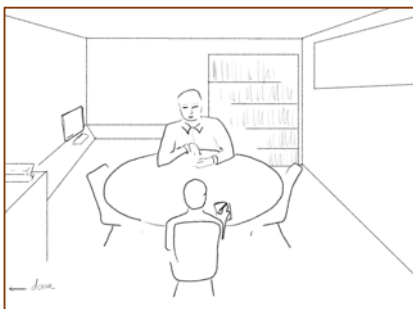
He explains how council needs year on year to be reviewing the value of activities. "And when we are looking at each activity we are looking at how popular we think it is, how many people it can have an impact on and what value that then gives it to the society. And I think if we were rigorous, we should be able to stop things as well as to introduce things. *(I am nodding yes)* So in terms of online learning, we have had the online learning set-up for quite a number of years and it's a fantastic idea, so I don't think it can be criticized on this idea at all. Ah… I think one of the issues is, well the main issue is the… it is a fantastic idea, why hasn't it been taken up more widely? That's, what's kind of, that's, one background thing is, you know, why is it not attractive? It's a kind of, to me, it's a kind of no-brainer… […] So that's one thing, and then there is the value for money and over the years it's absorbed quite a lot of money and if it's not being widely used is it really value for money? And I suppose that's the nob of what… what I see. And then there's putting those things together and saying; how are we going to take this forward. We are not going to disinvest; we have invested so much. It's difficult to disinvest in it. So, what ways can we find to reengage

people…? […] And what outlets can we find that might be income generating around it? […] And I think that having the bigger ehm, maybe reinvigorated committee is one step towards doing that. And we have, if you like, empowered that committee to go off and do it. If the committee doesn't do it, then I think as a secretary general and council we need to say why?"

After sharing his view on the status, Patrick brings in a new concept to broaden the scope of the online learning and transform it to a platform. He feels it is a complicated issue how to maintain financial sustainability over time. And he states broadening the scope offering a wider range of content, for example the resource limited countries specific content, guidelines, conference video's, yearbooks, etcetera and empowering sister societies to become actively involved in the online learning website are quite a lot of things to explore.

> The council's vision is one side of the coin. The council members value their expectations of this product by quantitative criteria of user numbers related to costs, while turning a blind eye to not showing a pro-active attitude in getting the product (as is) widely used and thus making the committee responsible for council's expectations. The other side of the coin is the new committee's vision which currently is to be developed.
> The organisation of the online learning activity has become a virtual reality as described by Van Dinten & Schouten; an externally oriented service provider who is internally organized and in which phenomena get importance because employees and leadership experience those phenomena as reality.
> (Van Dinten & Schouten, 2011, pp. 255-256)
> To illustrate the context leading to the current range of use I wait for the right moment to bring in items connected to the lack of a society wide structure and pro-active attitude to incorporate its online learning project. And Samah's story will illustrate qualitative value of user numbers; one user is likely to be a doctor helping many patients and sharing knowledge with many doctors.

Promotion of the tool
He does not feel the need to explore to implement the project in the curriculum of his own centre, because he feels that being one of the biggest units in the UK with lots of teaching materials that trainees are exposed to. I tell him Heleen has introduced the online learning at her university where the situation that students are exposed to so many materials is similar, and that students are very enthusiastic. His answer to that is that they never tried to do anything with undergraduate medical students for they spend a relatively limited time in this field of expertise.

I tell him the story Samah told me, that young teachers are an interesting group to work with to advocate the use of the website. Subsequently I inform him about Heleen's idea to publish the student level courses in the public part of the website. Patrick is brainstorming to make it into an app. I reply I wonder why, because it is running on any browser in any tablet, and even on smartphones although the format and lay-out is not designed for such a small screen. He agrees and states that he thought of an app from the point of the accessible side of things. "Because everybody knows about the online learning…" I tell him I don't think so. He knows, because he is involved, as appears, since the first presentation of the plan. We laugh.

Interrelation with the committee
To illustrate some things are not common knowledge I let him know Heleen has asked me a lot of questions how the organisation itself is structured. "So… if you think should we give them some feedback on their vision and what's going on in a bigger plan…" Patrick is wondering if they are in this position. "Personally, as a leader, I don't like to

kind of micromanage each of those areas…" And he explains how he would like to see that every individual would take up his or her own role. I answer him that perhaps doing this research might help everybody to see who needs to be in contact to whom doing what. Because I felt it was a bit too loose. Patrick adds that the 'observer' from the secretariat who attended last Skype meeting has shared similar information with him. I tell Patrick I asked Heleen if she knew why there would be an 'observer' and she didn't. "It's to be helpful", Patrick reacts. He wanted to see how the committee was functioning.

I do understand, but nevertheless this reason wasn't communicated to the people involved. I don't feel my remark that Heleen didn't know has enough impact to make him see how odd it felt for at least Heleen, Simon and me, to receive an announcement from the secretariat, that there would be an "observer" present at this meeting. Nevertheless, the message that this committee could use some guidance from the council did come across.

> Especially the first half of our meeting is business; a lot of it is appropriate feedback for committee members regarding interrelations and interaction between council and committees.
> A pleasant conversation with appropriate distance according to the place and within a fixed timeslot of one hour.
> Patrick states my visit has been for mutual benefit and I agree with him.

"What I was hoping is that Anand and Heleen and the committee would have these wide-ranging discussions… and would come up with some proposals. Now, if they are a little bit struggling on that, then we need to get together and share maybe some of the council's vision." Patrick will take our conversation to the secretariat and I will take feedback to Heleen.

Lucy

Two days later, on a Friday morning, I ride up to a local hospital in a small town.
The building is a composition of blocks from one to three stories high. In the masonry of the building different coloured bricks in a pallet of pale yellow to dark red, are shaped into lines and figures. All frames are painted red.
It is eight-thirty in the morning, at the reception they immediately know who I am looking for and I am guided to the stairs taking directions which turn to take where. Upstairs I meet Lucy's secretary who offers me a chair at one of her colleagues' desks near the entrance. Her desk is one of five and is near the window at the other end of the office. All desks and walls are covered with papers, chests with drawers and bookshelves filled with ring binders and stuffed puppets.
Since Lucy isn't in yet her secretary makes me a hot cup of black tea with milk.

After a while Lucy comes in, dressed in a white blouse and dark pair of trousers. She takes me to her office, which feels more like a room because of the colours and furniture in it. It is about 4 meters long and 3 meters wide. The walls are light yellow painted and covered with a dozen of colourful drawings. Against the left wall there are two couches (two-seaters) and a chair, all with pillows on it, and a bookcase with three shelves filled with books. Against the right wall there is a couch (two-seater) where I sit down, and her desk with a computer screen and a large red office chair which seems to embrace her when she sits down in it. At her desk a photograph of her three children.

Lucy introduces herself. She is one of the first nationally trained experts.
She tells me that the national training only started eight to nine years ago, due to lack of quality insurance "… training in the UK was very patchy. It depends on your centre, it depends on your supervisor, then it depends on… but even when you have a good centre you might not have a good supervisor. So, trainees at the time, before my year, it was all variable."
Later she did her PhD, subsequently she decided to do this job for the region, and she attended a masters in law.

Reaching out

As she is telling me more about how education is structured in the UK, she states online learning is very important to support trainees. I tell her Patrick thinks trainees in the UK would not be interested in online learning, because they are offered plenty. She disagrees. "There is nothing in the UK as we are doing in online learning. There isn't any, the universities don't have it either. And I think it is so important we do the online learning, because that is the future." She thinks advocacy of the product by sending out posters and adverts through her own network is very important. Lucy has a clear idea of the product, although she states she does not use the online learning in her own teaching, "for the committee never had that discussion". Her answer to what she is currently missing in the committee: "I think it's communications and agenda with an action plan and deadline. This is what I am used to in all my other committees."

Lucy is chairing a national branch organisation and shares her experience she has regarding contacting people and asking for help. "We are passionate, that's why we put a lot of time on our own to help with the guidelines. This committee will be the same, we will have to ask people, you know, 'can you help? Update this guideline, a review, …'. And that's where it becomes, … there might be difficulties as people get busier and everyone gets you know, the energy is very much budget problems, isn't it? Everyone working a lot more than what they're paid for. So, I think that might be a problem. […] And I said to Heleen, that is the difficulty. Unless you are buddies, then you can ask directly." "And that's where Simon comes in with his network, because a lot of those people, he knows them personally." "But that is what I said, we can, but we can't, what if Simon retires? (laughing) You know, it is difficult!" "Why would you feel hesitant to

call someone?" "No, no, we would ask. We would ask. But they will not reply unless you know them personally. That is my experience. I know that because I run a lot of international conferences and sometimes you… let's say somebody asks my administrator got no reply, sometimes you just have to pick up the phone… It's that personal relationship that sometimes gets you the help."

I ask Lucy if she knew any of the committee members before the first meeting in France and she answers me she didn't. "We went into the first meeting having no discussion what-so-ever, even the historical background, that's why I asked you on the escalator. That should have been the first point. But we had so many visitors in our first meeting, that we all felt… whou… I should have known this or…" In retrospect, knowing that only Simon, Heleen and Angela knew each other, she feels as if everybody in the committee has been too polite that first meeting. "I did know this committee was new. But I liked what it was doing; it was the development of online learning, the free web based learning. So, it will be the same for all of us, we just wrote. And got in the committee."

Interrelationships amongst volunteers

As when I met Angela and Heleen, I am asked to provide information on how this committee is structured within the organisation, current status of various things happening and the history of this project. Lucy tells me she didn't know this project has a sponsored budget, she thought everything was from board level. I tell her about the handover file, that was discussed with the chairs in February 2016 and that my journey has taught me this was never handed over to the other committee members, who never have asked any questions until I visit them. And she agrees that sharing all this information would have made a difference. "We should have gotten that file when we were congratulated on being in the committee. It is about interrelationships." She suggests the project might not have been handed over appropriately, if Anand is feeling he needs guidance as well. I interpret her question as an inquiry if all aspects and expectations of this project have been clear to the chairs. I know it wasn't for Heleen. And I tell her to ask Anand, if I get to speak to him and give her feedback; "I don't know if we are on the same level of what we call important." She agrees on we do not know that: "Exactly. I just think we have got to sit down then and have a meeting. Far too many issues raised, you have raised far too many issues." She starts laughing. And I am grinning: "I am good at that…" Lucy replies: "I know, far too many issues and most of it is business. And agreement that your role is important enough. This is what we need to do. And that this is a long-term contract."

> Each meeting initiates new potential action-cycles for the collocutor. Perception of one's own position changes receiving new information and feedback, especially regarding the organisational level of the new committee. Mutual understanding that is reached during these meetings needs time to mature before the next step in the process of change can become manifest. Action planning on a larger scale: all individual processes will interact during coming Skype meeting. See what happens.

Lucy is joking a bit when she is helping me to formulate a new research question: "It's a fairly dysfunctional start of a new committee with huge visions from an umbrella of a loosely bound body of volunteers." And is serious again when she states: "The longer this goes on, the more people will feel uncomfortable saying: you know what, I don't know where we are going and they will say, why didn't you say that three years

ago. And then they will fall off the committee. I think this would happen to me, I am speaking of me personal now."

Not being involved in decision making of other things than content creation would make her feel not important as a committee member. "The mail of Anand enhances the fact: ok I am just a committee member. We don't get asked this kind of stuff." Lucy refers to the e-mail where the chair sends the message there is no budget for my presence at the annual meeting this year.

I start: "So, one e-mail …" She finishes: "… makes a big difference! […] Because it's in a learning committee that doesn't know each other." I steer the focus to interpretation: "And everybody is interpreting the message in his own way." To which Lucy replies: "But to me, it shows a little bit of hierarchy, and yes there is a bit of hierarchy. I am a chair of a big organisation and there is a bit of hierarchy, there is a chair, there is a treasurer, but we all make decisions together. Yeah? Big decisions on money. And this e-mail showed me a little bit of hierarchy, ok you are that way, we don't make decisions and that is how I have interpreted it. Because I am new, I think that is just what it is."

In conclusion Lucy states: "Everybody is volunteering." To which I reply: "That is one of the issues here, so there is a lot of goodwill, a lot of trust and nobody would like to be directive in this organisation." She agrees: "But a little bit of guidance would have been welcome." I wonder to myself; who is expecting what guidance from whom?

At first Lucy shares her knowledge on education in her field of expertise in the UK, at some points I would reply her sharing my knowledge on education related to the online learning environment. Then the conversation gradually changes: Lucy starts asking me lots of questions, while sharing her thoughts by giving me examples from her work in other committees. We do not monitor time and when we end our talk it appears we have been talking for two hours and forty-five minutes exploring the wide range of this online learning project from content to sharing interpretations of communication, analysing interaction amongst the committee members, and with me, and with various other people involved thus painting a picture of how this committee is working and what issues need attention.

Eva

I met her for the first time at the first committee meeting in France, but I never had the chance to speak to her. Only after she couldn't get in the first Skype meeting I spoke to her briefly when testing the Skype connection some days later.

We were to meet at the airport of the city in Greece she lives and works in. After one hour of waiting I call her again and she tells me she can't make it because she is in a meeting. I take a cab to the small apartment I rented. The landlord is surprised I didn't call to say I am coming early, so I explain the situation to him. We chat while he prepares the bedroom. He has worked in the Netherlands, in the same area where my husband is now working. He offers me to show me around in the neighbourhood and I accept his invitation. I end up on the back of his scooter, no helmet, no protection whatsoever. Sightseeing. Talking to him sketches a picture of what impact the financial crisis has on daily life of people living there.

At about five o'clock Eva picks me up with a taxi and we drive to the hospital where she works to pick up her car. She is dressed in a fine blue dress wearing elegant shoes with high heels. She asks me if I would like to see the place she works and yes I do like to see that. Eva shows me around; the hallways and rooms are all colourful and small for the furniture in it. For example; a bed, a chair, a sink, and scales in a room approximately four to three metres. She introduces me to several co-workers as the manager of the online learning project, coming over from Holland. That feels a bit odd to me, like she is working for me instead of me working for her.
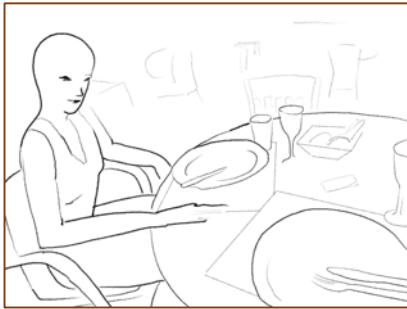
Eva is married and mother of two.
She takes me to a nice restaurant located in a park on a hill somewhere in the city. The half an hour ride offers the opportunity to enjoy the city's scenery and talk about it.

We sit down at a round table in a corner of the restaurant's balcony, overlooking part of the restaurant and a terrace stretching out to the park.

The place is filled with people. I would call it a hot day; that is over thirty degrees Celsius during the day. To Eva this is normal. We order some food and drinks.

A powerful tool

Eva has been introduced to the online learning around three years ago when she participated in one of the society's Schools. After that she has been visiting regularly "to learn some things and to update my notes on some subjects." […] "And for my colleagues to educate themselves. Sometimes you want to tell them; read about that." […] "And sometimes I sit with colleagues to discuss one of the cases." She thinks online learning is a powerful tool for people to educate themselves, independent of the place they live in. And because of her personal involvement with the tool she thought it was a good idea to get more involved by entering the new committee. Eva is teaching a lot at university; it is part of her daily practice and that why it is interesting for her, she says. For example, to find out how to make guidelines for what to do whit specific syndromes.

I check with her view on the suggestions of Angela and Pauline to have the content labelled in level and subject. Eva likes it the way it is as the titles suggests what you see when a patient comes in. But she agrees with Angela and Heleen about their currently task; simplifying the student level. She sees the online learning environment as a tool doctors will outgrow once they get more experienced. That makes her questioning whether CME certification would be interesting for specialists that are no longer in training. "Usually you do not have a lot of time to do this if you are upper level, when you're not in training."[…] "People in training will I think, yeah. Because they are going through exams and it is very useful. But again, in each country they will have their own system. So, if you are in a system you want to follow the system's rules and you will do for example the multiple choices, in the United States, to pass the exams." Eva herself has never printed out certificates of Medscape and CME courses she did in the past fifteen years, for the certificates have no value for her.

I react to her remark, as Simon has pointed out as well, an international standard level of education doesn't exist, if it would mean that the society is going to set a standard by development of this CME courses. "Unless, you set the standard at the end of some points, when somebody has gathered some points, then you get the certificate from the society. This is interesting. So, it shows someone has received online learning training and has passed." I ask her how she sees her own involvement in this CME discussion at the first meeting for example. "Yeah, well, you know, because the other people are more experienced than I am, you know, I didn't talk. Because Anand, he is, he will know about the financial part of everything. So, I didn't want to discuss..."
The survey will enlighten the committee whether to go ahead with this idea. I ask Eva if a target response has been set and she doesn't recall that has been set.

Eva, like Lucy and Angela, is unaware this project has its own annual budget that is requested from a large pharmaceutical company. To her it seems like a lot of money for just PowerPoints. I explain to her why and how the workflow is designed and grown to what it currently is, what the ICT company does and my role in this. I refer to the discussion Patrick is having in regard of the value for money and that the outcome of that is related to the plans of this committee. Eva thinks it is difficult. I answer that all of us walked out of the room after the first committee meeting without knowing each other. "Exactly!" Eva, like Lucy, had no idea and felt everybody else knew each other from the past. I assure her she was not the only one not knowing anybody, only Simon, Heleen and Angela knew each other from working together at some point in their careers. "Oh, that is good", she reacts. And of course, working closely with Simon for the past seven years, I have met Heleen and Angela before. Not to the level of knowing each other though. I tell her meeting most of the committee members made me see that sharing plans and discussing ideas is experienced as being difficult, because nobody knows each other. "Yeah. Like with the e-mails, it is difficult. I read the questions, you know, I agree, ok." […] "I think the fact that you are here

Although we sit in a nice restaurant in the park and level during the conversation, our meeting is more functional than with all other members. Eva shares a vision of what potential the online learning can have in setting a global standard for a high level education by endorsing and providing appropriate certification. Most of the time, like with Angela, Heleen and Lucy, I filled in the blanks regarding the project.
With Eva it was a bit harder to connect, for after one hour and forty minutes her phone rang and she picked up. She had a conversation with what appeared to be her secretary for twenty minutes. I was sitting there looking around and accepting the situation.
In the approximately half an hour after the call she seemed a bit distracted and we talked mainly of the situation she is working in, her busy life as a wife, mother and daughter and the impact the financial and refugee crisis has on her personal life.

today and we are discussing is very helpful. So, this personal exchange of thoughts is very important. And I always prefer that. For example, I always like to talk to somebody instead of e-mailing. But this is not very easy, especially if you don't know the people." I tell her it took me quite some time before I felt I could pick up the phone and call Heleen. Eva shares her experience: "For example, if somebody asks me to do something I will do it, but again, you know… because you are not in a discussion sitting on a round table … For example in the first meeting when they were discussing the UEMS and

education and all the stuff, I presumed that they… in many things, you know, I wasn't entitled to speak. Everyone seemed to be very knowledgeable on that matter…"

"Did you want to ask me anything else about the e-learning."
"No, not really. It's more like a journey… we didn't know each other and now we know a bit more about each other. What we are doing, why we are doing this… For me doing this thesis is a double bind, but it is also my future. How am I going to work for you, with you. This year and the coming year?"

Anand

Like all other committee members Anand has been appointed by the board; he is chairing the committee. Subsequently he has taken up the financial management of this project.
Anand has never discussed financial management, three committee members told me they didn't even know this project has its own budget which is generated by the committee itself, applying for sponsoring annualy.
His communication in discussions and e-mail correspondence show he and Simon allocate budget from opposite perspectives.

Simon decisions origin from feedback from various colleagues and his own experience as a tutor. At annual meetings for example the discussion on privacy has risen a number of times, and it appears there is no international guideline how to deal with this kind of content. Therefore, he decides to manually check users and to provide preregistered codes to society members and sister societies.
Anand checks the costs of this and states the manual check is too expensive. He decides to implement an automated login, and convinces council that the content does not need tight protection for there is plenty more similar material available and easy accessible online.

Regarding facilitating society's School coordinators Anand states, they do not need to be facilitated.
Currently all groups are facilitated from tutor's perspective; customised courses, student progress can be monitored, presentations and other content can be uploaded on request, and other language versions of the content could be added if desired. Participants receive personalised login codes and a click-and-follow manual which buttons to press.
The committee's discussion on this subject is reflected in the minutes of the committee's Skype meeting in March:
"For the society's schools there are separate courses which consist of a selection of chapters and the tutors can monitor the students and the learning process. C (me) asks if we still facilitate these courses, because several courses have chosen a section from the content and some have added their own presentations/cases. A (Anand) proposes that everybody gets access to the general content via an automatic login and that is it. The courses are extra work and there is limited funding. S (Simon) proposes to ask the school coordinators if they want the courses and if they want it then there may be extra

costs. Via the courses the participants get to know the e-learning. H (Heleen) will ask the school coordinators if they want to continue to use the courses and what if costs are involved." Two out of seven Schools do use special opts, minutes of the Skype meeting in June do not state any decision regarding these and other courses.

Another discussion is related to implementing technical adaptions in an open source application. Adaptions make it costlier to update the application because all adaptions need to be redone and tested again.
The decision to customise the live-voting functionality has consequences for costs regarding the technical aspect and the facilitating aspect.
Live-voting is a technique where a tutor interactively presents a clinical case to any number of participants. Participants connect to the case using their mobile phone or tablet or laptop and vote answer options. Results are live fed to the application providing feedback to the tutor and the audience as a group.
Simon has been teaching with audience poll interactivity since the early nineties; it enables the tutor to keep the audience involved. In December 2016, he organises a test with the live voting function embedded in the online learning application. I observe that the trainees, were very helpful in pointing out to Simon which button to press when to show voting results. They brainstorm how to make it more user-friendly. Johan, who is present as well, is asked to make some adaptions to the interface and to the presentation of the analytics. This is Simon's way of thinking; technical adaption to serve the tutor. Subsequently four cases are prepared, which means all questions are manually altered for live voting. Simon and I have a meeting to assist a tutor with a walk through. The tutor is a colleague of Simon who will present the tool at a meeting in Denmark. As a result of that, a person present sends in a request how to get access to this tool, with the intention to spread this information in his network.
From the committees aim point to reach out with the online learning this is positive feedback, from the financial point of view this could mean more investment is needed in facilitating new users. Simon would be happy to facilitate. Hearing the echo of cost reduction discussed, I do presume Anand would be happy to facilitate too if it will not have impact on the current budget.
I suggest to publish a live voting folder in the public section. Anand, Heleen and Simon agree. Johan, the programmer is in CC. He calls: if two tutors login to the same case for a live voting session, it isn't possible to separate the answers that are send in from two different locations. I know, no application ever totally behaves as I assume; Johan and I will find some solutions soon. And this will have impact on the budget. I forward Heleen the resume of our call and I will suggest to put it on the next meeting's agenda.

On committee level, I do miss clear guidance here; what exactly is handed over from whom to whom and with what vision, what targets and what mandate?
This committee's policy switches from content driven to system driven decision making and sometimes ad hoc backward within one sub-project, e-mail thread or agenda issue. It has never been discussed how this committee will bring this project further to what goals.

In March, I invite Anand, like all other committee members. His reply is positive, although he writes to be out of the country most of the time till after May 16th.

Between May 1st and May 30th, I send him three more invitations to meet, offering Skype call as an alternative. I receive no answer. Work-related mail is answered though. Heleen sends out a suggestion to meet in person to prepare for the annual meeting where not everybody will be present. To support this idea, I answer to that providing feedback from various conversations I had. "Along the way I have learned about the questions and the several perspectives that exist to look at this e-learning activity - from historical background to future plans and from very local initiatives and ideas to global platform ideas - budget and amount of (voluntarily and paid) work are related to which ideas the committee sees fit to incorporate into their long term vision and strategy and active advocacy of the portal. The council is supportive, but the online learning environment has to get out of development status in order to give proof of its value for the society. […]" Anand answers to this thread: "Will not manage to take a day off during a week day, till mid October. I have too much travel already planned for June, July and August. […]"

I feel neglected and a bit irritated for receiving no answer to all my invitation e-mails, but I do realise that is my problem. This answer shows Anand is even too busy to take responsibilities as a chair of this committee. Subsequently I send in a reflection to a specific e-mail thread from possibly his and from my perspective, inviting him to react to this and to start a dialogue.
No reaction. *(Appendix V)*
A few days later the committee has a Skype call.

> Previous conversations related to this committee learn nobody knows the chair. Simon and Heleen regularly ask if I have managed to set a date with him. And related to various issues, I have regularly encouraged both Simon and Heleen to contact Anand by phone or Skype, especially because e-mail correspondence for them too, is a blockage to connect. They haven't spoken to him yet.
> Hence, there is no dialogue at all with this chair. Anand applied to be a chair in this committee, but is too busy to act according to his role. I decide to act on a different level and send him a reflection how his quick answers do have consequences. This committee is context driven; social orientation is dominating within the group; the chair is self-referenced and is directive in his communication, using the budget as a power-tool. (Van Dinten & Schouten, 2011) A conflict seems inevitable and the committee is expected to disintegrate if nothing changes.

Financial legacy related to technical development.
For the first ten years, technical development and content creation has been on the priority list. It takes time before a chapter is published, sometimes more than two years. Initially Simon is convinced; the number of users will grow exponentially through advertisement once the online environment is completed. Later he experiences that it isn't that easy to reach out on a global scale, using the society's newsletter and demonstrations and flyers at the annual meeting do not live up to the expected growth of the number of users.

Part of it is due to severe setbacks at start-up: initial users, most colleagues from within the direct circle of active society members, experience trouble to access the website. Once they are in, the website appears to have numerous bugs. When I start working with Simon I do receive lots of requests for help; users complain about the buggy system. All VIP users, as Simon calls them, the first few months I am e-mailing back and forth constantly testing the system. The application is instable; it crashes regularly and it generates bugs. I remember uploading images that spontaneously disappeared, pages that could not be edited, save buttons unable to save, etcetera. The ICT company

responsible for it is not capable of stabilising the system within the limits of the proposed budget. Another ICT company takes over the project and fails too; at the 2010 meeting, I present the project navigating around numerous bugs. This company suggests to rebuild the application. He is granted permission to do so with the restriction to keep the costs within the given budget.

During the summer of 2011, I give instruction to five medical students how to upload all existing content. The framework isn't fully operational yet.

I try to convince Simon and the ICT director to postpone uploading until the framework is fully operational and tested. They state development and uploading must and can go parallel, arguing it is of crucial importance to present a fully operational website at the annual meeting. At the annual meeting, I present a partly operational website. The ICT company fails to deliver a bug free version of the application in time and within available budget. In 2012 the society's council votes to stop the online learning project, because of the costs. The treasurer and the chair of the education committee protest against it. The treasurer sends a letter that council will no longer support new initiatives that lack sponsoring. The online learning project now solely depends on sponsoring of a large pharmaceutical company. To cut the costs on current and further development, the director of the ICT company suggests to implement an open source framework. Being caught between the pressure to deliver and the ever-raising ICT costs Simon agrees with this suggestion. Johan is introduced as the new programmer. I instruct two students to upload all existing content. At the annual meeting 2012, I demonstrate a third version of the online environment.

It runs bug free and has never crashed once.

In January 2013, the ICT company unexpectedly files for bankruptcy and all contracts are filed under a curator. Within a few weeks after that, a couple of the programmers who worked for that company, find themselves an investor and start up their own company. They offer all former clients a new contract plus guarantee that they will buy their project from the curator. Council and Simon feel they do not have much of a choice here and sign a new contract. Johan is employed by the new ICT company and will stay on as the projects programmer.

Value for money

Currently the online learning environment allows full use of the portal on personal computers, tablets and smart phones running on various operating systems. The team that facilitates the committee consists of the programmer, two students in Medicine and myself.

Over two hundred authors have contributed and over four-thousand-five-hundred accounts have been created since 2013. Value of these analytics have not been discussed in detail.

Patrick commented on the current financial status of the project: "And I just felt it needed to be on a, it needs to be on a more sound financial footing moving forward. Or… it needs to be so brilliant that the society says well this is worth paying for, it's worth us paying for it, without having to worry about sponsorship. We will support this, because it is such good value to our members, but I don't think we have achieved that. If it is done and it becomes so important. You know we pay for a website, because it is so important. If online learning, is so important that we have to invest in it year after

year than we do it, but we have to see the evidence of that. […] But you're right, if we develop it as a platform, it becomes of value for all of the areas of the society."

Reaching out.

On June 8th Patrick, senior operating officer Zara, Anand and Heleen have a Skype meeting. In the minutes, I read that Patrick has shared and discussed with the chair and co-chair council's vision on developing the online learning into a platform regarding sustainability of the project. Various ideas are discussed regarding the organisation of the online learning website, for example; resource limited countries section being a separated project supported by a sponsor and perhaps in the future by donations from affiliated sister societies; CME certification and the yearbook in a section to generate income from paying customers; perhaps a section providing congress presentations in video; guidelines and links to other branch related online information.
In the Skype call of the committee a few weeks later, on June 26th, I ask Anand how this new development will be organised; who of the committee will be doing what in what timeframe. Anand states the development of the platform is not for the committee to decide. My face shows a big question mark written on it: "Is it not?"

Problem definition and research question reformulated
How do all these stories and observations relate to the original problem definition and research question:
How to change the way of organising to shift the focus from technical and content development to continuity and global implementation of the online learning environment within an organisational context of various emergent changes and where its existence is dependent on a body of volunteers that is loosely bound by shared medical expertise and a society's mission statement?

The committee who is leading the online educational project lacks a clear view how this committee is organised. Committee members rely on the assumption the chair knows.

Does the chair know?
The chair lives on a tight agenda. He works in his laboratory, is committed to research projects, is engaged in private education and travels a lot having talks related to his field of research.
Online learning is one of the lesser priorities in his schedule.

I make some inquiries with the senior operating officer regarding the recruitment, to see if the council has addressed the organisational context regarding council's support for this project in relation to its sustainability. Council hasn't. *(Appendix VI)*
In the advertisement, the recruited chair has been invited to take up responsibility *"for the development of the society's online education strategy. Members are invited to apply for the position of Chair of this exciting new committee. This is a fantastic opportunity for the successful candidate to make a real difference to one of the society's core missions; education. The Chair will drive the development of the society's successful online learning website, explore online learning initiatives that help extend the life of our*

annual meeting and expand the reach of the society's training and activities to wider audiences." Stating the position *"would be well suited to a candidate with a keen interest and knowledge of online education"*.

Applicants are invited to send an e-mail outlining their suitability and their curriculum vitae. In December 2015, the council has appointed Anand as chair and Heleen as co-chair.

After the chairs are in post the vacancy for four committee members goes out: "The Committee aims to serve as a forum for expanding and developing the online education activities of the society and to ensure that society members have continued access to the educational resources of the Society." Subsequently the committee members have been recruited, selected and appointed by the council in the second quarter of 2016.

This committee is appointed by the council, but the organisational context has never been discussed. The secretary general states he does not like to micro manage a committee, still council evaluates the effectiveness of the committee's work related to continue or discontinue support for the committee's activity.

Any strategy that this committee will develop should relate to council's standard to become effective. The chair is not showing any behaviour he is engaged in defining the online learning's value for money standard nor quantitative nor qualitative targets in relation to the committee's organisational picture that determines interrelationships between activities and members, and assigns roles, responsibilities, and mandates different tasks.

Based on the value for money concept council intervenes at project level without discussing its organisational context by introducing new developments, which will have conceptual, managerial, technical, and financial implications.

The chair comments it is not for the committee to decide on the organisational context of this new development.

This thesis research itself is in fact an intervention encouraging all participants to change the current situation they are in. (Van Nistelrooij & De Wilde, 2008). The authors refer to Lewin if they state it is crucial to see the individual, the group and the organisation as a social entity; in order to see the trees and the forest. So they can learn how their organisation is organised, or to be more specific in this context to learn how they can organise themselves.

Committee members do not ask questions; feeling the most less experienced on that subject; feeling the need to hold back not to start a conflict; feeling hesitant to contact the chair; feeling too low in the hierarchy to do so; feeling the only one not knowing any of the other members… Most of them felt confident with feeling the only one not knowing at first, expecting the chair to guide them from a broader perspective.

As I discussed with Simon, Heleen and Lucy, becoming a team is crucial for a committee to function. Especially because all work is done in extra time from places spread out over various countries. And the chair is showing no pro-activity in organising the team. The potential and ambition moving a project forward will disintegrate at the same pace its priorities on the committee members' lists will disappear.

Therefore, the research question of this thesis has changed to:

> **How to empower these committee members to organise themselves enabling them to shift focus from technical and content development to continuity and global implementation of the online learning environment within an organisational context of various emergent changes and where its existence is dependent on a body of volunteers, loosely bound by shared medical expertise and a society's mission statement and targets?**

Action research has enabled all participants and myself to build close interaction on a variety of processes simultaneously. In the beginning, I consciously have put myself in

the role of researcher during meetings, phone-calls and reading e-mail. Towards the end I consciously have put myself in the role of freelancer doing the task list. And not only because work dropped, but also because requests for feedback and guidance in the organisational context are increasing.

> Reflecting my own learning cycle as a student action researcher: I am used to work in different groups of people, most of the time in an open and/or social oriented context yet often framed in a tight time schedule. Subsequently I am used to give and receive immediate feedback when interacting, even unasked for. During this research, I have learned to listen and to observe more carefully, leaving more space to others. Allowing to explore in depth, if desired.

To visualise the changes in interrelations before and after visiting most committee members, I have compared observations of a Skype call in March. This call marks the start of this research period, I just have had my first meeting, with Samah. And with a Skype call in June, which marks the end of this research period of which data is used in this thesis. The figure shows interaction has increased significantly; most committee members were actively sharing ideas, questions. The numbered rows follow discussion rounds corresponding with items on the agenda.
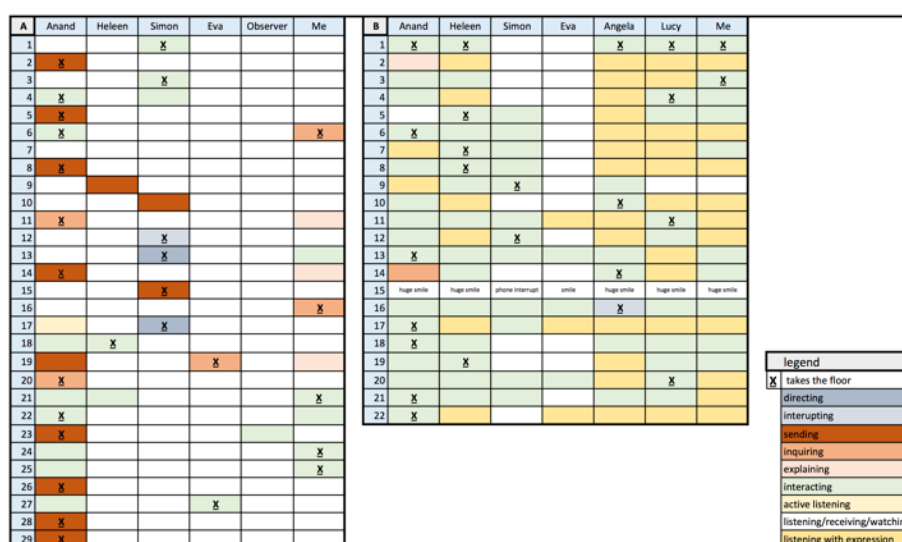

Figure 1: Depiction of interaction, vertical numbers are following topics that originate from the agenda. A - Skype meeting March 22nd. Note:Angela could not attend, Lucy was unable to connect and on council's request an observer was present. B – Skype meeting June 26th with all committee members present.

Invitation to my BBQ.

The main characters that I have visited are all part of the commissioning party I work for. I plan on inviting them to a BBQ at the allotment. To celebrate my graduation following the completion of this master thesis.

I make all invitations by hand. All invitees receive a personal text of course and a request to see their presence as their gift to me. I send the invitations out by post. In my perception, a special occasion needs special attention to share the acknowledgement it is special. The biggest challenge is getting everyone together at the same date. From experience, I know this is seldom achieved on a fixed date. So, I create an event called BBQ in an online schedule maker and send out options and a request to let me know any food allergies. What never happens does happen; apart from the fact that everybody accepts the invitation entering their availability the schedule shows one Saturday where all checkers are green! Even writing this down as a fictional story, I can't believe everybody is going to attend my BBQ. I am truly happy about it they all will be there.

The garden me and my husband rent is about two-hundred-and-eighty-square-metres. In the back of it, we have built a tiny wooden house measuring twenty-five square metres and three-and-a-half metres high. The wood is stained with anthracite and the frames with mahogany. The place is fully equipped for us being there during weekends and short holidays and for having up to twenty guests. Left of the house we made a terrace with a transparent roof over it. Grapevines creep underneath; it looks like we will pick our first grapes next year. Various coulisses are surrounding the house and the terrace; racks with climbing plants, high and low shrubs, and (fruit) trees start to create small sceneries. Since we started this project only four years ago, the garden still needs some time to grow into shape. Nevertheless, for us it already is a special place to be.

Friday night, I write down all groceries to make several salads and several dishes with meat and prawns. Saturday morning, we buy all groceries on the way to the allotment. Immediately after arrival, I start preparing the food. In the meantime, my husband places chairs and side tables at various places of the garden and prepares the BBQ.

All guests are due to arrive about five o'clock in the afternoon. At around four forty-five I am at a corner of the access road that runs from the gate, about twenty-five metres from where I stand, to the parking place. Every time a car comes to the gate I call in to the gate's number to open it. The first four cars are "neighbours" coming in, they wave

when they drive by. It is Saturday and quite busy with "gardeners" who stay here on weekends. A few of them pass by on bicycles, an acquaintance stops for a minute to update me on the latest seedlings he has recently put in his greenhouse. If I would like to have some I should come by in spring. I tell him I love to. The beautiful special border plants and grasses he gave me a few months ago are doing well in our garden. Rene and his husband both are hospitable people; we visited each other a few times during last season.

The car with Simon, Heleen, Patrick and Lucy in it arrives. Simon has picked them up at the train station. Patrick and Lucy flew in from the UK and then took the train, Heleen came in by train from the north of the country. The four of them are the first to arrive. Simons parks his car and we welcome each other. I receive congratulations from all shaking hands, and kisses with Heleen and Lucy. Patrick looks around and is laughing: "So, this is the community you are chairing, isn't it?" I tell him: "Not any more. All of us are kind of kicked out recently". "Kicked out?!" "It started with one volunteer complaining her work load became too heavy. We worked on empowering committees to start taking up more responsibilities themselves and not leave everything to her. Then her initial complaint bent to accusations we took everything away from her." They all laugh. "Subsequently a group of supporters causing us sleepless nights throwing accusations. We decided it was best to hand over all responsibilities to her and her supporters. For this is a hobby, right?" Lucy is curious: "Where have you been accused of?" "Spending too much money unauthorised, which we could easily disprove. All the rest was personal on relational level." Patrick states chairing local community groups is different from branch related committees. He shares an experience organising a village race each year. Simon wants to know if Patrick is racing himself. "No, good heavens, no! Watching others racing is excitement enough for my taste." Laughing out loud.

Walking down the path Simon, Heleen, Patrick and Lucy enjoy the wide variety of the gardens we pass. Every garden has its own tiny house. No two of them are the same, dependent on how the owners spend their time in it. Some live there throughout summer season, others only during the weekends.
At our garden, I show them around. On the terrace, I introduce them to my husband, Derek, who is welcoming the guests with his huge smile. He offers them drinks explaining he will help with the catering during dinner after which he will leave. Simon, who has met my husband more often, is joking if I am always that harsh to him and they both engage in well-yeah-after-you-marry-them-you-get-to-know-them kind of stuff. Lucy states it is only natural for men to need clear guidance from their wives and women in general. Patrick agrees. We all laugh. All food and drinks are placed on a table flanked by the BBQ. I invite my guests: "Please feel at liberty to pick up chairs and be seated where ever you wish. Or to prepare your own food and drinks as desired and of course you can ask Derek to do it for you. Especially if you are a woman…" Grinning.

Heleen is the first one to see Angela walking through our small gate, with her bicycle. She walks toward Angela exclaiming: "Hey hello. Did you cycle all the way over here?" Angela laughing: "I noticed this place is only fifteen minutes away from my home!" Lucy comes in smiling: "Nice bike! Typical Dutch to travel by bike, isn't it?" We all greet, and Angela congratulates me with a kiss on each cheek.

I show her where to park her bike and walk her to the terrace while talking about our garden and the history of this place.

Simon and Patrick have taken a seat in the sun on the lawn in front of the tiny house. I leave Angela in the care of my husband and the others to walk up to the gate once more, since I received a text message Anand will be arriving in a taxi in about ten minutes, he flew in from Switzerland.

Anand walks to the pedestrian entrance when I am about ten metres from him away. Apparently, his taxi took off already. We great each other with a handshake and I ask him if he had a nice flight. He says it was ok. I smile: "Isn't it that you are traveling by plane like most of us here are travelling by car?" "I guess, he says, I have been flying around the world quite a bit lately." He tells me he where he has been in the past month involved in quite some research projects if I understand correctly. He is living a very busy and tight schedule. "While I am here I will meet some of my current obligations and I will be off no later than ten tonight, ok." "Sure", I say and change the subject to the surroundings. He is listening with a smile.

While Anand is saying hello to everybody, Derek is getting him some tea. On the bench a few metres away from the terrace, Angela is sharing clinical experiences with Lucy. Heleen and Simon are near the entrance of the tiny house with my husband who is entertaining them with anecdotes from the gardener's world. Meanwhile he sets fire to the BBQ using a Firestarter. I walk towards them to pour myself a glass of tea, while watching my guests and overhearing patches of different conversations. Anand sets himself next to Patrick, asking how he is doing. "I'm doing well, thank you, quite busy… but you are quite busy yourself, aren't you Anand?"

"Yes, yes, just got an article on CYP17A1 inhibitor abiraterone published. And currently, I am involved in much traveling for …"

My phone receives a text message that Eva, who flew in from Greece, is about to arrive. I head off to the gate.

The taxi is waiting at the gate. When I am near it, Eva gets out and walks through the pedestrian entrance. We greet each other with a kiss on each cheek. She apologises for being late, because her plane was delayed on departure. She brought a long warm coat, because it is about fifteen degrees Celsius cooler here in the Netherlands. Walking down the path I ask her how she and her family are doing. And we talk about the things we see in all those different gardens we pass.

Eva is welcomed. She receives her drink after which she walks over to Heleen. "Thank you for your information on Dr. Hannah, she was really helpful with the case." "O, I am glad to hear that, yes she is a nice person. I consulted her once too." They update each other on several subjects they shared when they met in September. Simon walks over to Patrick and Anand asks them if he can get them another drink. He can. After getting a glass of wine for all three of them he is seated next to Patrick and Anand.

I take a chair and walk over to Angela and Lucy who are still on the bench discussing health care in suburbs. In the hospital where Angela is working people can really get aggressive when they feel you will not help them, because you will not write a recipe for antibiotics for a normal flu that usually will be over in a week time. "They actually slam

their fists on the appointments counter to claim their rights. Then security has to come in and… sometimes, it is… yeah… a kind of sheer drama in our hospital." "Oh, how awful, but isn't there anyone who can do something about that?" "No I guess. People here are so rude compared to the people I have treated in Canada for example. How can you stop them behaving like this?" I laugh: "That would make a challenging research project." "Hahaha, yes I am in!", says Angela lifting her right hand upwards. Lucy is laughing: "I guess I am really lucky our patients in our hospital are much politer." Angela continues: "Lucky you! You don't have all those endless discussions with for example diabetes patients about having diabetes and the relation with it to their own lifestyle?" "Oh, yes, I guess life style is a difficult one for most people, isn't it? Although I must say in our regional hospital it is all fairly within limits compared to what I hear from colleagues in large general hospitals." "How has it changed the way you address patients? For example, the young patients that are asking you for a gastric band to lose weight instead of discipline themselves eating healthy food and doing sports." "I try to convince them a gastric band is not a solution if they do not change their life style as well, but… ehm… yeah the medical centre is taking patients that age in, so…"

Derek breaks in: chicken garam masala and marinated prawns are ready to be served with salads and bread. We all get up and cue up at the BBQ and take some food on a plate to the table on the terrace. People are passing side dishes like cucumber, pickled vegetables (atjar tjampoer), asparagus, coleslaw, etcetera. Conversations continue and do get a bit more personal.

Derek is serving semi home-made hamburgers and pork tenderloin. Heleen is in conversation with Eva; her hospital is cooperating with a national private organization that will take over regular care in specific areas of her field of expertise. At the moment, she can't oversee possible consequences this will have for her job. Eva shares her situation working in a general hospital in Greece where national, and especially public health care system is suffering from the financial crisis and a growing number of patients who come to Greece as refugees, while being understaffed. It means working long hours on a low salary.

Simon asks why hospitals are understaffed. "Because, you know, doctors will try to work in the private sector or abroad." "What does that mean for education in Greece", Lucy asks. "I don't know, it's difficult…" I tell them Samah told me a similar story of qualified doctors leaving Sudan to go work abroad, her idea was training more doctors would eventually result in more doctors that would stay. Eva disagrees, because training more doctors is not helpful in improving working conditions in public healthcare.

It seems all guests are satisfied and my husband starts cleaning the table.

Heleen, Angela and I help clearing the table. Derek takes the glowing coal to the chiminea, a front-loading fireplace with a bulbous body and a chimney, at the open end of the terrace and puts some logs on it. Evening civil twilight has set in and temperature is dropping.

Derek invites everyone to pick up their chair and be seated at the fire while he will clean up the table and the BBQ. They all gather by the fire.

Lucy and I serve them coffee and tea. Simon helps my husband fold the table. I take a chair to join my guests. My husband leaves for home and comes over to say good-bye. He is complimented for the food, replying: "Thank you, I did not do all of it myself, I had

some help." "Well of course", I laugh. Simon says: "At home, I do all of it! Every day! I make sure I have done all the shopping and cooking before my wife gets home from work. Since I am with emirate I have to… to stop me from working she says…" Laughter spreads across the table. My husband leaves us laughing and waving.

Patrick seizes the moment to extent the joke of Simon's wife preventing Simon from holding on to his profession. And is serious when he asks Simon about how he sees the future regarding his work for the online learning environment. Simon would like to finish the start-up; that is generating the main content of this special section and completing translation in five languages. Anand is listening. Lucy asks Simon if his work is to be continued by the separate steering group. Simon thinks it should. Patrick and Anand agree. Lucy asks: "But why is it under this committee than? It's getting more complex this way, isn't it?" Anand replies this section is in the online learning environment, but not under the committee's budget. So, it is separate from the rest of the online learning: "It is not our responsibility, nor is it the society's. And if their budget is spent, their steering committee should take care of bringing in new budget."

"Who will do that?", Heleen asks.

"Well my successor will", Simon says.

"Simon", I ask, "who will take care of your succession?"

Patrick replies: "Council could..."

Simon interrupts: "I will discuss this with the steering committee, because I think it should be one of them taking over."

"But I don't understand. Why it should stay separated from the other activities in the online environment after content is all completed", Heleen says, "It is part of the online learning environment and everybody can use it the same way like the other parts."

Lucy: "It has all to do with the budget, isn't it? If this would become one budget, the costs of this whole project will be increasing with every new language and every new content update."

"Exactly", Anand says, "and we already are doing everything possible to cut the costs. That's why we want all other societies to donate for this section of the online learning."

Angela: "Who do you mean by we? Council and us?"

Patrick: "Yes, development of the online learning has been very costly. Up till now most of the budget has been sponsored, but the society is responsible for weighing money for value each year. We at council level do not want to disinvest in it and that's where CME and the platform come in… I think we need to have a discussion how to achieve this and where council can help this committee in developing a strategy on online learning as a platform. Perhaps with three or four work streams in it, a budget indication and committee member responsibility tied to each work stream, and an advocacy plan how to make it visible within the society."

Anand: "Yes, once we have brought costs down and implemented CME to generate income, we can discuss with council if the society might take up responsibility to guarantee sustainability of the online learning."

Heleen: "I think you did a good job with the automated login, Anand, and personally I am glad you took up finances, because I am not good at that. But perhaps you are a bit too decisive without consulting us, because we do not know where we stand."

Lucy: "Yes, this creates a bit of hierarchy, isn't it? As a member, I accept that. But I feel I am not important as a committee member, if I am left out of important discussions."

Eva: "But Anand, I read and hear you are so busy with so many important things. Could it be you have no time left for discussion? And can we help? I for example, wrote to Heleen and Angela because we were working on updating together, I needed some private time and they were patient with me."

Anand: "I wrote to you all I was on a tight schedule, but it's no problem to do tasks. It's all simple things that needed to be done and that I did."

Heleen: "Yes of course, the same goes for all of us, I think…"

Lucy: "Because we all have to do it in extra time! I think it's communications that we miss, and indeed, as Patrick was offering to help with, agenda with an action plan and deadline. This is what I am used to in all my other committees. I chair a national committee. We all have our objective, every year, we have a work plan for the year, maybe several projects. But once we finish, we move on, then we meet at the national conference. And then the next year there is the next work plan. The evening before the conference I organise a restaurant where we have dinner, no time schedule, no agenda. Everybody gets to know each other which makes it easy to connect when you are back home. For example, if one of my committee members, delegated to a project of which he is the lead, is not meeting his deadline, I call him: 'Nigel, you need to do this.' It's about working as a team and as a chair I must drive it."

Me: "Anand, every member of this committee is willing to help you to get this committee organised. Could you accept their help?

Anand: "Sure! But I am really sorry, it is nearly ten, I have to leave."

Me: "I'll walk you to the gate."

Angela: "Could you let us know how we can help?"

Anand: "Sure, I will, I will be in touch in a week or three."

Eva, Patrick and Simon are leaving as well. Since Heleen and Lucy will be staying with me, Simon offers to give them a lift to the train station, which they accept. Everybody is saying goodbye wishing all a safe trip home.

I walk them to the parking place. Before Anand gets into Simon's car I ask him: "Suppose you would not be able to accept the help of your fellow committee members for any reason; would it be negotiable to formalise your role as a treasurer and hand over the role of chair to save this committee from disintegrating?"

> I would be happy to throw a BBQ at my place with all of you in real life somewhere in the near future.

Reflection.

On methodology and my role as a freelancer/researcher.

In relation to the practical relevance of this research, the action research approach has been an adequate fit. Since this online learning project has a different and variable position on all participants' priority lists and there is no time table at all, one of the challenges was whether the timespan of each action-reaction cycle would be sufficient to work with. My visits with individual participants have been crucial to set things in motion and to keep momentum. It has been pursuing interaction spreading across country borders without participants physical meeting each other.

Having both my positions, researcher and freelancer, intertwined did indeed allow me to establish a close interaction with various participants on a variety of processes simultaneously. At first my position of freelancer was dominant and I very consciously stepped in and out the researcher's roll. After a few visits both roles received an equal share of my time. Towards the end of this research process I experienced a bit of trouble stepping back into the role of the freelancer I used to be, taking action on the practical level. Due to all information, my focus seemed and still is irreversibly changed from taking immediate action on the practical level to the process of empowering the participants to take action on an organisational level, broadening my skills as a freelancer as well. On the other hand, the positions of a freelancer or a researcher are not that far apart, for both require the ability to stay involved with a project and all the people (temporarily) committed to it at a rather distant position.

A qualitative scientific research process differs from an artistic research process in one major aspect: validity criteria. Triangulation is part of the action research methodology used: interpretations and ideas from all participants and the researcher are shared and checked back and forth and checked with relevant documents and correspondence. Related to that, I used member check to discuss analyses and conclusions with some of the participants.
In multiple peer debriefing sessions with and without my coach present, I have discussed this research and parts of it have been read by some of my peers. Furthermore, I have discussed this research process in face-to-face meetings with my coach.
At first I have looked into keeping a journal or even an audit trail; there I lost myself in details, for especially during the first few months I did not have any idea what would become important enough to write down. When speaking of my own thoughts and/or ideas: inside my head lives a continuous stream, especially when working on a project. My artistic mind has developed a kind of natural filter, perhaps to be seen as a variation of keeping a journal: I use the bulk of information and time as a filter where the more useful thoughts and ideas surface. These I implement in action. I started ordering data after screening six months of correspondence and after processing the first couple of interviews. To steer this process, I created an unfold document with post-it notes on it in coloured codes; labelling various ongoing matters, action taken and planned, persons connected. This document has been the fundament for the decision to write a thick

description in chronological order picturing how information and insights did grow during this research process for each of the participants and of course for myself.

Another challenge was getting all committee members involved in this research process. March 10th, I have sent the first half of invitations, by the end of June, I gave up the hope to be able to arrange a meeting with the chair.
I could not find any theoretical insights or methodological tools that would help me out with the question how to deal with missing a main character's input from an in-depth conversation. Subsequently I have described the chair from using parts of written text in assignments from the previous semester and through describing and citing parts of his e-mail correspondence with other committee members and myself and two observations from Skype calls. After writing my conclusion I decided the discussion should have the format of a fictional narrative; as an empowering tool. Here I have fully relied on my artistic skills: looking for inspiration writing dialogue for this character I visited his website and had a look at his publications. Then I pictured a setting, my garden house at the allotment, and an action, a BBQ, in which I allowed the discussion-story to arise from my mind that was filled with relevant information from the past few months.

The scientific relevance of this research lies in proven effectiveness of the action research methodology in given context: empowering a committee of loosely bound volunteers spread across various countries acting without any formal contract nor time table and lacking a physical office where people can meet each other.
The social relevance of this research lies in the generalisability and recognisability of specific situations to learn from related to communicating, interrelating, and organising.

On literature.

The last months of this process I have had regular calls from and to and visits from and to two of my peers during which we discussed our progress. One of these peers called to tell he was working on an extensive literature review and how he was doing that. I replied I had screened a lot of articles and read a lot of books concluding it gave me in-depth knowledge and inspiration on methodology, process consulting, context and so on. I only had selected a few citations that I thought were substantial additions to specific part of the text in this thick description. For example, I re-read "An anthropologist on Mars" (1995), by Oliver Sacks to learn from the way he is describing specific cases: open, non-judgemental and with in-depth knowledge of the people and the context he is describing, broadening my view how every individual mind is a work of art in itself and that this should be acknowledged when researching in a field of emergent change where interrelations play an important part. And I did not cite from it. I figured citations should make a substantial addition to this thick description in understanding this specific research.

On my personal learning process.

As I stated in the Preface and acknowledgements, it has been a steep learning curve. I learned so many new things, that it would be impossible to describe every aspect of this learning process. Yet the most important learning aspect of conducting this research probably has been the experience how an open, preferably not time framed, face to face conversation is a powerful, yet very open and non-judgemental intervention to help managing a process of emergent changes. I could not have foreseen how these eight unique visits would affect interrelations in relatively such a short period of time.

Apart from learning to think and act from a business-related perspective, the methodology of action research allowed me to challenge myself and experiment how to entwine my artistic competences in conducting this research.

Being an open, rational, social and self-referential freelancer, I have gained better insight in reading what is asked and what I can offer. This allows me to make a better decision which responsibilities I will be able to handle and what position I need to be in to do so and therefore I can be more open without hitting a wall.

On the master study.

The first semester almost killed my self-confidence. Coming from a creative branch, I almost drowned in the cultural differences that I experienced, the second semester made up for that, especially with the International Project in Cape Town. Although I had a bit of a false start here too: reading the assignment I interpreted it for being a subject related group research assignment. Therefore, I took five possible subjects to the first lesson expecting a short brainstorm after which everybody would have committed to a subject. Instead all groups were already formed and no group had a subject. And me and one other person did not have a group. Four ambitious men I hardly knew took me in their group. It was a beautiful experience and I learned a lot sprouting with them on how to organise and conduct this international research. This experience gave me confidence designing and doing this international master thesis. The third semester I felt even more in place, although I would have preferred Management of Change as the only specialisation, to give it all attention it deserves. The fourth semester, if you have reached this point of the thesis, you have just read all about it.

In short, the curriculum of this study has not only offered me various perspectives in organisational approaches, and words to describe business and research related processes and subjects, but it also has offered me a perspective to enable a career change that fits my competences and my personal bias.

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Appendix I

[url to website online learning environment] / [New Committee] Transfer Meeting 29-02

On Monday February 29, 2016, Anand, Heleen , Conny and Simon met at the Hospital. Previously a large set of files containing all past and current aspects of the [online learning] project were made available to Anand and Heleen through the cloud. Note: An overview of these files will also be made available to secretariat [of the society].
First a tour was given through the handover files, [the cloud] and the […] portal.
Subsequently priorities for the near and more distant future were discussed:

1. Working procedures, constitution of on line committee and designation of tasks.
   Request for a CM system like Elsevier/Frontier to automate to-do lists and monitor content acquisition and reviews etc.
   Getting 2-3 more committee members.
   Easier login procedures.
2. Content
   Current chapters and cases: updating.
   Current chapters and cases: grading core/advanced.
   Creating new content (strategy and planning).
   Updating glossary.
   Development forum?
   Links with websites such as [urls examples]
   Making partial content available without login.
   An overview of e-learning content on main page.
3. Evaluation of current collaboration coordinators of the […] Schools and consolidation of their involvement:
   Participation of […] Schools in [the committee].
   Asking […] School teachers to put content online (through [the online learning environment] or other platforms).
   Asking students to evaluate and use an online system during courses to get course slides and notes / reprints uploaded by teachers.
   Making a permanent online page for each regular […] School, and allowing students access to content after the school.
4. Evaluation of current experience of 'courses'
   Development of course strategy (bachelor/master level; involvement of universities)
5. Development of elearning CME courses
   Objectives; target groups and content
   Increased motivation of students?
   Financial aspects.
6. Collaboration with sister societies
   Global scope
   Expanding content and editorial board.
   Promotion of use.
   Contribution to operating budget.
   Change of name for [online learning environment] if a joint venture with other societies is planned?
7. Budget
   Current budget discussion with [pharmaceutical company] 2016/2017
   Business plan upcoming 5 years with objective to obtain financial stability.
   Involvement of sister societies
   Structure of technical/administrative support
   Backup plans for keeping the website of E-learning and its content.
8. [annual] Meeting in [France] 2016
   Symposium on line learning: current achievements; [sister society] Guidelines; the view of a medical educationalist; study results assessment of competencies
   Meeting with [committee of education].
9. Publicity
   [Society's] news bulletin
   Kind of online flyer for new users
   Other…

Appendix II

Dividing the [online learning] tasks in new [committee] effective 15.9.2016

Chief Editors: Chairs of [committee] (Currently Anand and Heleen)
Editors: committee members (Currently Simon, Eva, Angela, Lucy) or invited topic editors
Content Manager, Designer and Illustrator: Conny (Also co-ordinates IT tasks)

Notes:
- We may consider whether use of students to check and serve in between for uploading content is to be now discontinued, as […] committee members will check content, which will be at all times in google drive anyway or in an editorial manager system. This is a redundant task.

- Some of the new content may be through [research journals]. Anand presented this idea to [journal] editorial board, who agreed in principle to give it a try. So for potentially important and high impact chapters, committee chairs will propose new review articles (avoiding similar content already in [journal]) to [journal] review editors. [journal] will consider and approve new review articles of joint interest, invite authors and manage the reviewing and publication process for journal. Content will be modified and used as a chapter in [online learning environment]. [Journal] will have a link to content on [online learning environment].

New content
- Editors propose topics and authors for new content.
- [Committee] discusses and approves new content idea and authors.
- Author is invited to send in content by an editorial manager interface (Chief Editors, and editorial board members: Full members of [committee])
- Content to editorial manager (by author)
- Inviting reviewers (Editors)
- reviewer's comments (2 reviewers per chapter/case)
- Revisions if required by reviewers and editor
- Decision to accept by editor forwarded to chief editors
- Chief editors check and final decision
- Adding new illustrations, if required by editors. (Content manager)
- Formatting and upload into [online learning] website (by content manager)

Content updates (One member will take lead for each topic and be responsible)
- Committee members discuss and review old content or get opinions from colleagues and experts about need for updates of old chapters.
- Committee decides which chapters need updates and prepares a list in order of priority
- Author is invited to update content by responsible editor
- Editor checks coordinates updates, using reviewers if needed.
- Editor forwards the decision to chief editors.
- Final decision by chief editors.
- Adding updated illustrations (content manager, only if any additional benefit is seen)
- Formatting and upload into e-learning website (Content manager)

Courses
- Strategy on development of the variety of courses (internal and external)
- Internal courses: establishing growth in the use of [online learning in society's] schools
- Potential lecture material from [society] members who are involved in teaching at universities?
- Since two projects will already run at same time, and funding is coming from donations, a paid option no longer needs to be pursued. Instead, a contribution from other societies, or their help with continued funding is to be discussed with international consortia.

Partner Societies
- Inviting them to participate in creating content. **This will now be done at International level, once the new [online learning] name and scope is formalized.** More members may join the editorial team from other societies. This will require a robust editorial management system in the format of a journal.
- Promoting the use of the content - direct links on their sites
- Participation in funding the [online learning environment]. To be pursued next year at International meeting in [USA].

Online meetings for ongoing and planned task lists
- [Committee] core members and content manager will participate in 3 online meetings per year to monitor and address new content, revisions etc
- Content manager to provide updates 4 times a year on progress of projects and tasks completed. This will be for discussion and planning during annual and skype meetings. Proposed dates for reports are 15 January, 15 April, 15 July and 15 October.
- Committee online meetings can be planned 2-4 week after updates.

Billing and finances
- [Committee] chairs will approve paid tasks in advance
- Content manager will send invoices for approved tasks addressed to [Society] to the [committee] chairs who will check, approve and forward those for payment to [Society].
- Content manager will coordinate IT tasks with webmaster.
- Accounts will be held by [Society] who will sign the contracts with webmaster and content manager.
- [Sponsor] financed main [online learning environment] tasks and bills to be kept separate from other work.

Provisional list of chapters done or in progress since Feb 2016
Finished / Project manager / Webmaster (3)
- [titles] (published in the portal last week)
- [titles] (published in the portal last week)
- [titles] (invited by Simon)

Ongoing / with authors / reviewers to be taken over by project manager (1)
- [title] (author is working on comments reviewers)

Comment [CvW1]: students have been asked to give the technical assistance of uploading the final [cloud] file into the portal (at [...] euro's an hour)

Comment [a2R1]: Still not clear to me. The way I see it authors provide text and figure after reviews. You format text in the template and add more figures if needed.

So after that content is ready for immediate upload to server and published?

Does that also mean student have full editorial access to [...]server?

Comment [CvW3]: all [committee] members that is?

Comment [a4R3]: Yes

Comment [CvW5]: reviewers need to be given access to [cloud] by project/content manager

Comment [a6R5]: No need. Editors can handle all content until it is accepted. Then send the file to you. You will also have direct access if we switch to an editorial manager for review and submission.

A shared [cloud] folder that can be accessed by all editors can still be used to keep project files in separate project folders.

Comment [CvW7]: will they communicate directly?

Comment [a8R7]: Yes.

Comment [CvW9]: see note [1]

Comment [CvW10]: please propose timeframe that we can work with as well

Comment [a11R10]: Once the [committee] decides on new content / updates, we will have a list.

Currently it seems there is just one potential incoming chapter.

Comment [CvW12]: the most important benefit will be avoiding copyrights and/or (messy) tree structures constructed in ppt transferring to neat (interactive) pictures

Comment [a13R12]: If old figures were OK earlier and nothing new is being added by authors, we can leave them as such.

Chapter will be replaced anyway and we can leave it to authors if they want new figures.

Comment [CvW14]: see [1]

Comment [CvW15]: a few pilots are running at universities - evaluation needed on behalf of further strategy development

Comment [CvW16]: this will require some technical investment from their side as well

Comment [CvW17]: NOTE the [progress] report usually is given during the [annual meeting] (in September)

Comment [a18R17]: This is for [committee] to know what was done in past three months.

Appendix III
Operation and Remit of the [new] Committee […]

<u>Committee Composition</u>

Chair / Co-chair: [Society] members who have in-depth knowledge, experience and interest in online learning resources and tools. Appointed by the [society's] Council and also a member of the [society's education] committee. The chairs of committee should normally, have served at least one term as a member of the committee prior to serving as chair of the committee. Vacancies for committee chairs shall be announced and appointed as above.

Up to 4 Full members
Up to 4 [society's] members will sit on the board, as well as ex-officio members
A member of the Secretariat will attend the meetings
A representative of the [society's education] commitee
Members of committee must be [society] members, except those who are ex-officio or co-opted (Local organizers of […] schools).

Recruitment: Vacancies for membership of the committee will be advertised through [society's] newsletter and online. Committee chairs will liaise with the [society's] Team for the upcoming vacancies. Chairman to nominate Society representatives, Council to ratify.

Ex-officio members: Chair of the [society's education] Committee

Quorum   3 Full members, which must include at least 2 [society's] members (including ex-officio members).

Duration of Service

Chairs: Co-terminus with office.

Full members: 3 years or co-terminus with office if applicable.

Ex-officio members: Co-terminus with office

Co-opted members: 2 years.

Reporting   The Committee reports to the [society's] Council through the Committee Chair.

<u>Meetings</u>   Committee will meet during the [society's] Annual Meeting and conduct its business through email and web conferences as needed.

Remit	To serve as a forum for expanding and developing online education efforts of the [society]. Ensure committee members have knowledge of [online learning] opportunities and online educational projects. Ensure [society] members have continued access to the educational resources of the Society To help promote and guide the use of online learning tools for [society's] educational events, participation in the activities of [the society] including, where possible and appropriate, giving presentations about [the society's] online resources, whilst ensuring that such activities does not overly burden the educational and scientific content of meetings. Discuss with society's members new initiatives to enhance the annual meeting and educational activities, and extend the usefulness of all events by making digital content available during and after the event. Where appropriate (subject to decision of Chair and Council), manage presentation of online learning resources in [society's] events, e.g. the Annual Meeting, and upon request at advanced seminars and […] schools. Committee will pay special attention to [the society's] schools as well as advanced seminar series to make the educational resources available online and promote use of [online learning] during the schools. To monitor and provide guidelines for copyright issues that may arise due to online distribution of educational materials prepared by [society] members and other faculty members contributing to [the society's] seminars / events.
Additional notes	Committee members should make every effort to attend annual meetings. Any Committee member who does not attend the annual meeting for two years may be asked to step down, other than in exceptional circumstances. An effort will be made to allow members to join the meeting online if the member is not attending the [society's] annual meeting. Each new committee member will be issued with a list of aims of the committee and the remit of the committee, together with the last three sets of meeting minutes. Any potential conflicts of interest should be declared at the start of the meeting or as they arise, and the member concerned should take no part in the discussion.
Current membership	Chairs Anand, (2016 – 2018) Heleen (2016-2018) Full members [Chair education committee] <u>Ex-officio</u> co-terminous with office (2011-2015) co-terminous with office (2011-2017) <u>Co-opted members</u>

Appendix IV

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A TO MASTER THESIS RELATED RESEARCH STUDY

Conny van Wijngaard – de Vugt, student part-time Master Business Administration, Rotterdam School of Management (RSM), Erasmus University.

Dear (NAME),

As we spoke about last congress in [France], I would like to invite you to participate in a research study that is related to [the online learning environment] and my graduate thesis.

Context

In November 2009, I became involved in working with the [Society]. During the development of their [online learning environment] my responsibility grew. Currently I am responsible for project and content management; giving on demand assistance for a variety of tasks I am requested to do.

What intrigues me the most from an organisational point of view is the dynamics of emergent change that is demanding constant adaptation of processes and workflows. Due to these adaptations, the way of organising is best to describe as learning on the fly.

I am interested in how to make this learning on the fly more effective for all stakeholders and explore how to change the way of organising to shift the focus from technical and content development to continuity and global implementation of the online learning environment in the context of various emergent changes and where its existence is dependent on a body of volunteers that is loosely bound by shared medical expertise and a society's mission statement: to make [online leraning] available on a global scale.

Research study motivation

I would like to invite you to participate in exploring the implementation of the online learning environment on a global scale. And I am looking working with you on [online learning] related issues that are important to you.

The format of this research study will be Qualitative Research, which is primarily exploratory research. Qualitative data collection methods will vary using unstructured or semi-structured techniques, such as discussions, individual interviews, participation/observations, and interaction design in relation to observations, interviews, and interventions for learning processes, for example communication and conscious use of feedback and dialogue.

The thesis will be written using excerpts from our interactions showing us how we interpret the way we work, and it might even show us what we learn from that.

On the next page, you will find a letter of information and informed consent statement, to be interpreted as the start of the informed consent process. Please have a look and send it back to me if you approve and/or If you have any further questions, please contact me.

Best wishes,
Conny van Wijngaard –de Vugt; Tel: […, E-mail: …]

Page 1 of 3, Rotterdam, March 10, 2017

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Study procedures

Participants will be invited to participate in an interactive way during the research period. And if possible, each of them will be visited and interviewed at least once during this research period which will enable to work with observations during an interview. Further communication will be done by e-mail and video calls.

Apart from that user-feedback obtained from tutors and students participating in currently running pilot courses will be included.

Furthermore, access to 7 years of documentation on the project development have been and will be used to build a historical background of the project.

During my research period, I will keep a journal, draw scenes at the locations I visit, member check interviews, and interpretations, archive correspondence, recordings, and pictures if applicable.

Study results

The results of this study will be reported in a master thesis. The thesis will be published in the Erasmus Library for students to learn from and may also be published in journal articles and books.

Upon request the study results can be provided to you in pdf send by e-mail.

Potential benefits

The research study can be beneficiary for all participants involved related to achieving progress within currently running activities.

Potential risks

The fine line between stepping in and out of the research context might even touch your personal context. If a situation might occur where you do not feel at ease with, please let me know your concerns and note your participation is fully voluntarily. Therefore, you do not have to do anything you do not want to.

Confidentiality

Based on the function description within the organization it will be possible to resolve the identity of the participant. Function descriptions and role definitions are functional in understanding organisational processes and their context. Names, (audio-)recordings photos and personal details will be used solely for purpose of this research. Original data will be anonymised in text, graphics and drawings before publication.

INFORMED CONSENT

You are being invited to participate in a research study that is related to [the society's online learning] and the graduate thesis of Conny van Wijngaard – de Vugt, student at the Rotterdam School of Management (RSM), Erasmus University. Therefore, during the research period some of the raw data will be reviewed by the coach Ir. Ton Roodink.

Participating in this study is fully voluntarily. If you decide to participate, you may choose to pull out any time without giving a reason.

You are aware that your interview will be tape recorded to ensure an accurate reproduction of your responses of which excepts may be included in the thesis and/or publications to come from this research. With the understanding that the quotations will be role-related and context specific.

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study, and that names, (audio-)recordings photos and personal details will be used solely for purpose of this research. Original data will be anonymised in text and graphics before publication.

Date:

Your name:

Signature:

Researcher's name:

Signature:

Address:

Mail:
Tel:

Appendix V

Dear Anand,

In view of my research, I would like to share a scene of one of our recent interactions, hoping to be able to reach out to you. I have written the first scene trying to capture your perspective; the second scene is written from mine.

-- ∞ --

[CH]. Today is May 1st, a day like any other ordinary day filled with work at the laboratory, meeting deadlines and people. At around midday I receive an e-mail from Conny. I read the message backwards: "-6 hrs (the alarm clock wakes me every day at 4:45 a.m. anyway; no problem ;)", "Good idea! If it is possible for you to get up early, I think the time difference is -5 (or -6?) hrs."
What is this about then?
 "It has been decided I will not be attending the meeting in [USA] in person. Would you like me to connect through Skype?", "The date is ok for me", "See the mail below for the date of the [committee] meeting during the next [annual] meeting. Is it okay? - As I have not heard from you and we need to get this organised soon, I have selected a provisional date for the […] Committee meeting on your behalf. This is date is subject to approval by the meeting team. […]".
Well there is not much to approve on the date here, isn't it? April 7th I suggested to wait planning the meeting till we would have the scientific program, as I thought many of us would have presentations. And I feel a bit irritated about [secretariat] planning the agenda. I type the reply to Conny *"Meeting in [USA] will be about general [committee] work. No need for you to join."* It would do if she reads the minutes afterwards. I continue answering a pile of other e-mails.

[NL]. Today is May 1st, a day like any other ordinary day filled with work, and study. At around midday I receive an e-mail from Anand. I read the message following a backward displayed thread: *"Meeting in [USA] will be about general [committee] work. No need for you to join."* It replies to: "It has been decided I will not be attending the meeting in [USA] in person. Would you like me to connect through Skype?".
I notice it has been replied to me personal leaving out Heleen's reply: "Good idea! If it is possible for you to get up early, I think the time difference is -5 (or -6?) hrs."
Why? I am offering the committee service in the way I have done to Simon in the past seven years and I am confused here, feeling at limbo. I need to think about what is happening here. Feeling a bit frustrated I forward Anand's reply to Heleen with "FYI", thinking they should sort this out amongst themselves first whether they will need me for input or not. I close the mailbox and concentrate on my work.

-- ∞ --

Anand, when we met in [France], I have come to know you as a highly respectful and very intelligent person. I am sincerely interested how you see development in effectivity for the online learning environment within given context and challenges you meet.
I would very much have your input to complete the story in my graduation thesis.
And of course, please feel free to comment on the written scene as you feel fit, it would help me to understand the way you think.

Best wishes, Conny van Wijngaard – de Vugt

Appendix VI

Committee [online learning environment]
New Committee Vacancy Position: Chair
Deadline: 30 November 2015

[The society] is delighted to announce the creation of a new […] Committee, which will be responsible for the development of [the society's] online education strategy. Members are invited to apply for the position of Chair of this exciting new committee.

This is a fantastic opportunity for the successful candidate to make a real difference to one of [Society's] core missions - education. The Chair will drive the development of [Society's] successful online learning environment, explore online learning initiatives that help extend the life of our annual meeting and expand the reach of [Society's] training and activities to wider audiences.

It is expected that the committee will meet once a year during the [Society's] annual meeting and communicate by email and through teleconferences throughout the rest of the year. The Chair will be supported in establishing the committee and beyond by the [Education] Committee and the [secretariat]. The Chair will hold office for an initial term of three years.

We anticipate this position would be well suited to a candidate with a keen interest and knowledge of online education.

We are really excited about the potential this committee can deliver and we hope you feel inspired to apply.

To apply for the post of Chair please send an email outlining your suitability for the vacancy, together with your CV, to the [secretariat] at: […]

Please note that the vacant positions for the Online Learning Committee members will be announced when the Chair is in post.

Committee [online learning environment]
Vacancy for committee members – FOUR vacancies
Deadline: 29 February 2016

The newly-created […] is now looking for [Society] members to apply to join the committee. [Society's] Council has recently appointed Dr Anand as Chair of this committee and Dr Heleen as co-chair.

The […] Committee aims to serve as a forum for expanding and developing the online education activities of [the Society] and to ensure that [society's] members have continued access to the educational resources of [the Society].

It is expected that the committee will meet once a year during the [society's] annual meeting and communicate by email and through teleconferences throughout the rest of the year. Committee members will hold office for an initial term of three years.

We anticipate this position would be well suited to a candidate with a keen interest and knowledge of online education.

We are really excited about the potential this committee can deliver and we hope you feel inspired to apply.

To apply for the post of Chair please send an email outlining your suitability for the vacancy, together with your CV, to the [secretariat] at: […]