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Results and planning proposals of the Blended Learning Course Environmental Statistics for Disaster Management

A successful, face-to-face session of a tutor training for multipliers at the National Institute for Disaster Management (NIDM) of the blended learning course has been conducted from 05/12/2011 to 07/11/2011. The final timetable and participants list is attached. The presentation of the content and the introduction to the tutor's role shown on the updated current course raised much interest of the participants and showed that the method, approach and content was seen very positive.

- 14 participants were present for the three days, the course's content was roughly distributed in three parts (all presentations are attached):
 - Day 1 (05/12/2011): Basic Skills of a online course participant
 - Content of current blending learning course.
 - How is it suggested to log-in and learn? Which scenarios were chosen
 - Elements of the online course: Modules, Units and Pages.
 - Self-timed exercises in the online modules.
 - Video Tutorials
 - Guided exercises Access to linked sources and glossary
 - Available Documents: 1.) GC21 Introduction, 2.) Off-line User manual 3.) Statistics compendium

Participants experienced elements of the current updated BL course

- Day 2 (06/12/2011): Skills and roles of a tutor in a BL course
 - Tasks of a tutor.
 - Skills of a tutor
 - Tools in the learning environment of GC21, adapting your personal data
 - Discussions, Chats, Tutor News, Pin board, mail communication with participants
 - Attributing participants to groups
 - Group processes and individual work

Participants exercise tasks of tutors and communicate in role of tutors
- Day 3 (07/12/2011): Advanced features of a tutor, assessing course targets
 - WebQuests (What are they and how do they work?)
 - Self-Assessments (Use and assess the results as a tutor)
 - Assess participation time and use of various tools (Self-Assessments, chats,

discussion, pin board etc)

- What makes CG21 products compatible with other platforms?
- Use CG21 as a conference platform (SABA and Centra)
- Group recommendations, remarks, criticism on current workshop and propose BL course(s) for participant's working environment

Participants exercise tasks of course evaluator and learning platform designer for future courses.

- **Target group:** The selection of the target group was excellent; practitioners from various environmental and teaching boards formed a heterogeneous albeit studious group eager to learn the aspects of tutoring a BL course. Some had online course experience but not many.
 - A mixture of advertising and direct approach by NIDM should be taken if BL-course will become part of the regular NIDM programme which is announced by the NIDM management
 - With the planned WEB-based training management and knowledge platform the information provided by NIDM can be even more effective (including online application). Other web platform can be used, like Moodle but the owners of the platform have to agree
 - If a small admission fee is planned, the fee could be reinvested into the course (material, print, face to face session, tutor)..
- **The content:** the approach used first and now adapted for the DM and statistics course and its use with examples of DRR – is one example and it proved to be successful. It could and should be repeated now that the course content has been adapted by NIDM to gain experience running own courses including NID tutoring or subject specific tutoring. For the current course as of 12/2011 the following has been adapted and incorporated :
 - The comments and ideas of Dr. Nath (former director CSO) have be included in the present course.
 - Selected databases have been provided and uploaded for use of the course and WebQuests.
 - The introductory module: Environmental Statistics and data bases for DM have been added (designed by Mrs Sreeja Nair - NIDM). It has covered Environmental Statistics data sources and a DM glossary to inform participants about the background of the use and importance of data for DM. The module has been arranged, uploaded and adapted for immediate training use by GIZ.
 - In the future another advanced BL stats - course can be developed dealing with more elaborated and difficult statistical methods (like PCA) or concentrating on more environmental issues like climate change and DM. At the moment the target group will be generalists.

It should be repeated that the development of a new course requires considerable time and resources. The development, adaptation, piloting, proof-reading, testing and assessment of the current course have taken almost 2 years from the ideas from the very beginning. Although the development of future courses can be faster, the current course can be used for content training and in addition for the training of tutor and BL courses' management skills

- **Recommendations for another and next BL-courses:**
 - There is no need for a face to face introductory course, but the final face to face session will be planned for 3 days.
 - The online course should have sufficient lengths. Usually one module is meant to be covered in one week. Fort the current course Module 1 and Module 2 could be covered in one week, Module 3 in another but Module 4 would easily need two weeks for students to be covered always considering that the online course will be form the covered in supplementary time apart form other professional obligations
 - Most important for the success of a online course is the 1st week and the starting chats – considerable effort has to go into this “motivating phase”.

- **Tutoring of BL-learning:**

- A course to train tutors for blended learning (for the 3 BL-courses planned in 2011-12 - i) DRR statistics course, ii) Environmental legislations pertaining to Disaster Risk Reduction and iii) DRR and EIA) is required (3 days in Delhi – most likely supported by the ekDRM project). This will enable NIDM to start their own design and implementation of BL-courses.
- The first course (BL Statistics and DRM) with national tutors can be co-tutored by GIZ experts if requested.
- At least three of the participants have interest and capacities to be trained as tutors for the Statistics course. We assume that a staff member or NIDM is appointed to tutor the BL courses (and will be trained accordingly by ekDRM)
- By end of 2012 NIDM should have enough expertise and knowledge to train tutors themselves
- Online and BL courses need thorough professional preparation, they are not learn-yourself courses although they can be used as such. A professionally tutored and monitored BL course promises much higher probability of success

Annex:

- Timetable of the ToT course
- 3 Presentations
- Participant's list and grouping
- Participants recommendations and comments at end of course