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CONFERENCE ENHANCING COOPERATION WITHIN A MULTINATIONAL NETWORK

– CASE: CARPE 2015

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A multinational network has special features, which have an essential influence on its internal functions. A wide variety of cultures within a network holds great possibilities as well as hindering factors when starting projects. To ensure the exchange of knowledge and harnessing the skills of the heterogeneous members into utilization of the network, it is important to invest in the formation of mutual trust and internal relations. Trust based on relationships primarily arises from face-to-face situations, where the people in question are able to meet each other in person. Later it is possible to maintain these relationships in other means, for example through online platforms.

Conferences and congresses are events with professional content as well as social and informal programme. According to studies and participant experiences, they offer good opportunities to meet colleagues, obtain and exchange information, explore current, new and upcoming projects and other activities, and to otherwise focus on self- and organizational development during the events.

Enhancing influence that a conference might have on the internal development of the strategic network of six European higher education institutes, CARPE, was studied in this bachelor's thesis. The network has organized conferences biennially since its founding in the year 2011. During these conferences the member institutions and personnel present their own and joint projects, look for partners for single projects and activities, discuss the development of the network and other subjects as well as future ventures, and also get to know each other. The results from an online feedback survey and memos of the conference sessions are analyzed and discussed in this research.

According to the received answers and content analysis, the conference is considered to have a positive influence on the network's operations. The conference was seen as a good environment for social events, thus creating relationships, as well as for presenting and exchanging ideas and thoughts. The participants were also interested in attending the future conferences, and they found that the conference has an important positive influence on the development of the network.

KEYWORDS:

Multinational network, cooperation, organizational development, internal relations.

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KONFERENSSI MYÖTÄVAIKUTTAJANA MONIKANSALLISEN VERKOSTON SISÄISESSÄ YHTEISTYÖSSÄ

Monikansallisella verkostolla on erityispiirteitä, jotka vaikuttavat olennaisesti sen sisäisiin toimintoihin. Laaja kulttuurien kirjo on verkostolle yhtäaikaisesti suuri mahdollisuuksien voimavara sekä työskentelyn alkuun pääsemisen hidaste. Jotta heterogeenisen jäsenistön välinen tieto ja osaaminen saataisiin parhaalla mahdollisella tavalla jaettua ja valjastettua verkoston käyttöön, tulee jäsenten välisten luottamuksen ja suhteiden syntymiseen panostaa. Luottamussuhteet syntyvät ennen kaikkea tilanteissa, joissa ihmiset tapaavat toisensa fyysisesti. Suhteiden synnyttyä on niitä mahdollista ylläpitää myös muilla tavoin, kuten esimerkiksi internetin välityksellä.

Konferenssit ja kongressit ovat tilaisuuksia, joissa ammatillisen sisällön lisäksi on paljon sosiaalisia ja epämuodollisia tilaisuuksia. Näissä tapahtumissa osallistujilla on tutkimusten ja kokemustensa mukaan hyvä mahdollisuus tavata kollegoita, saada ja vaihtaa tietoja, tutustua käynnissä oleviin, uusiin ja tuleviin projekteihin sekä muihin aktiviteetteihin, ja muutoinkin mahdollisuus monitasoiseen itsensä ja verkoston kehittämiseen.

Opinnäytetyössä tutkittiin konferenssin myötävaikutusta kuuden eurooppalaisen korkeakoulun muodostamaan strategiseen yhteistyöverkostoon CARPE:een. Verkosto on perustamisvuodestaan 2011 alkaen järjestänyt joka toinen vuosi suljetun konferenssin, joissa jäseninstituutiot ja -henkilöt esittelevät omia ja yhteisiä projektejaan, etsivät yhteistyökumppaneita, keskustelevat kehityskohteista ja tulevaisuuden hankkeista, sekä tutustuvat toisiinsa. Tutkimuksessa hyödynnettiin sähköisellä palautekyselyllä saatuja vastauksia osallistujilta, sekä konferenssin sessioista tehtyjä muistioita.

Saatujen vastausten ja sisällönanalyysin perusteella konferenssi koetaan hyvänä ympäristönä sosiaalisille tilaisuuksille ja suhteiden luomiselle, ideoiden ja ajatusten esittämiselle ja vaihtamiselle, sekä verkoston sisäisen toiminnan kehittämiselle. Osallistujat ovat kiinnostuneita osallistumaan myös tuleviin konferensseihin, ja kokivat konferenssien olevan tärkeä myötävaikuttaja verkoston kehittymisen kannalta.

ASIASANAT:

Monikansallinen verkosto, yhteistyö, organisaation sisäinen kehitystyö, sisäiset suhteet.

CONTENT

APPENDICES

PICTURES

FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (OR) SYMBOLS

CARPE	Consortium of Applied Research and Professional Education
HEI	Higher Education Institute
HU	HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht
MMU	Manchester Metropolitan University
TUAS	Turku University of Applied Sciences
UPV	Polytechnic University of Valencia
UAS	University of Applied Sciences
UD	University of Debrecen

1 INTRODUCTION

Globalization and internationalization have had a major impact on every level of working life. Multinational projects, culturally varied organizations and networking over borders are hardly strangers to anyone working in today's developed societies. Both organizations and individuals are well aware of the possibilities lying in continentally spread out joint ventures and projects driven by mutual aims and interests, when the projects are no more tied to a certain location and to the people available only there.

No matter the strengths and opportunities in such multinational networks, there are also challenges in keeping location-wise loosely bound organizations and contributing people in good contact. People do have different working styles and some are more effective and content working mostly on their own, without a need for constant physical presence of others. This does not remove the benefits of working, exchanging ideas, sharing knowledge and giving and getting feedback in person. One mean to bring people already working together to physically same place in order to enhance the cooperation is through a conference, which includes both professional and more informal program.

This thesis will examine the benefits of such a conference for a multinational network in the framework of CARPE network and its 3rd conference organized in Turku, Finland, in May 2015. One key interest in this thesis, is to find out whether meeting face-to-face, at a conference, has positive impact on cooperation within the network. This has been studied from the conference participants' point of view. The findings will support network's decision to organize a closed conference biennially in order to keep up good-quality cooperation and to give boost for possible future joint projects and other activities and development within the network.

Thesis is done in a higher education setting where all of the parties involved in the network, and thus the conference, are European higher education institutes (HEIs). Findings could to an extent be applied to multinational organizations in other fields as well.

2 CARPE NETWORK

2.1 Overview

Consortium of Applied Research and Professional Education – CARPE – is a consortium first of its kind in the field of applied sciences. CARPE is a strategic alliance of a number of European higher education institutes, with five full members and one associate partner, each from a different country. The network was established in 2011 with 4 founding partner institutions; Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften Hamburg) (Germany), HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht (Hogeschool Utrecht) (The Netherlands), Turku University of Applied Sciences (Turun ammattikorkeakoulu) (Finland) and Polytechnic University of Valencia (Universitat Politècnica de València) (Spain). A year later, in 2012, Manchester Metropolitan University (United Kingdom) joined the consortium as a full member. University of Debrecen (Hungary) was accepted as an associate member in November 2014, and the agreement of this was signed in May 2015. The network was initiated by HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht, which also hosts the secretariat of CARPE. (CARPE network 2015a.)

CARPE institutions have strong, shared focuses at the forefront of their agenda and throughout their organizations. The partner institutions concentrate on:

- "*Conducting research and providing education that is demand-driven and which also contributes to innovation in industry.*
- *Maintaining strong links with small and medium enterprises (SMEs), large enterprises, the public sector and local and regional governments.*
- *Embracing the themes of entrepreneurship, social responsibility, sustainability and internationalisation.*" (CARPE network 2015a.)

These shared values and operations have brought the member institutions together, and their unifying CARPE mission is "to enhance the quality of their education, their research and the contribution they make to regional and international

entrepreneurship and innovation in a European context. In addition, they benchmark their management facilities and services and collaborate on an equal footing, respecting their own identity as well as the responsibility of each party." (CARPE network 2015a.)

United, with a shared focus and joint projects CARPE as a network, and its institutions together and individually, have more ability to solve such European and global challenges as aforementioned. They offer applied research for significant parties and to increase the social and economic value of the knowledge they create (CARPE network 2015c).

2.2 Joint activities

Within the network, the partner institutions engage in cooperative work on many levels in order to put their mission statement into action. Joint CARPE activities, projects and workshops are executed by two or more partner institutions. The institutions are continuously in close contact controlling the on-going, and developing future projects.

On CARPE network's webpage, there are numerous currently running research and educational projects, to which at least two network's member institutions are contributing among other possible project partners. Also, there are previously closed projects, as well as listed calls and proposals for upcoming projects. These projects last from a few years' single projects, to joint educational programs, within a variety of fields, which were established and have been maintained for a number of years. (CARPE network 2015f). The projects concentrate on a wide spectrum of areas of research, all in order to contribute to further development both locally and internationally.

A large number of both staff and student exchanges have taken place between the partner institutions since the founding of the consortium. Educational, research and also administrative staff have paid visits throughout the consortium for example project meetings, workshops, benchmarking trips, international weeks and as guest lecturers. (CARPE network 2015g.) A number of individual

joint activities have also occurred for example in forms of publications, Video Poster Competition and article collection (CARPE network 2015e).

Workshops concentrating more on selected, single themes of CARPE network have been held on a few occasions during the limited amount of time that the consortium has been established. These workshops have focused for instance on Entrepreneurship in Education (2012 at HU), Internationalization of Higher Education (2012 at UPV) and Health Informatics and Game Technology (2013 at TUAS). During these workshops colleagues from the member institutions have shared their best practices, discussed possibilities for cooperation and simultaneously built trust and strengthened ties through networking. (CARPE network 2015d.)

2.3 CARPE conferences

The biennially organized conferences are aimed to attract attendants from multiple CARPE institutions and contain a much wider spread of attendees than that of the single workshops of conferences that focus on one specific theme or schedule. These conferences are thus far the greatest attempt to bring the member HEIs and their staff together in order to widely discuss the current and the wanted future state of the consortium. The participants can concentrate on single project presentations and meetings as well as get to know their counter research partner and other professionals. Attendees do not only meet their colleagues from partner institutions, but from their home university as well. Conferences are not such traditional academic conferences, but rather platforms for CARPE members to share ideas and prepare collaborative projects for European funding bids (Kettunen 2015, 92).

The first CARPE conference was held in the founding year of the consortium, in 2011 by HU. The conference was divided into six jointly decided themes. Proceedings from this first CARPE conference were collected and published by TUAS. In the introduction text of the publication it is said, that active participation in the network's projects will lead to a positive future and enable the universities

of applied sciences to increase the competitive advantage of Europe. (Kettunen 2012, 11.)

The second CARPE conference took place in Manchester, England, in 2013 and was hosted by MMU. Some 90 papers along with 22 poster presentations were received and over 150 people attended the conference. Themes of the conference were increased to ten and in each theme participants discussed opportunities for future collaboration. In order to take a step forward in cooperation within the network, the chairs of the themes developed a set of agreed actions to take forward after the Conference. (CARPE network 2015b.) This shows the strong focus to the future and continuity of the consortium and its work.

The continuum of the conferences took the third CARPE conference to Turku, Finland, in 2015, when it was TUAS's turn to organize and host the event. The conference followed the previous conferences in the aim of creating a networking opportunity for the members of CARPE. Over 60 presentations were held under seven themes, along with a poster exhibition of the said presentations. Some 220 participants attended the conference.

3 CONFERENCING INTERCONNECTING MULTINATIONAL NETWORKS

3.1 Multinational network

3.1.1 Definition

An organizational network springs from a contrived group – a group (of people), which has intentionally been made to serve a specific purpose – where linkages from among members are apparent (Gore 2007, 98). Hofstede etc. (2010, 47) have further described how the social system of an organization, and therefore of a network, is a different nature from that of a nation. Members of an organization did not grow up in it, had a certain influence in their decision to join it, are involved in it during working hours only and will one day leave it. Multinational networks are formed when the network's members represent more than one nationality. This has also been stated by Adler (2000, 139).

While being multinational, a network is consequently multicultural. This is a second fundamental dimension of a global organization according to Adler (2000, 15), and increases the number of for example perspectives, approaches and methods represented within the network.

3.1.2 Characteristics

Hofstede & al. (2010, 405-415), explain how organizations, as well as networks, are able to function only when there is some kind of culture shared by its members. Public and non-governmental organizations that span national boundaries are even more dependent on cooperation, and entirely on high-quality intercultural communication. Shared organizational practices keep the members of the network together while meeting diversely valued patterns coming from abroad or just outside of the network.

Gore (2007, 101) explains this culture as a 'social glue', giving a sense of a collective identity for the people in its sphere of influence. It also contributes in the development of cohesiveness within the network, which is highly important, as diversity in group's features might appear in the form of causing lack of team cohesion. Adler (2000, 142-143) explains this lack of cohesion to originate from the lower level of similarity between the members in multicultural teams. Gore (2007, 104) further explains, that people are naturally likely to trust people from other cultures less than people who originate from a background similar to their own. This mistrust is primarily a result of inadvertent cross-cultural misinterpretation rather than real dislike (Adler 2000, 143). Due to this, multicultural teams, groups and networks need to put more effort and time in creating cohesion, solidarity and trust between their members.

3.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages

As Gore (2007, 33, 104) has also stated, around the world the workplaces and working groups are becoming culturally more diverse. Through the large development and improvements of communication technologies and transportation, making and maintaining contact with people near and far, over borders and oceans, is easier and quicker than ever. This progress to ever more diverse networks is encouraged due to its proven benefits.

"A diverse team results in diverging ideas (Gore 2007, 105)." Gore (2007, 105) explains widely how multicultural, and therefore heterogeneous, teams and groups generate more ideas and are studied to be more creative when compared to homogenous groups. Cultural diversity in multinational groups gives a competitive advantage for example in a team the members are less likely to take part in counterproductive groupthink behaviors. This is highly important to note when considering CARPE network. Due to the network's professional objectives, as well as its own operations and special condition as being the first of its kind, there is a great amount of creativity needed. Having a great diversity within the consortium and its working groups, is to be seen as a positive feature and should be

appreciated and nurtured, as it is proven to have a clear beneficial influence on the innovative atmosphere. Multicultural teams also generate more perspectives and alternatives, and interpret within a wider variety of contexts, and therefore are advantageous over single culture teams (Gore 2007, 108). These attributes are well in line with other problem solving skills diverse teams have.

Moon (2013, 2414) agrees with his findings of culturally heterogeneous teams to outperform homogeneous teams over longer periods of time. He however puts emphasis on further findings, that the level of cultural intelligence has a major impact on the team performance. In an optimal team the members would represent a variety of cultures, while everyone having a high level of cultural intelligence. Ability for cultural intelligence can be trained by an individual and supported by an organization or institution. Rozkwitalska (2013, 67) has stated that individuals who were previously exposed to a foreign environment, thus gaining experience in such settings, had improved skills in cross-cultural communication. This means that experience in any international-, or just in the previous CARPE conferences, is likely to lead to even better communication in the working groups and other conference settings, and thereby to overall outcomes.

Gore (2007, 106) points out that multiculturalism can be seen as an either/or-factor, as in certain types of tasks the diversification of a group may be more of a brake for the productivity and to the work. After the praise for the great brain storming abilities of multicultural teams, it can in the end be rather difficult for the same team to get to a consensus or an agreement on a specific or concrete subject. This has been pointed out for instance by Adler (2000, 142-143). He puts much emphasis on the importance of building and having trust between group members, as in any initial stage of forming a group there is a need for team members to develop relationships. Like earlier in this thesis explained by Gore, Adler (2000, 143) states aswell how team members from similar cultures trust one another more readily. This greater chance of miscommunication can be fought with being aware of the issue, and investing resources, such as time, in the trust building process.

Lehtimäki and Karintaus (2013, 319) have written more about the social capital as a building block of organizational advantage. They argue, that in multinational enterprises some difficulties lie in managing social connections and in measuring the effectiveness of the connections. According to them, high level of social capital would be very beneficial for organizations, as it would facilitate among other things transfer of information and tacit knowledge, and enhance creation of new ideas and innovations. Once again it is easy to see how CARPE network would profit from supporting this kind of collaboration, especially in the creation of new knowledge. As Batt and Purchase (2004, 170) have explained; collaboration involves not only aligning the objectives of the network, but also developing the social dimensions, emphasis put on mutual trust and commitment.

"By integrating and building on the diverse perspectives of the various members of a team, solutions and strategies can be developed that produce greater results and are more innovative than the simple addition of each contribution alone (Adler 2000, 152-153)."

3.1.4 CARPE - a multinational network

CARPE network is truly and literally multinational, with all its advantages and disadvantages. Network's five institutions are all from different countries, but the number of nationalities within the network is much higher, as the single members of the network - staff and students – do not always represent their host institution's nationality, but are from a much wider and diverse backgrounds. This obvious feature of multinationalism and therefore multiculturalism can be presumed to affect the work and activity within the network. CARPE may expect more innovative solutions and ideas to arise from among its working groups, but it must not overlook the necessity of the time needed in order to successfully form well-functioning teams and groups, who are able to turn their diverse backgrounds into powerful resources.

As Kettunen (2015, 89) states, trust was considered an important element when the establishing of the CARPE network was taking place. The significance of trust

was recognized early in the consortium, and also quoted in the leaflet of the first conference. "Trust is important in joint research and development. If you have good partners, you have better results." Later in his article Kettunen (2015, 91) points out how this trust is generated by active collaboration in network's activities, which then may result in an infinite cycle of greater trust and enhanced collaboration.

3.2 Conferences bringing people together and promoting knowledge

The terminology around professional events is rather versatile and overlapping. By a definition made by Verhelä (2000, 19) a conference is a goal oriented negotiation event lasting for only one session. Therefore it might be more accurate to mention a congress, when referring to the CARPE conferences, as congresses are by a definition (Verhelä 2000, 19) professional, subject oriented gatherings consisting of several sessions and/or meetings. Often there is no concrete aim for the congress. Verhelä also points out the significance of the social program, which hand in hand with the formal program serves as a discussion forum for the subject in question. Examples of such programs are dinners, less formal gatherings and visits to various suitable destinations. Further description of a congress includes elements of keynote speakers, parallel sessions, abstracts of the sessions, poster-exhibitions and possible pre- and post-congress program. Congresses are considered international, when at least a half of the attendees represent four or more different nationalities. Saarelma is well aligned with Verhelä in his description of a congress, but he adds the closing ceremony to the characteristics of such event. In a closing ceremony of any form all of the participants are usually gathered in a big room or a hall, where a brief summary of the results of the congress is given. Prizes or gifts may also be given, and it is possible to have a final performance in the form of music or other performing arts. (Saarelma 2002, 60.)

Rogers (2008, 28-29) states according to Maple's contends that these kind of large events are designed to bring the people in (any) given field together in an

environment, where information can be shared and progress identified. When the researchers and other professionals get together to look at the latest achievements, results or to discuss ideas and work on projects, it creates a significant boost to knowledge and skills immediately for the people present, and later indirectly through their work and influence even further. Thus these kind of professional events – meetings, conventions and exhibitions – can do a lot to promote and further develop the professional skills in a community, and in a network as well.

As told by Lawson (2000, 5) one main drawing factor for the demand of meetings and congresses, is also the need for communication at a personalized level. This means an opportunity for individuals to exchange ideas and views particularly in activities involving problem solving and innovation. This exchange of knowledge is most effectively achieved through group participation. Further benefits of a conference with the already mentioned environment for networking, providing a forum for discussion and giving the opportunity to promote ideas, Appelby (2002, 21) also adds the sense of belonging created for participants.

These are unquestionable reasons in favor of keeping organizing CARPE conferences, as such young network with strong multicultural features filled with professionals, certainly would profit from efficiently sharing and spreading the expertise internally.

3.3 Face-to-face meetings vs. virtual meetings

The era of information and communications technology has changed the working environments significantly, and has made it possible for such multinational networks as mentioned in this thesis to function properly, no matter the physical distances. Electronic and online applications and systems have made the working life faster, inexpensive and more global. Using these possibilities is very well a desirable option for any organization to combine the good sides of multicultural creativity and the inexpensive working environment.

Feldman (2009) has given quite a list of positive features for organizations of utilizing online systems and virtual events. Virtual events give organizers the ability to broaden the community, cut costs and enhance attendee tracking. The rapid, nearly instant, responses are also on the list. According to this list, the organizers can have wider audiences and more attendees, and therefore make the event richer for everyone, thus also giving greater possibility for more creativity and brain storming for instance. Any data can be collected and saved relatively easily, and it is rather easy and without cost of both time and money to attend. In the world where communities and organizations are looking for the most profitable combinations of effective work and value of resources, it is obvious for multinational networks' desire to highly favor these possibilities.

Ball has written multiple times about the relationship and differences between face-to-face and virtual meetings. In his earlier article Ball (2004) describes the features of these meetings to be as different "as day is from night". He tells the strengths of face-to-face meetings include for example qualities of networking, brainstorming and interactivity. He gives an example how often times much of the learning and networking happens in the hallways outside the room or during the social functions. This can obviously not happen in a virtual environment. Lawson (2000, 5) joins in saying how the importance of a congress or convention lies not only in what is said from the platform but also in the total atmosphere of the event and the stimulation provided as a result. Ball (2004) further claims the learning environment to be more conducive when meeting face-to-face, as being away from their distractions in offices it is easier for the participants to focus better on the subject in question.

More recently Ball has said more about the reasons why face-to-face meetings result in often good outcomes. In his article Ball (2014) explains the social connectivity of the people in a face-to-face meeting to become much stronger compared to the ones attending a virtual one. Colleagues in a face-to-face meeting are more likely to keep connected and to meet each other again. The opportunities for relationship building are far greater in live meetings than in virtual ones. Also, travelling broadens one's horizons and may result to new or more creative

ideas. Ball also mentions how the basic human gregariousness will drive people to get together for face-to-face events in any case.

Hardwick, Anderson and Cruickshank (2013) have similar findings, which greatly compliment the vision to organize a conference as a platform for networking and cooperation. In their study about trust formation processes in innovative collaborations, the researchers found that a necessity for exchanging tacit knowledge and thus developing innovation was trust between the persons working together. Like discussed earlier in this thesis, Hardwick et al. also state that trust is an enabling mechanism for cooperation. According to their paper, trust is created by human interactions, and consequently virtual environments do not replace the face-to-face meetings in this matter. However, they discovered, that once trust has been created, the connection can be maintained with virtual applications, such as e-mail.

All this research gives a substantial support for CARPE network to continue organizing the biennial conferences, as these face-to-face events foster such crucial attributes of good-quality collaboration as trust building, brainstorming, sharing tacit knowledge and more spontaneous interacting, which could not occur on a similar scale in virtual environments.

4 THE 3RD CARPE CONFERENCE

4.1 Background and purpose

The 3rd CARPE conference was organized very much following the spirit of the previous two conferences; the core objective was to offer a professional and social gathering for all CARPE members, in order to enhance cooperation in any and every level of the consortium. According to a report (CARPE network 2015b) conducted after the second conference, the conference was viewed as an important opportunity for staff of the network to come together and share expertise on research and teaching, as well as a unique opportunity for new projects to be identified.

The first conference of the network was organized in 2011, the founding year of the consortium, in Utrecht. The second conference took place in 2013 in Manchester, after which the dates of the 3rd conference as well as the deadlines for paper submissions were released. The second CARPE conference attracted over 150 participants from the partner institutions, and altogether 90 papers and 22 poster presentations were received (CARPE network 2015b).

The 3rd conference was organized by the hosting institution TUAS.

4.2 Setting

The conference was held in 17th – 21st of May, 2015, and the main conference days were 18th to 20th. Prior to the conference an informal get-together as a social program was organized for those participants who already were at or came early to the location. After the main conference dates the CARPE Steering Committee held a meeting at TUAS, and there was another social program event as a guided tour in the city offered to any conference participant.

The main conference took mainly place at TUAS's premises in the ICT-City building in Turku. The themes were divided into 7 tracks, under which over 60 sessions, workshops and presentations were held. The tracks and sessions overlapped running for two consecutive days. The presenters of the sessions etc., were asked to bring an academic poster about their session to the conference. This Poster Exhibition was on display at the main conference venue for the first two main conference days. The last main conference day was organized as a daylong conference cruise.

Two key note speeches were given prior to the first sessions.

Social program was organized throughout the conference and was offered to every participant. There was an Opening reception in the first evening of the conference, when the Poster Exhibition was opened aswell. Formal Conference Dinner was arranged in the evening of the first conference day.

Individual meetings for selected participants/working groups were organized prior and during the conference.

4.3 Participants

The 3rd CARPE Conference was open for all members of partnering institutions. Altogether over 230 people attended the conference for at least one day, and every partner institution contributed by sending delegates. Slightly more than 50% of the participants came from the hosting institution, TUAS. Tens of attendees came from HU and MMU. HAW was represented by 25 participators, UPV by 10 and the new Associate Member of CARPE, UD, took part with 6 representatives.

Conference participants represented a wide scale of institutional professions and positions, as there were presidents and rectors, project managers, researchers, doctors, lecturers, a variety of administrative staff, student union representatives and students.

A majority of the participants attended the conference as primary attendees. Following the call for papers, accepted presentations, workshops and sessions were prepared and given by some 70 persons from every Full Member institution.

All participants had an equal possibility to attend the general sessions, workshops and social program. It was possible for the participants to shift from one track to another during the day, according to which ever sessions they wished to follow.

5 RESEARCH METHODS

5.1 Feedback survey

The aim of this thesis is to examine the benefits conferencing has for the cooperation within a multinational network. This has been done through examining the network's conference participants' views about the conference, and their subjective opinion about the effects the conference may have on the network and its cooperative activities. In order to gather such information, a qualitative research was needed.

According to Hirsjärvi et al. (2009, 161) a qualitative research is in place when it is aimed to study an issue comprehensively. They further explain how qualitative research preferably uses people as the instrument of gathering information, and this group of people has to be appropriately chosen. Random sample is not a typical attribute of a qualitative analysis.

In this case a feedback survey was considered to best suit the purpose. One benefit of this method is the large amount of data that can be collected. It is possible to include a great number of people and their answers into the study, and furthermore, many questions can be asked. Survey is an effective research method. In a feedback survey the data is collected systematically and with a set standard. The questions are to be asked in exactly the same way of everyone, in order to decrease the chance of guiding an informant's answer(s) (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 193, 195).

The feedback survey of this thesis was conducted as an online survey, as it was considered to be the most suitable mean of gathering the widest possible amount of answers regarding the special features of the case in question. These special features were for example the limited amount of time that most of the conference participants spent in Finland, where the research was executed. As the conference participants came from various countries, it was easier to reach them via online systems. Utilizing an online survey platform also gave the possibility for

the responders to complete the survey at any time suitable for themselves. This was considered a way to give a slight increase in the answering rates.

When planning the feedback survey it was highly important to keep in consideration the nature of the group of people desired to answer the survey. As the thesis and the research was to do with one special network (CARPE) and its special event (conference in May 2015) it was obvious to choose the group to be studied to consist of the attendees of the said conference. In this way it was ensured to collect answers only from the members of said network and participants of the conference in question. English was quite obviously chosen to be the language of the survey, as it is the *lingua franca* of the consortium, and the people answering the survey had relatively equal comprehension of the questions in the survey.

The link to the survey was sent to all conference participants (222 people) in an e-mail a week after the conference. The survey was said to be open for 23 days, and it was possible for the receivers to answer it only once. A reminder e-mail of the survey was sent a week afterwards, which increased the total number of answers received. Response rate was finally set to satisfactory flat 30% with responders representing every CARPE institution.

5.2 Content analysis

In a content oriented analysis – falling under the classification of an inductive/qualitative analysis – the core objective is to analyze the well-defined and research-wise valid information from existing documents. A document can be understood in a rather wide variation of a (written) form; letters, diaries, speeches, discussions and reports are all examples of a document, which can be analyzed. Through this method it is possible to create a summarized and general overview of the phenomenon in study. By analyzing a document, it is desirable to describe the content in a verbal manner, and not as much in a quantitative mean. (Tuomi & Saarjärvi 2011, 95, 103, 106.)

In this research the memos of the conference sessions were analyzed. These memos were compiled by people who were particularly designated to execute

this task, with assistance of the track leaders. These persons were present in the session/workshop rooms, and followed the presentations and discussion, but did not contribute to the session themselves. The main points of the presentation and discussion were documented, as well as any and all ideas and sayings within the fields of future cooperation between the CARPE partner institutions. These memos were created in order to document the participants' attitude towards further future collaboration within the network.

Despite the common guidelines of documenting process given to the persons in question, the content of the memos and thus the transcriptions of the sessions emerged to be quite diverse. Reasons to this diversification might be found in the subjective interpretation of the guidelines given, and the experience and skills of making notes of professional sessions, workshops and meetings in general, and moreover in one's non-native language. Due to the aforementioned, some memos contained more relevant information concerning this research than others. However, it is possible to draw conclusions that similar cooperation oriented discussions and initiatives were exposed in all sessions, even if they were not documented.

The memos were worked and analyzed according to Miles' and Hubermans' three-phased process, as described by Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2013, 108). The first and highly important part is to reduce all unnecessary or invalid information and data. The next phase is to classify the data valid for the research. This valid data was considered to be any and all ideas and initiatives for future cooperation within the network.

6 RESULTS AND EXPERIENCES OF THE CONFERENCE

6.1 Quantitative general results

66 persons representing 30% of the conference participants answered the survey. Most of the answers (>30%) were given from TUAS, and nearly as much (28%) were from HU. MMU was represented by 18% of the answers, HAW by 12% and UPV by 7%. The newest member of the consortium, with the smallest number of representatives at conference as well, was represented by only 2% of total answers. These percentages are in line with the numbers of participants representing each institution at the conference, and therefore the results can be interpreted to describe the general view of the 3rd CARPE conference participants.

This 3rd conference was for slightly more than half of the responders the first of the consortium's conference they have attended. 20% had participated in all three conferences. Thus, roughly half of the responders had the possibility to compare this 3rd CARPE conference to either one or both previously organized ones.

The responders were asked about their general feelings about the consortium with opposite statements, such as "I have gained a lot from the network" vs. "I have gained nothing from the network" (Picture 1). The respondents had a 7-point scale between the statements, where they could mark their opinion. Number 4 was the middle point of the scale, and can be therefore considered as a neutral view on any of the statements. Statements that could be interpret in having a positive and negative sides, were tried to be organized in a way, that the positive statement would appear on the left, and therefore the lower the average value on that statement would represent support on the positive statement, and consequently the greater the average value would mean support of the negative statement. One statement (*There are too few CARPE projects – There are too many CARPE projects*) did not have a positive-negative setting, thus being most content with the issue would appear as answers put in the middle on the scale, and the average value being 4.

Picture 1. Research survey question 7.

None of the average values appeared on the "negative" side of the scale being more than 4. Closest to this general average became the statements *"I know numerous people from other CARPE institutions" – I don't know anyone from other CARPE institutions"* with the average value of 3.59. The lowest average value, and thus the greatest support was given to the statements *"I have a positive feeling about the network"* (2.24), and *"Colleagues are from a very wide field of expertise"* (2.44). The respondents gave their supports to the following statements as well (average value in the brackets): *"Network is a success"* (2.82), *"Network is very effective"* (3.14), *"Network is very professional"* (3.24) and *"I have gained a lot from the network"* (3.3). (Figure 1.)

The statements *"There are too few CARPE projects"* vs. *"There are too many CARPE projects"*, didn't have a clear positive or negative sides, but with the average value being less than 4 (3.11) the statement with 'too few existing projects' got more support.

7. How do you feel about the CARPE network in general? Please tick in the circle closest to your opinion

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		Keskiarvo
Network is very effective	6,06%	25,76%	37,88%	16,67%	7,58%	4,55%	1,52%	Network is ineffective	3,14
There are too few CARPE projects	6,06%	21,21%	33,33%	36,36%	1,52%	1,52%	0%	There are too many CARPE projects	3,11
I have gained a lot from the network	7,58%	22,73%	28,79%	25,76%	4,55%	9,09%	1,52%	I have gained nothing from the network	3,3
I know numerous people from other CARPE institutions	7,58%	16,67%	19,7%	30,3%	18,18%	6,06%	1,52%	I don't know anyone from other CARPE institutions	3,59
Network is very professional	3,03%	33,33%	25,76%	22,73%	6,06%	7,58%	1,52%	Network is unprofessional	3,24
Colleagues are from a very wide field of expertise	13,64%	53,03%	21,21%	4,55%	3,03%	4,55%	0%	Colleagues are from a very narrow field of expertise	2,44
I have a positive feeling about the network	27,27%	42,42%	21,21%	3,03%	1,52%	3,03%	1,52%	I have a negative feeling about the network	2,24
Network is a success	10,61%	33,33%	33,33%	15,15%	3,03%	3,03%	1,52%	Network is a failure	2,82

Figure 1. Results of the research survey question 7.

More than 85% of the participants would be interested in attending a CARPE conference again. Less than 5% stated they would not be interested in attending, and some 12% answered "*Maybe*".

6.2 Conference enhancing cooperation

As this thesis examines the general conception of a conference enhancing collaboration within a network, the answers were examined as a whole, and were not divided into opinions given by smaller groups representing for example the different CARPE institutions.

Participants were asked about their overall evaluation of separate events at the conference, as well as how much they felt these events enhanced future cooperation within the network. On the question 15, the respondents could evaluate the impact of the events on scale 1 to 5 (Figure 2). Answering 1 meant, that the respondent felt, that the event in question did not play any role in enhancing future cooperation, and 5 meaning a significant enhancement on collaboration. Therefore the greater the average value given would represent a greater impression of

that event having a positive impact on collaboration, with the maximum value being 5.

Meetings were considered to have the greatest enhancing impact on future co-operation, with the average value of answers being 3.79. *Campus visits* got the lowest value (2.77), therefore meaning the least enhancing power on collaboration. It must be noted, that only 11 respondents participated on a campus visit, which represents only 15% of the responders. Therefore some 85% of the responders can not really have an opinion about this particular event. More than half of the events received an average value higher than 3.00, meaning they were seen to enhance future cooperation. These activities were (average values in brackets): *sessions* (3.80), *conference dinner* (3.55), *conference cruise* (3.53), *informal get-together* (3.27) and *opening reception* (3.26). Half of the activities with an average value more than three can be considered social events, and half of them professional. *Conference cruise* can even be considered to be both a professional as well as a social event, as it holds content of both aspects. The remaining activities evaluated were *poster exhibition* (2.94) and *keynote speeches* (2.94), which both also scored very nearly to the average (3.00). When counted all together, the activities of the conference got an average value of 3.32.

15. How much do you feel the following activities enhanced future cooperation within CARPE network (professional and social development of the network). 1 = Did not enhance at all, 5 = Enhanced significantly

	1	2	3	4	5	Keskiarvo
Informal get-together	7,58%	12,12%	39,39%	27,27%	13,64%	3,27
Campus visits	21,21%	7,58%	50%	15,15%	6,06%	2,77
Opening reception	4,55%	12,12%	45,45%	28,79%	9,09%	3,26
Poster exhibition	10,61%	22,73%	34,85%	25,76%	6,06%	2,94
Keynote speeches	12,12%	22,73%	30,3%	28,79%	6,06%	2,94
Sessions	6,06%	3,03%	19,7%	46,97%	24,24%	3,8
Conference dinner	6,06%	6,06%	36,36%	30,3%	21,21%	3,55
Conference cruise	13,64%	3,03%	25,76%	31,82%	25,76%	3,53
Meetings	9,09%	3,03%	21,21%	33,33%	33,33%	3,79

Figure 2. Results of the research survey question 15.

Responders were also asked to evaluate these events on a scale *Excellent – Good – Fair – Poor* or *Did not participate*. The best overall rating was given to

conference cruise, with 65% of respondents choosing the term 'excellent' to describe it. *Conference dinner* was nearly as highly evaluated, with 46% describing it as 'good', and 43% choosing 'excellent'. The rest of the events were primarily and consistently evaluated as 'good'; *session(s)* with 65%, *informal get-together* with 64%, *opening reception* with 62%, *meeting(s)* with 61% and *keynote speeches* with 52%. These evaluations were given by the participants who attended the events in question. The widest range of evaluation, and also the lowest average, was given to *keynote speeches* and *session(s)*. The highest evaluation was therefore given to mostly social events of the conference. The reasoning behind these evaluations is unclear, as such things were not asked in the survey.

One part of the survey was designed for only those participants, who had brought a poster and/or held a session at the conference. Due to an error in the survey, this question was unfortunately open for all respondents regardless of whether they answered 'yes' or 'no' to the question about having brought a poster / held a session. However, some of the questions asked in this specially designed part of the survey could have been appointed to all participants, and hence should not be left completely without attention and analyzing, despite of the error. In this part, the responders had once again two opposite statements regarding their work (project, research or an idea for example), and were asked to indicate their feeling on a 5-step scale between these two statements. Again, the statements were organized in a way that the supposedly positive statement would appear on the left side, where the values were <3. Answers with a value of >3, would appear on the right side, which would represent negative feeling.

The average value of the answers stayed on the positive side with all statements. All values were also closer to the whole value of 2, than to the possible general average value of 3. There was little variation between the supporting of the statements, and thus it is fairly safe to state, that all the positive statements were supported equally much. The statements were: *Conference helped me to bring forward my ideas/research/project, People were interested in my ideas/re-*

search/project, This was a good environment to discuss my ideas/research/project, Coming to this conference had a positive impact on my ideas/research/project and It was a success.

One more question was designed to examine the participants' general views about the conference in whole. Following the structure of some of the previous questions, there were once again two opposite descriptive adjectives or statements, and a scale from 1 to 7 between them. The respondents were asked to position their feelings/opinions on the scale. The adjectives and statements considered more positive were again located on the left side, and the more negative ones to the right side. Since the scale was from 1 to 7, the general average, thus the neutral opinion about the two adjectives/statements stated, was 4. Therefore adjectives/statements which received an average value <4, were positively supported. If the average value was to be >4, more support was given to the 'negative' adjective/statement. (Figure 3.)

16. 3rd CARPE conference was...

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		Keskiarvo
Inspiring	21,21%	36,36%	30,3%	6,06%	3,03%	3,03%	0%	Boring	2,42
Professional	28,79%	36,36%	25,76%	3,03%	3,03%	1,52%	1,52%	Unprofessional	2,26
Warm	30,3%	53,03%	7,58%	4,55%	3,03%	1,52%	0%	Cold	2,02
Driving	18,18%	36,36%	24,24%	10,61%	7,58%	3,03%	0%	Stagnant	2,62
Enhancing cooperation	27,27%	36,36%	28,79%	3,03%	3,03%	0%	1,52%	Discouraging cooperation	2,24
Innovative	12,12%	21,21%	28,79%	28,79%	3,03%	1,52%	4,55%	Traditional	3,12
Social	31,82%	43,94%	13,64%	6,06%	3,03%	1,52%	0%	Unsocial	2,09
Too much program	0%	7,58%	16,67%	56,06%	15,15%	1,52%	3,03%	Too little program	3,95
Gave me new ideas	13,64%	30,3%	43,94%	7,58%	1,52%	1,52%	1,52%	Gave me nothing new	2,64
I felt myself as a significant part of the consortium	16,67%	28,79%	22,73%	21,21%	3,03%	4,55%	3,03%	I felt myself as an unimportant part of the consortium	2,91

Figure 3. Results of the research survey question 16.

The positive adjective/statement was supported more in every case. Average value variation ranged from 2.02 to 3.95. Most support was given to the following adjectives/statements (with their average values in brackets): *warm* (2.02), *social* (2.09), *enhancing cooperation* (2.24) and *professional* (2.26). The other supported adjectives and statements were: *inspiring* (2.42), *driving* (2.62), *gave me*

new ideas (2.64), *I felt myself as a significant part of the consortium* (2.91), *innovative* (3.12) and *too much program* (3.95). In the case of the last statement and its considerably high average value, the value can be seen as a proof of contentment towards the amount of program during the conference, as the opposite choice for this statement was *'too little program'*. Therefore the value being close to the general average value 4, reflects a neutral attitude towards the amount of program.

6.3 Future collaboration

Question number 5 had a possibility for multiple choice regarding responders' experience in CARPE projects. Circa 22% had no experience in CARPE projects, whereas the same amount had previously been, or were currently part of a CARPE project. 44% stated their interest in participating in CARPE projects in the future, and no one expressed negative interest in CARPE projects. Due to the fact, that there were no instructions about the possibility for multiple choice (exceeding the wording of the question), some responders might have chosen only one option, which they felt was closest to their opinion, as the question received answers from all respondents.

Question 6 asked responders' opinions about how important they find some joint activities within the network, concerning the development of the consortium. Everyone answered the question, and gave their view on the importance of the activities in question on a scale from 1 to 6. *Research and development projects* reached the highest average value of activities with a value of 5.39. All the activities got averages on the positive side of the scale. *Conferences*, with the value of 4.64, were considered to be more important activities than for example *publications* (4.33), but less important than *staff-* (4.91) and *student mobility* (4.73). The range of the average values of the activities was from 4.05 to 5.39. (Figure 4.)

6. Concerning the development of CARPE, how important do you find the following joint activities within the network? 1 = not important at all, 6 = highly important

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Keskiarvo
Research and development projects	0%	3,03%	3,03%	9,09%	21,21%	63,64%	5,39
Educational programmes	0%	1,52%	4,55%	27,27%	34,85%	31,82%	4,91
Thematic workshops	0%	1,52%	9,09%	34,85%	40,91%	13,64%	4,56
Conferences	0%	1,52%	9,09%	30,3%	42,42%	16,67%	4,64
Student mobility	1,52%	3,03%	6,06%	27,27%	34,85%	27,27%	4,73
Staff mobility	3,03%	0%	7,58%	16,67%	37,88%	34,85%	4,91
Personnel training	1,52%	13,64%	24,24%	19,7%	21,21%	19,7%	4,05
Publications	1,52%	9,09%	9,09%	36,36%	22,73%	21,21%	4,33

Figure 4. Results of the research survey question 6.

The last question was about responders' interests to attend the next CARPE conference. 85% answered 'yes' and 12% 'maybe'. Only a minor group of 3% answered 'no', and are not interested in attending the next CARPE conference.

According to the session memos, collaborative attitude and actions were present in many of the sessions, and new initiatives for cooperation arose. Members of the network had plenty of discussions for joint projects in the future for example within the fields and themes of "An Environment for Cooperative Modeling in Mixed Reality", "Internationalisation", "Football and communities" and "Sustaining communities".

From the educational aspect there were discussions for co-curriculum development in certain fields, for instance in "Entrepreneurial ecosystems" and in doctoral studies. MMU invited the staff of CARPE partners to join their online training courses, and to share practices and experiences there also. In "Quality assurance in mobility of students" session an idea to create a common CARPE Study Guide for students interested in studying at another CARPE partner institution was exposed.

Visibility and involvement of students in the network was discussed to be improved by enhancing the collaboration between student unions of the partner institutions by for example creating their own CARPE information guide or other

promotional material. There was also discussion about the need to promote student mobility within the network, and an idea about having an own track for students in CARPE conferences in the future was mentioned. In another session an idea for multi-professional International Week for students within the network was suggested.

In a number of sessions, unofficial thematic groups were created and contact information was exchanged in order to further discuss the possibilities for joint research and projects after the conference. In order to stay connected, these groups decided to utilize various online communication platforms such as closed LinkedIn groups and e-mail communities to exchange information and gather best practices.

Additional and in a sense more concrete ideas in order to enhance cooperation within the network were also suggested and documented. Some examples of these proposals are; translating interesting project data from native languages to English, so that the results are readable for all CARPE members, and improving the CARPE website.

6.4 Verbal evaluation

Two of the questions in the feedback survey were optional with an open answer possibility. Question no. 17 "*How would you best describe the 3rd CARPE conference?*" was answered by 64% of the people taking part in the survey. Question no. 18 "*How could we improve the programme or practical arrangements?*" was answered by 68%. Some of the answers given under both questions can be analyzed as valuable data regarding this research, as the responders have shared their opinion in their own words.

It can be stated that most of the participants were content with the conference, and sensed it having a positive influence on the cooperation within the network, according to these open answers as: "*It was a nice opportunity to connect to other CARPE members and exchange ideas*", "*great chances for socializing*", "*The CARPE Conference activated the research, joint educational programmes and*

student and staff exchange", "*generally a great networking opportunity*", "*enhanced collaboration and discussions*" and "*lots of room for sharing ideas*".

Some neutral or constructive feedback was also given, and ideas towards a better functioning network arose from these opinions as well. "*-- but the sessions should have been better prepared and more creative*", "*Some better forms of communication before the event*", "*"Facebook" for the conference could be nice*", "*Maybe have some structured ice-breaker activities in the social settings*", "*I would remove the conference dinner and instead allow for informal get-togethers between staff. I think people are at their best in informal situations*", "*Networking sessions in a relaxed atmosphere: you can never have too many*", "*More indepth sessions*". Therefore it can be interpreted, that members of the network are oriented towards creating a better network.

Only a marginal number of the answers were analyzed to have negative, disappointed or other such feelings about the conference and its arrangements and/or content.

7 CONCLUSIONS

CARPE is a multinational network and therefore has to face both, the opportunities and challenges of this essence. On the other hand, the network has a great chance of creating innovative solutions and new approaches in its projects and other joint ventures due to the heterogeneous membership within the network, and on the other hand the same reason might impede any and all of the projects, as the people having diverse backgrounds need more time in creating mutual trust and understanding in order to work efficiently together. The network, its Steering Committee and other members, must be aware of these special elements influencing network's operations, in order to foster the opportunities and overcoming the challenges.

CARPE is dependent on the expertise and proficiencies lying among its members. Exchanging (tacit) knowledge is an important part of bringing these skills and information together, and to refine them into utilization. To ensure this flow of internal information transference, the network should invest in creating good connections and relationships between its members and institutions, as it has been proven, that more knowledge is exchanged when the persons in question have established a relationship and there is mutual trust between them.

One mean to create a platform for networking and therefore trust building, is to continue organizing CARPE conferences, which focus on developing network's state as well as joint projects and other activities. Somewhat less studied, but highly important, outcome of conferencing are also the interpersonal relationships which evolve greatly during the social and informal situations of the event. These kind of situations are largely non-existent in virtual and online circumstances, which are in great usage and assistance in multinational communities.

According to the research results, also the members of the network notice the enhancing influence of conferencing to cooperation within the consortium. Conference participants find the social events of the conference enhancing future cooperation within the network at least as much as they feel professional events

are. Participants also found the conference as a positive environment to discuss their projects and ideas, and majority of them would be interested in attending a conference again. Participants' wishes for having online platforms and environments for a specific theme within the network are surprisingly well in-line with previous studies about how relationships and contacts can be maintained virtually after the trust and relationship has been established in person.

The consortium might want to document better in the future, what kind of proceedings are initialized in conferences, and perhaps in smaller level events as well. This would give first hand proof of the influence these get-together occasions have on the development of collaboration within the network. The findings in this research and thesis support previous studies how exchanging knowledge enhances cooperation. Further recording of this could however be recommendable, in order to get long-term results, and to examine for instance whether the amount of enhancement drops after a certain number of conferences. At this point, the continuum of biennial conferences seems essential for the young network in its task of developing its functions and internal relations, which are necessities in aiming to achieve CARPE's greater visions.

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Feedback survey questions – 3rd CARPE conference

Note: This survey includes some questions, which are part of other researches, and are not in that sense relevant or used in this thesis. These questions are the questions number 9, 10, 11 and 18. These questions were inserted into this thesis research, as it was considered the best way to get most answers to all questions, as all of them were aimed to the CARPE conference 2015 participants. Tying all the questions together decreased the number of a-mails that were to be sent to potential answerers.

Questions with an asterisk indicate compulsory questions. The questionnaire system did not let the survey proceed until an answer to these questions was given.

1. **Your home CARPE institution**
   - Hamburg University of Applied Sciences
   - HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht
   - Manchester Metropolitan University
   - Turku University of Applied Sciences
   - Polytechnic University of Valencia
   - University of Debrecen

2. **Professional experience in the current institution***
   - Junior (0-4 yrs)
   - Intermediate (5-9 yrs)
   - Senior (10+ yrs)
   - I am student

3. **Approximately how many (professional) conferences do you attend annually?**
   - 0-3
   - 4-6
   - 7-9
   - 10+

4. **Number of CARPE-conferences you have attended (including this one):***
   - 1

- 2
- All 3

5. Choose the statements that apply to you.*
- I have been before part of a CARPE project
- I am currently part of a CARPE project
- I am interested in being part of a CARPE project in the future
- I am not interested in CARPE projects

6. **Concerning the development of CARPE, how important do you find the following joint activities within the network?** 1 = not important at all, 6 = highly important*
- Research and development projects
- Educational programmes
- Thematic workshops
- Conferences
- Student mobility
- Staff mobility
- Personnel training
- Publications

7. **How do you feel about the CARPE network in general?** Please tick in the circle closest to your opinion*

Network is very effective . . . . Network is ineffective

There are too few CARPE projects . . . . There are too many CARPE projects

I have gained a lot from the network . . . . I have gained nothing from the network

I know numerous people from other CARPE institutions . . . . I don't know anyone from other CARPE institutions

Network is very professional . . . . Network is unprofessional

Colleagues are from a very wide field of expertise . . . . Colleagues are from a very narrow field of expertise

I have a positive feeling about the network . . . . I have a negative feeling about the network

Network is a success . . . . Network is a failure

8. In your opinion, how active member of CARPE network have you been?
1 = not active at all, 5 = highly active
- 1 - 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

9. What do you dream CARPE is in 2020?*
(Open answer possibility)

10.   What should CARPE do to achieve this vision?*
(Open answer)

11. Please name some keywords (values) to create an excellent CARPE culture
1. *
2. ()
3. ()
4. ()

12. Did you hold a session or bring a poster to the conference?*
- yes
- no

13. How do you feel about having held a session/brought a poster to the CARPE conference?

Conference helped me to bring forward my ideas/research/project . . . . . I would have done equally well or better bringing forward my ideas/research/project without the conference

People were interested in my ideas/research/project . . . . . People were not interested in my ideas/research/project

This was a good environment to discuss my ideas/research/project . . . . . This was a poor environment to discuss my ideas/research/project

Coming to this conference had a positive impact on my ideas/research/project . . . . . Coming to this conference had a negative impact on my ideas/research/project

It was a success . . . . . It did not succeed

14. Please give your overall evaluation of the events you participated in:

(Answer options: Excellent – Good – Fair – Poor – Did not participate)

- Informal get-together
- Campus visit
- Opening reception
- Keynote speeches
- Session(s)
- Conference dinner
- Conference cruise
- Meeting(s)

15. How much do you feel the following activities enhanced future cooperation within CARPE network (professional and social development of the network). 1 = Did not enhance at all, 5 = Enhanced significantly *(Answering scale 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5)*

- Informal get-together
- Campus visits
- Opening reception
- Poster exhibition
- Keynote speeches
- Session
- Conference sinner
- Conference cruise
- Meetings

16. 3rd CARPE conference was...

Inspiring . . . . Boring

Professional . . . . Unprofessional

Warm . . . . Cold

Driving . . . . Stagnant

Enhancing cooperation . . . . Discouraging cooperation

Innovative . . . . Traditional

Social . . . . Unsocial

Too much program . . . . Too little program

Gave me new ideas . . . . Gave me nothing new

I felt myself as a significant part of the consortium . . . . I felt myself as an unimportant part of the consortium

17. How would you best describe the 3rd CARPE conference?

(Open answer possibility)

18. How could we improve the programme or practical arrangements?

(Open answer possibility)

19. Are you interested in attending the next CARPE conference?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe