

Crowd Benefits, Interview with Mauricio O'Brian

<http://creatingcommons.zhdk.ch/?p=621>

- MoB: 00:26 Goteo.org is a crowdfunding platform. Let's say, the answer to an epoch that is, that they questioned themselves in 2009. 2009 may ring a bell for many things: the crisis, the first platform economy, big boom, in which we were already immersed, and kickstarter, the big platforms started to run, started to work even in Spain. And Platonic, uh, had a hint. In which questioned, therefore the hypothesis, what will, could the crowdfunding bring into the crowd benefits.
- 01:17 **"participatory culture / platoniq"** (subtitle)
- MoB: 01:17 The background of platonic was always related to participatory culture, to a wider perspective of what is culture, and the use of resources, and even the strength of working together for a common purpose. And, sort of, they embedded in that first hypothesis, and all the research that they did over those two years, they embedded that sort of DNA of being open. In Goteo as it started, as I mentioned it was 2009, the first research steps and when they were taking over Platonic, they did over 68 workshops with 2000 participants all over in Spain, and internationally, to define what could it be, a tool, or what at times becomes an infrastructure, and an architecture, of funding, and how could it benefit the commons? And through those workshops and through the participation, they came up, and they launched in 2011, we launched in 2011, when we launched the actual first step of Goteo as a crowdfunding platform.
- MoB: 02:40 The platform is just a structured tool. The foundation is composed by other tools, in which there is constant social innovation, in which a lot of Platonic's ideas of keeping updating through the commons and being connected to your mission, it's very, very, very attached. There's a lot of participating and talking out about what it could be, the benefits of the crowd, finding new ways of financing, you know, being a laboratory about funds. How could we reconfigure the way that they are distributed as a resource?

03:18 **"non-financial participation"** (subtitle)

MoB: 03:24 One of the things that make Goteo, for us, one thing that may stand out, is that concept of being open. It's a place and it's an open space, digitally, to collaborate, collaborate in many senses. When you're looking for finance in Goteo, you're not just looking for the money. You're looking to collaborate with your community, to engage with them, until it gives back something to society, because it's your compromise. Maybe related to your social impact, or maybe related to the type of production that you're doing. The way of collaborating with a nonfinancial, nonmonetary ways has a very straightforward reason. There is all about community and engaging with a community – why not engage with the ones that already believe in your project, or participate in your project? And also, given the chance of, okay, let's put the money aside, you believe in me, you want to help me, and it's not even part of my budget, you know. Because this is something that has to be very, very clear at first, you're not going to make a translation of a book in the part in which you're asking for non-monetary collaborations. You can not, gonna ask for the translator itself, [inaudible]. That doesn't work. You know, this is not the compromise and the engagement that we're looking for.

MoB: 04:49 What we also make them think is, which are the elements related to their community, that they could work with the community? You know, maybe it's a matter of: Oh, I could ask for human resources. Somebody that could help me out, you know, because I'm organizing this, or I'm going to organize a presentation of the actual book, but, I dunno. You can ask for infrastructure, you know, you can say, okay, make a call to somebody that, could somebody lend me out a space for to do that presentation? Or materials, or [inaudible], you know, resources, that could be, I don't know, could somebody lend me, just take three boxes to the presentation. Things that simple, and, you know, apart from the big, oh help me out with the communication of the campaign, engage or share other initiatives whom I could work with or I could collaborate in the future. You know, something open.

05:45 **"civic funding"** (subtitle)

MoB: 05:51 We did a match funding campaign with the [inaudible], the Barcelona City Hall decided to make a call to projects related to social economy, related to collaborative economy, and to projects and initiatives related to the commons, those two areas. That call, and that funds they put in disposition and they give to that initiative, are 24 projects that they're applying for 96,000 Euros, which is not much at first. But we have to

think that those 24 projects, they run at the same time, their own different communities, their own different scenarios, their own different proposals and areas, but they have a sort of meta-field in which the mission of the city hall is combined, and the effort is combined. This actual campaign, we may think, and the overall numbers and figures on the match funding, is that 40% were entities, institutions that go from local governments, from regional governments, universities, private entities and even innovation institutes. That is more or less the type of collaborators in the match funding site, they put up to the 40% of the final amount of money, and the 60% was added by the citizenship. So it's a perfect match, in that sense, because you're combining a tool, as crowdfunding, with institutions, which want to be transparent, showing the basis how they're giving the money out. They want to be participatory, at the most, you know, the minimum and basics, which communities are brought in thanks to the effort and the sort of passion of the promoters of the projects, and even they're going a step forward and saying, okay, the final decision is not from the actual institution itself. It's by the crowd. Whoever is successful thanks to the [inaudible] and donations of their community, will make it through. And the decision making in that process, it's not strictly from the institution. So it combines, and there's a factor of co-responsibility in developing those type of projects and those type of alternative funding systems, in which helps us to get a glimpse of what could be the next future for, especially for us as a platform. Yet it's not the final, you know. It's not a model that it's completely blocked. And this is where the constant innovation within civic funding is a laboratory, in which Platoniq and Goteo collaborate to generate those new scenarios.

09:10 "decision making" (subtitle)

MoB: 09:10 You know there's, it's just a matter of, more than a bit, trying to get more into a dialogue, into details, into understanding how this flows of promoters, communities, decision making and funding – how do they articulate at the very end. You know, because it's there, and it's public, and donations are on real time, everybody could see them, and that flow, it's present. And that type of transparency, it's crucial for that trust and relationship, when we're talking about public funds, or when we talk about entities that have a responsibility upon their citizenship or even members.

MoB: 09:57 One of those future scenarios is collaborating with this type of democracy, in a direct democracy and the decision making for citizen policy, in which you also bring the factor of funding. It's not just a matter

of saying I like it or I give it a vote, it's I also put a part of my money into something that is backed up by an institution at the same time. There's where a co-responsibility, that we were mentioning before in the case of the match funding, it is something very easy to implement when we get to those scenarios. There's even the experience that we have, thanks to Platonic also in this participatory culture, and this new ways of thinking, how to use technology in that participation and projects that have been in Madrid, Barcelona and north part of Spain. There's different types of platforms, and different types of needs, and even flows in the decision making through those platforms.

MoB: 11:05 There's something peculiar, that we realized, that for the time in which a project gets funded it's 40 days. When we talk about participation, the speed of decision making and participation, it doubles up to, and it goes even more than double, it goes up to seven times longer, seven times longer to reach the goal respected for that proposal go to [inaudible]. If we make it parallel, and we see the speed that we have in a crowdfunding campaign and the speed that we have in a participation, how could we link those experiences?

11:45 "the commons" (subtitle)

MoB: 11:50 The mission and vision that Platoniq brought in, within the participatory culture, within the commons, that are embedded in that DNA of Goteo, of sharing, opening up data, opening up to new ways of funding, opening up to new ways of collaborating and crowdsourcing through those volunteer collaborations within the campaigns. Throughout that proposal of transparency, pure transparency, in which donations are real time, when we are talking about public funds, we go for the public bases. Even in a third level of complexity, we talk about the social impact, measure that social impact and not just question how much money I'm going to spend in this project. If I invest in this project, what is the social benefit, that there's going to be behind it, which is the social return, which is that collective benefit apart from the rewards itself, that sometimes – in any other platform it is just a presale, you know, forget about the presale, I don't wanna think about persales, I want to know what's behind it, for the community? Not even for the – um, the promoters are important because it gives you that passion, that they know about their project, and they want to do their project, because they believe in it as nobody will, you know. But I have to, you know, be aware Goteo is responsible in participating in that notch. And there's an accountability factor as a foundation, that we have to be, you know, coherent about what we're proposing. When we talk about the commons

and how deep we are engaged with it, it's not just a matter of licencing, what a project could give back throughout that collective benefit. It's also our commitment as an institution, our commitment with our infrastructure, you know, [inaudible] and in the code, making all possible to collaborate with other entities, or institutions, or initiatives, or promoters, that have that same spirit, that want to collaborate for the common good.