



Designing and facilitating conversations that matter

SOCIAL DIALOGUE
PROJECT



Dear readers,

Establishing dialogue structures at the workplace is a fundamental steppingstone to achieving better working conditions. Sharing this vision, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and Tchibo initiated a joint two-year project on Social Dialogue in Myanmar in close cooperation with the Industrial Workers Federation of Myanmar (IWFM). >



In Myanmar, a country with a young, but growing garment sector, the Social Dialogue project worked from 2017 to 2020 to establish a structure of meaningful dialogue in garment factories to the benefit of both workers and managers. At the core of the project was Freedom of Association – one of the basic human rights – which states that everyone has the right to join or form organisations that represent their interest.

However, dialogue does not come naturally. Even less so if it is to happen between people who have diverging interests, which is the case within factories. Taking existing power imbalances into account, workers and their representatives need to be provided with the necessary space. The Social Dialogue project aimed to create this space by facilitating dialogue with different techniques. Thereby, workers, their representatives, unions and managers have the capacity to understand

each other's perspectives, take ownership of their interests, and negotiate solutions that are workable for both sides in a factory.

We wish to thank all partners who have contributed their knowledge in compiling this manual and deeply hope that it can play a part in supporting a future that is built on dialogue.

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Project Partners

The Social Dialogue project was jointly designed and implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and Tchibo GmbH.

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) promotes international cooperation for sustainable development. The FABRIC project (Promoting Sustainability in the Textile and Garment Industry in Asia) supports the Asian textile industry in its transformation towards fair production for people and the environment. It identifies the common interests of key actors – in factories, ministries, civil society and international brand manufacturers – and brings them together with the aim of developing a shared vision of sustainability and promoting greater cooperation.

Tchibo stands for a unique business model. Founded in 1949 as a coffee roaster in Hamburg, Germany, the family-owned company today offers not only coffee specialties, but also non-food ranges and services that change on a weekly basis: in its own shops and cafés, in supermarkets and online shops throughout Europe. Tchibo has a strong stance in corporate responsibility that is based on dialogue and empowerment programmes, as well as on sustainable production. It has received several awards, including being named Germany's most sustainable large company.

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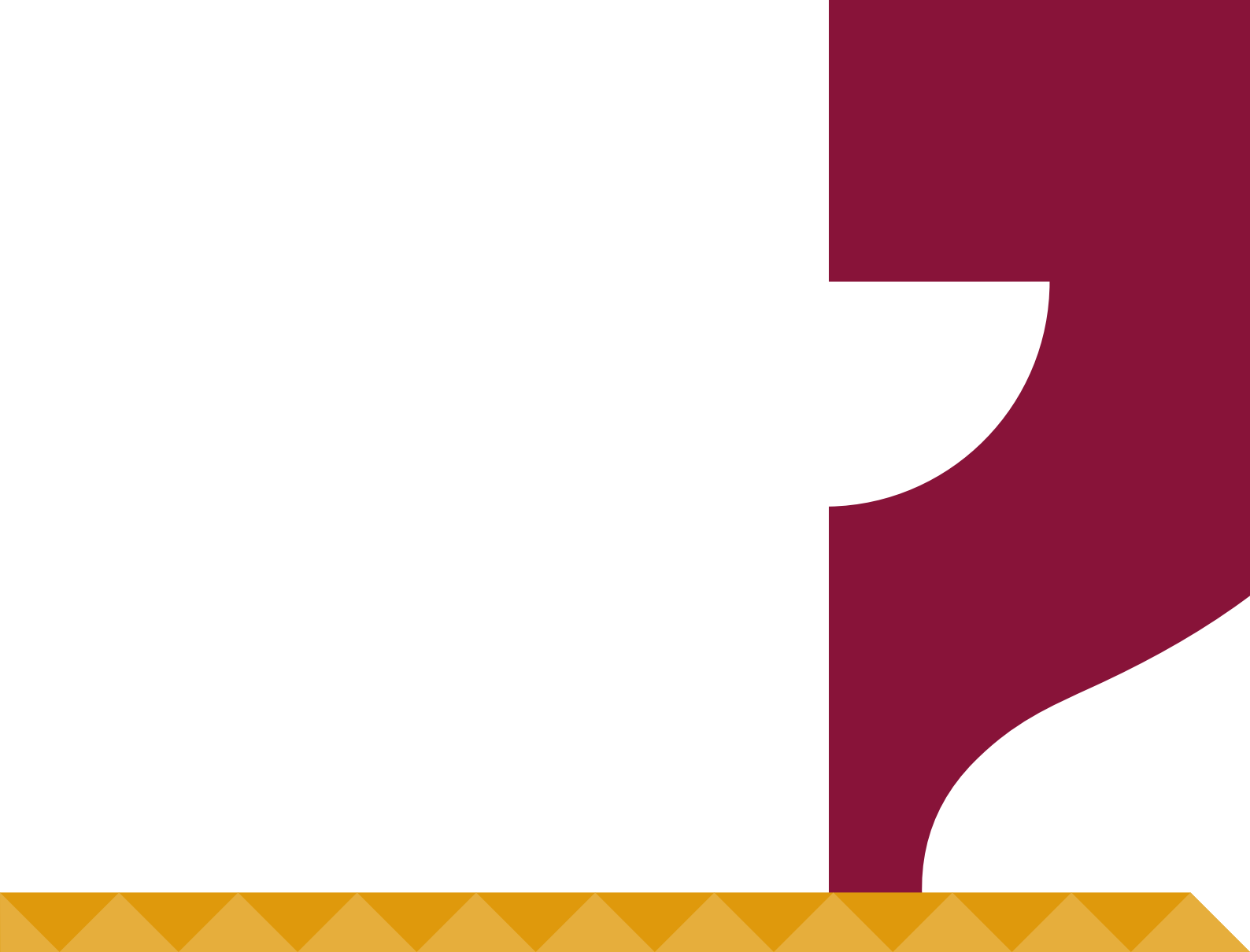
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1. Why social dialogue?

Social dialogue is not just ‘people talking’. It is a structured process of solution finding that gives everyone involved the opportunity to participate.

To ensure meaningful dialogue and take group dynamics to the next level, facilitators work with proven methods and social psychology techniques, ranging from Deep Democracy to Appreciative Inquiry.

Within the process of social dialogue managers and workers are trained to identify problems and employ different methods of analysis and decision-making. At the same time, they learn to apply rules of dialogue that are rooted in the principles of non-violent communication.

By working together, the communication gap between

workers and management is slowly bridged. Key factors for success are that dialogue occurs at an eye-to-eye level and that solutions are co-created. Everyone involved has the same right to express their opinions and views and to be listened to. This way a climate is created in which everyone involved will be able to understand the viewpoints of their dialogue partners. They recognise each other's concerns and take them seriously. This clears the path for a culture where social standards are not driven by conflict, but by solution-orientated thinking. In the long term this helps to produce strong, courageous people who can jointly bring about the necessary changes in their organisation.

NEUTRALITY

When you facilitate, an impartial or neutral position is of great importance. As a facilitator, you create a space for the people you are working with and let them bring the content. You are not a teacher or a lecturer. A neutral position means that you are in a place of non-judgment, you do not steer discussions towards an outcome, you focus on the process and the group dynamics, and you hold a space of safety for all participants. Being able to do this takes practice and you will be tested again and again. The fact that there will always be situations that test your neutrality means it is a path of continual growth, a path without end.

②

Factual
noticing
differences

OPEN MIND

new
data

③

Empathic
emotional
connection

OPEN HEART

Seeing through
another person's
eyes.

④

Generative
from the future
emerging

OPEN WILL

CONNECTING
2 an emergent
future
self
identity
self

2. What is facilitation?

Facilitation is the act of engaging participants in creating, discovering, and applying learning insights.

In contrast to presentation, facilitation involves a neutral person who asks questions, moderates discussions, introduces activities and helps participants discover possibilities. A facilitator can help a team with issues such as communication or problem-solving, but typically does not contribute to the actual content of the conversation or the management of a certain project.

According to the International Association of Facilitators, facilitators:

- take a strategic and comprehensive view of the problem-solving and decision-making processes and select, from a broad range, the specific methods that match the group's needs and the tasks at hand; >

GOOD TO KEEP IN MIND

There is a distinct difference between facilitation and moderation, although both play an important role in group meetings and discussions.

A MODERATOR

- arbitrates or mediates; presides over a meeting, forum or debate
- steers a conversation towards a specific goal
- is competent in the field they are moderating
- asks questions that draw out insights for the audience

A FACILITATOR

- contributes to the fulfilment of a need or a purpose
- makes something easy by guiding participants through a collaborative process to achieve new outcomes
- remains entirely neutral to the content

- are trusted by all group members as a neutral party who has no biases or vested interest in the outcome;
- help the group understand the techniques that are used and enable the group to improve its own problem-solving processes.

A facilitator of meetings, events, networks and communities steers the communication flow and keeps it on track. Facilitation focuses on including all participants in the discussion, even the ones who are less comfortable with speaking up and contributing, making sure that all voices are heard. By doing this the discussion will be vibrant, interesting, and useful for all involved. Having good people skills, the facilitator enables a comfortable

and inclusive environment that ensures openness and trust for those who participate.

For our Myanmar Social Dialogue Project we opted for facilitation. Our groups needed the neutral presence of a facilitator and an open environment to hold courageous conversations in order to understand each other and to work towards necessary changes.

5 RULES FOR CREATING A FACILITATION ENVIRONMENT

When planning a training or workshop facilitators should:

1. ensure that a good learning environment is arranged in advance.
2. focus the subject matter on the current needs and problems of the participants.
3. use a variety of participatory training techniques that are rooted in the participants' own knowledge and experience.
4. have participants work in small groups when they are reflecting on the activities in which they have participated.
5. ensure flexibility, allowing for adaptations to training activities as they progress.



3. Several approaches to facilitation

As a facilitator you can choose from a wide range of methods and techniques that serve the needs of the group best.

A facilitator can be compared to the conductor of a symphonic orchestra. They are expected to continuously focus on and attend to the group, process misperceptions and emotional reactions, focus exclusively on process rather than content, and help the group develop so they can ultimately work without facilitation. To meet these responsibilities, a variety of approaches can be used separately or combined in a meaningful way.

For our Myanmar Social Dialogue Project we chose different facilitation approaches and methods. On the following pages we will discuss them in depth, describing similarities and differences, as well as situations in which they can be used.



3.1 The Circle Way

The circle, or council, is an ancient form of meeting that has gathered human beings into respectful conversations for thousands of years. Circles started around the cook-fires of our ancestors and have accompanied us ever since. We remember this space. When we listen, we speak more thoughtfully. We lean into a shared purpose. The Circle Way is a modern methodology that calls on this ancient tradition and helps people gather in conversations that fulfil their potential for dialogue, replenishment, and wisdom-based change.

In the Art of Hosting practice (see 3.4) we often begin and end meetings in a circle. It helps the process if participants can ‘check-in’ at the beginning about why they are participating, and ‘check-out’ at the end by reflecting on what was accomplished. Meeting in circle can be especially helpful when you want to become more familiar with each other or the issue at hand. It is also suitable as a means for deep reflection or consensus making.

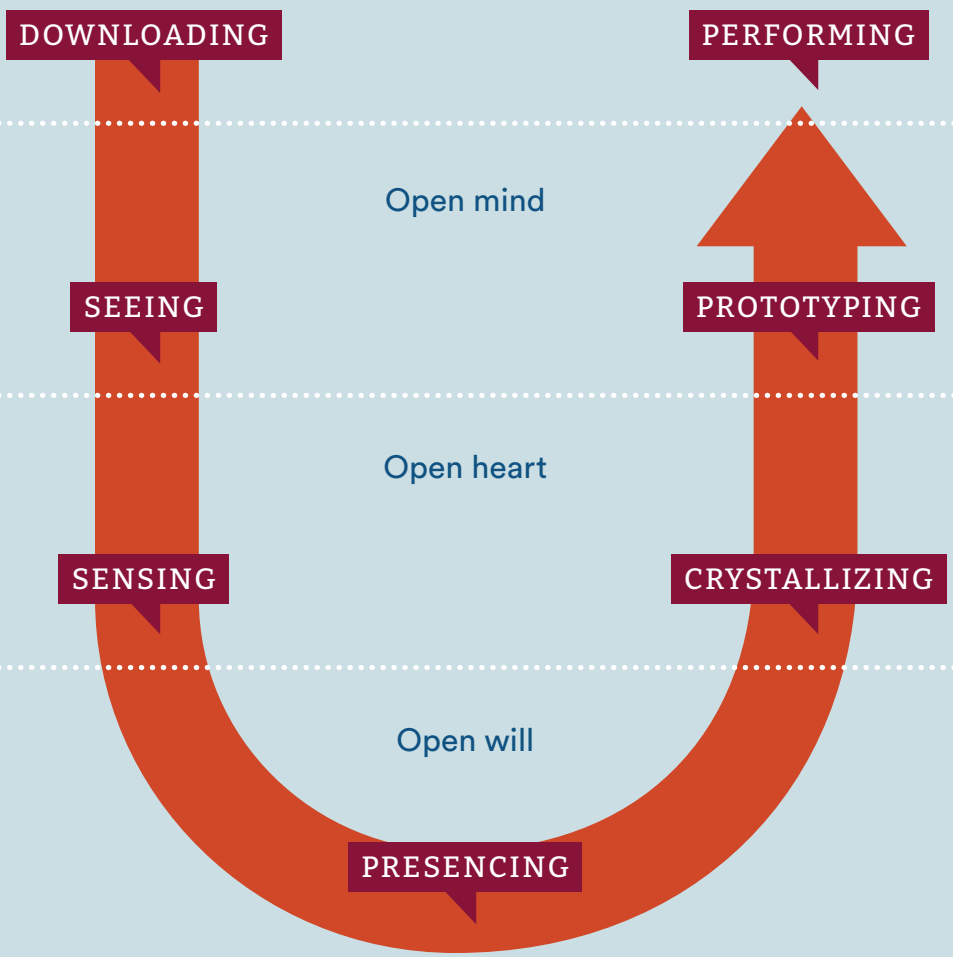
HOW IT IS USED

What transforms a meeting into a circle is the willingness of people to shift from informal socializing or debate into an attitude of thoughtful speaking and deep listening. For our Myanmar Social Dialogue Project, we employed The Circle Way during the check-in and check-out, as well as during the sessions to keep the group focused and open while sharing and discussing.

3.2 Theory U

Theory U was developed by Otto Scharmer and is based on a concept he calls 'presencing', which blends the words 'presence' and 'sensing'. Presencing is when we let go of the old and connect to a field of future potential. According to Scharmer we can engage in the moment in two ways. One is the present moment that is basically an extension of the past. That present moment is shaped by what has been and it is based on what we already know and think. The second is a quality of the present moment that functions as a gateway to a field of future possibilities.

It requires us to let go of our old beliefs and thoughts and sit with what we don't know yet. When we are able to shift from the first to the latter, people begin to operate from a future space of possibility that they feel wants to emerge. Being able to facilitate that shift is, according to Scharmer, the essence of leadership today. >



Theory U is a way of making a system (or an individual) sense and see itself. The core process can be seen in the diagram on the left hand page.

As you can see, we move down the left side of the U (connecting us to the world outside of our organisation) to the bottom of the U (connecting us to the world that emerges from within) and up the right side of the U (bringing forth the new into the world). On that journey, at the bottom of the U, lies an inner gate that requires us to drop everything that isn't essential. This process of letting go (of our old ego and self) and letting come (our best future possibility) establishes a connection to a deeper source of knowing. The essence of presencing

is that these two selves – our current self and our best future self — meet at the bottom of the U and begin to listen and resonate with each other. Once a group crosses this threshold, nothing remains the same. Individual members and the group as a whole begin to operate with a heightened level of energy and sense of future possibility. Often this process is described as 'from ego to wego'.

▶ To learn more, you can watch this animation which explains Theory U in simple terms: [youtube.com/watch?v=WvNlfu4263Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvNlfu4263Q)

HOW IT IS USED

Theory U is a change framework and set of methodologies designed for very complex global challenges. It is used by thousands of organisations and communities worldwide. On the website of the Presencing Institute (presencing.org) it is explained to you in detail. Here you will also find a collection of tools (<https://www.presencing.org/resource/tools>), with very precise instructions, that you can use in your work. These range from Prototyping (creating a microcosm that allows you to explore the future) to Stakeholder Interviews and Sensing Journeys.

‘The larger goal of
Deep Democracy is
not me changing you
and you changing me.
But ‘we’ learning
how to relate’

ARNOLD MINDELL



3.3 Deep Democracy

The concept of Deep Democracy (DD) was developed by Arnold Mindell, a physicist and a therapist. Rather than focusing on the majority rule, as in classic democracy, Deep Democracy proposes that all voices, perceptions of reality and states of awareness are important, and that the information carried within this is required to understand the complete process of a system. For that reason, there is a focus on the voices that are mainstream (the majority) and on those that are marginal (the minority). DD is a natural process that is of great value in any community-building process. DD goes beyond merely involving

each individual in the political process. It tries to foster a deeper level of dialogue and inclusiveness - creating space for all sorts of views, tensions, feelings, and styles of communication.

Conflict and Courageous Conversations

Deep Democracy is also a conflict resolution method: if there is too much tension in a group and a lot is happening below the surface, it can be very difficult or even impossible to make any decisions. Often, we don't know exactly what is wrong, but we sense that there are unspoken issues. DD has developed conversation models and tools so that difficult issues can be discussed >

constructively and solved together. It assumes that groups can find their own solutions to the problems they encounter by making it easier to say what needs to be said. Opposite and conflicting opinions are investigated within the group without avoiding any conflicts. This allows people to practise their ability to be flexible and stay open to opposing ideas. The group can arrive at a deeper level of listening by listening actively, with empathy, and by reflecting on what has been said.

Teams that regularly talk in this way develop respect, appreciation and trust, and learn how to share leadership. As soon as the conflict and tensions have been resolved, the team will be able to work together again effectively and the decision making will become natural again. This works like a short thunderstorm clearing the air.

HOW IT IS USED

DD works in a process-oriented way. The facilitator constantly pays attention to a safe climate so that people have the courage to be vulnerable and to express themselves freely. DD paves the way for saying what needs to be said so that teams and departments can make good decisions, to which everyone is committed. This way, the facilitator avoids opposition from group members that only emerges later in the process,

resulting in decisions being affected or reversed.

FOUR STEPS OF DD

- Gain all the views
- Search for the alternative point of view (the 'no')
- Make it safe to say the 'no'
- Vote
- Add the wisdom of the minority and ask them what they need to go along with the majority decision

How to deal with conflict when facilitating?

In any group setting, conflict can be healthy. It shows that members are taking ownership and sharing their ideas honestly.

However, there is always a possibility that healthy conflict escalates and ceases to be constructive. Since emotions resulting from conflict tend to intensify over time, it is important to address the conflict as soon as it starts to become unhealthy. There are many approaches and

methods for intervening if the discussion starts to fragment:

- identify the dysfunctional behaviour
- prevent dominance and include everyone
- summarise discussions and conversations
- bring closure to the meeting with an end result or action.

7 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE YOU INTERVENE

1. Can I identify a pattern?
2. If I do not intervene, will another group member?
3. Will the group have time to process the intervention?
4. Does the group have sufficient experience and knowledge to use the intervention to improve effectiveness?
5. Is the group too overloaded to process the intervention?
6. Is the situation central or important enough to intervene?
7. Do I have the skills to intervene?

3.4 The Art of Hosting

The Art of Hosting and Harvesting Conversations that Matter' is a highly effective way of using the collective intelligence and self-organizing capacity of groups. It consists of a mixture of powerful conversational processes to invite people to step in and take charge of the challenges they face.

The Art of Hosting is an emerging set of practices for facilitating group conversations of all sizes. It is supported by principles that:

- maximize collective intelligence
- welcome diverse viewpoints
- maximize participation and courtesy
- transform conflict into creative cooperation.

The Art of Hosting is not a training where people sit back and listen. Participants are invited to actively engage in conversation and to transform conversation into meaningful action.

The methods below are the two most well-known practices that the Art of Hosting uses. Each of the methodologies used as part of the Art of Hosting has a powerful question at its core.

3.4.1 Appreciative inquiry

Instead of taking a problem-solving approach, Appreciative Inquiry offers a focus on possibilities, moving from 'what is' to 'what could be'. Based on powerful, affirmative questions, people interview each other to

▶ To learn more, you can watch some of the many great videos on the Vimeo channel of artofhosting.org. Each offers a glimpse into what The Art of Hosting Conversations that Matter is all about.

uncover experiences that resemble what they want to create. For that reason, Appreciative Inquiry has been described as ‘leading by asking the right questions’. For example, if teams are not working well together, participants can reflect on times when they were collaborative and successful. Such experiences hold the keys to how we might create the future we wish for. Appreciative Inquiry is used to tap into the latent capabilities of the group to create the success it is seeking.

3.4.2 World Café

The World Café method imitates a café setting where small groups of four or five people talk with each other around tables. They are discussing questions that are related

to real work or they talk about work they are trying to do together. This is an ideal way to find out what a group of people is thinking and feeling about a topic. After the first conversation, one person stays at the table as ‘host,’ while the others move to a new table, taking their previous conversations with them. This way, the threads of the various conversations are woven together, and everyone gets a sense of what is being discovered and developed together.

WORLD CAFÉ PRINCIPLES FOR HOSTING CONVERSATIONS THAT MATTER

- Set the context
- Create a relaxed space
- Explore questions that matter
- Encourage contributions from everyone
- Connect different perspectives
- Listen together for insights
- Share collective discoveries

Powerful questions are fundamental to the Art of Hosting; many of the methodologies incorporate this concept. A powerful question is one that probes deeply, allows for rich discussion, and seeks wisdom and knowledge. Questions that begin with ‘how’, ‘why’ and ‘what if’ are the most likely to achieve these goals.

3.5 Open Space Technology

Open Space Technology is a way to enable all kinds of people, in any kind of organisation, to create inspired meetings and events. Open Space Technology is best used when the work that needs to be done is complex, the group you work with is diverse (combining many interests and skills), the time is limited and the passion to come up with a solution is high. Whenever we need the contribution and innovative genius of everyone – on for example budget, leadership or a crisis of some kind – then the space is open for anyone to pose a session topic. Over the course of the meeting, people are

free to move around to choose which session(s) they most want to attend, bringing maximum enthusiasm and commitment for conversation and action. This allows for personal buy-in and committed action to be achieved in a very short time.

A focusing theme or question provides the framework for the event. The art of the question lies in saying just enough to evoke attention, while leaving sufficient open space for the imagination to run wild. Open Space Technology has one outstanding characteristic: the release of energy and commitment. It also has one outstanding enemy, which is: control. Open Space Technology will not work



when the energy and commitment generated are not allowed to flow freely.

The 4 principles of open space technology

- Whoever comes are the right people
- Whatever happens is the only thing that could have
- Whenever it starts is the right time
- When it's over, it's over

These principles are simple statements of the way things work. While they may appear counter-intuitive, they are what always happens when people interact.

The only law or rule in OST is the Law of Two Feet. This invites you to stand up for what you believe and if you feel you are neither contributing nor learning in the place where you find yourself, you should use your two feet and go somewhere else. The Law of Two Feet is fundamentally about personal responsibility. It emphasizes that the only person responsible for your experience is you.

HOW IT WORKS

- Participants sit in a circle
- The organiser states the theme
- Participants go to the centre of the circle, write down a topic for discussion, announce it to the group, then place it on the agenda board
- Participants sign up to sessions they would like to attend
- The person who suggested the topic hosts the session
- Notes are made -by everyone – while the session runs
- Participants can switch sessions or have a break at anytime
- An unedited report is compiled from each session and sent to participants

3.6 Non-violent Communication

Non-Violent Communication (NVC) shows us a way of being very honest without any criticism, insults, or put-downs. It has been described as a language of compassion, a tool for positive social change, and a spiritual practice. NVC was developed by Dr Marshall B. Rosenberg, who has introduced it to individuals and organisations worldwide.

NVC gives us the tools and consciousness to understand what triggers us, to take responsibility for our reactions, and to deepen our connection with ourselves and others.

It is based on a fundamental principle: behind all human actions are needs that people seek to meet. Understanding and acknowledging these needs can create a shared basis for connection and cooperation, and – more globally – peace. >

How you can use the NCV process

Clearly expressing how I am
without blaming or criticising

OBSERVATIONS

1. What I observe (see, hear, remember, imagine, free from my evaluations) that does or does not contribute to my well-being:
"When I (see, hear) ..."

Empathetically receiving how you are
without hearing blame or criticism

1. What you observe (see, hear, remember, imagine, free from your evaluations) that does or does not contribute to your well-being:
"When you (see, hear) ..."
(Sometimes unspoken when offering empathy)

2. How I feel (emotion or sensation rather than thought) in relation to what I observe: *"I feel ..."*

FEELINGS

2. How you feel (emotion or sensation rather than thought) in relation to what you observe: *"You feel ..."*

3. What I need or value (rather than a preference, or a specific action) that cause my feelings: *"... because I need/value ..."*

NEEDS

3. What you need or value (rather than a preference, or a specific action) that cause your feelings: *"... because you need/value ..."*

Clearly requesting that which would
enrich my life without demanding

REQUESTS

4. The concrete actions I would like taken: *"Would you be willing to ...?"*

Empathetically receiving that which would
enrich your life without hearing any demand

4. The concrete actions you would like taken: *"Would you like ...?"*
(Sometimes unspoken when offering empathy)



NVC has four steps to creating meaningful conversations

- Observe and recap
- Describe emotions
- Identify needs
- Make a request

Understanding each other at the level of our needs creates connection. At this deeper human level, the similarities between us outweigh the differences, which will result in greater compassion for others.



Want to learn more?

Learn more about events, courses, books and other resources by subscribing to the newsletter on cnvc.org

HOW IT IS USED

The NVC process focuses on language and process. Conflicts arise when words are perceived as threats or insults. The goal of NVC's four-step approach is to have meaningful conversations to connect to every person's needs. It is not about 'winning' an argument. The NVC process starts with neutral observation. Let people in the group describe their emotions, instead of issues. Recap to make things clear ('I'm hearing you say that ...'). Help participants to identify their needs, based on what they've just shared, and then try to come up with a clear request based on that need. Marshall B. Rosenberg remarks about

this process: 'The number one reason we don't get our needs met, is that we don't express them. We express judgments. If we do express needs, the number two reason we don't get our needs met, is that we don't make clear requests.' NVC slows down the pace of the conversation and compels people to reflect and clarify on what they feel and say. For our Social Dialogue Project, we applied Non-Violent Communication and we have encouraged its further use through agreements. It has been a wonderful tool to resolve conflicts and misunderstandings with greater ease.

‘When we hear the other
person’s feelings and
needs, we recognize our
common humanities

DR. MARSHALL B. ROSENBERG



3.7 Experiential Learning Theory

David A. Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) is a powerful approach to all forms of learning, development and change. Experiential learning describes the ideal process of learning, invites you to understand yourself as a learner, and empowers you to take charge of your own learning and development. The way you learn is the way you approach life in general. It is also the way you solve problems, make decisions, and meet life's challenges. Learning

occurs in any setting and continues throughout your life. The experiential learning process supports you in performance improvement, learning and development.

David Kolb's work on the experiential learning cycle is among the most influential approaches to learning. The experiential learning cycle is a four-step learning process that is applied multiple times in every interaction and experience: Experience – Reflect – Think – Act. It's a learning process initiated



Want to learn more about ELT?

Watch this video on experientiallearninginstitute.org/resources/what-is-experiential-learning/

If you would like to find out what your learning style is, go to experientiallearninginstitute.org/resources/learning-styles/.

by a concrete **experience**, which requires **reflection**, review and perspective-taking of the experience; then abstract **thinking** to reach conclusions and conceptualize the meaning of the experience; leading to a decision to **act**, engaging in active experimentation or trying out what you've learned.

This cycle is so natural and organic that people engage in it without being aware that they are learning. It happens almost effortlessly all the time and is constantly transforming our lives.

The way in which we navigate the learning cycle varies from person to person. Personality, education, work experience, culture and competencies determine how people prefer to use the learning cycle. The Kolb Experiential Learning Profile describes nine different ways of navigating the learning cycle by learning styles. Please note that a learning style is not a trait or a fixed way of how a person learns things. It is more like a habit.

HOW IT IS USED

ELT describes different learning styles, with complementary learner's needs. While most of us are not just one specific type of learner but fall across the spectrum of each of these styles, facilitating sessions that are engaging on all levels will give participants the best chance of success. Learning styles are also effective in helping to guide team learning. They provide a framework for understanding others whose approaches are different from yours. For our Social Dialogue Project, we planned our sessions in such a way that we could keep everyone engaged with various activities encompassing all learning styles.

DAY

1

CHECK-IN

AGREEMENT

OVERVIEW
⊕ EFFECT

FACILITATOR
TRAINER

↑ Theory of
LEVELS of
listening

Dialogue
WALK

CHECK-
OUT

DAY

2

CHECK IN

RECAP

W.C, A.O.H,
T.O.U, N.V.C, D.D

KOLB

Design Elements

NEUTRALITY

Check-Out

DAY

3

CHECK-IN

POWERFUL QUESTIONS

RECAP

COMMUNICATION VICES

APPRECIATIVE INTERVIEW

Check-Out



4. Preparing and Designing for Facilitation

A lot of time should go into preparing sessions. If you take your time to do this well, your session may be transformational.

A facilitator is a person who sets the right coordinates for a meeting or workshop to take place and produce results. The process may vary, depending on the situation, but most often, a facilitator has two important responsibilities: to design and to plan.

The cornerstone of facilitation is understanding what the objectives of the sessions are, so we can work towards achieving them. Once you know the objectives, it is time to design the right group process and select the proper facilitation techniques that will help you achieve the outcomes. Proper planning will help you stay confident and make adjustments as needed during the event.

Most skilled facilitators spend about three to four times as long preparing

for a session than the amount of time they spend giving the actual session. But why should you spend so much time preparing?

As a facilitator, it's your job to guide a group through a process, making it easier for them to accomplish the goal at hand. Having a structure and a general idea of what direction you're going will help you do just that. However, as we've all learned in life, nothing ever goes as planned! You need a plan and a back-up plan and possibly a few more plans, just in case your other plans don't work. Having options to draw from will give you flexibility and allow you to change things at a moment's notice to meet the group's needs.

Knowing who's in the room should also be part of your preparation, as it is an essential ingredient for effective facilitation. Find out as much as you >

can before you get there. The more you know about the group, about individual personalities and about the dynamics at play, the more likely you will achieve a successful session and create a positive experience.

When planning your session and while you're in the room facilitating, you need to find ways for the entire group to be on a level playing field. Finding ways for everyone in the group to participate is a key component of getting the group to buy in and own the process.

Consider designing a session with structures and activities that appeal to different learners and personality types. This could be as simple as arranging a seating plan that is equal and fair, where everyone is at the same eye level, in a circle and with no one's back to anyone else.

As a facilitator, you need to help set a tone for the behaviours and attitudes

of the session. You could think up guidelines yourself or you can simply ask the group what behaviours and attitudes will help them get the most out of the experience.

Clear instructions will make it easier for your group. Breaking down the steps of an activity and describing the end goal will also definitely help them. You could do this by writing the directions on flip chart paper or a PowerPoint slide and asking the group to repeat the steps to you to make sure everyone understands the activity.

When formulating the instructions, you could consider:

1. how you want people to present their information to the group.
2. what topics of conversation do you want them to cover.
3. whether you want them to take notes.
4. how much time will they have for this activity.

A simple 'get to know you' activity is always a good way to start a session. You can ask everyone to turn to the person beside them and share something interesting about themselves, then share that info with the larger group.

Chaordic Design

Chaordic Design will help you, as a facilitator, to navigate complex situations. The chaordic path is the path that walks between chaos and order. When you don't know where you're going, or what the future holds for you, you can bring a bit of order to your work by using clear, strategic steps. These steps are intended to create structures that allow you to create together, as a group, without stifling creativity or the emergence of new ideas and new ways of doing things.

The steps taken when walking the chaordic path can be used both as a planning tool and to help you understand what you are discovering about an organisation, community, or initiative. They will also allow you to make progress that is rooted in real need, and that is sustainable for the community it serves and the people working within it. Think of them as

stepping stones, nested one within the other. You cannot build the next one until the previous one is in place.

The stepping stones

Each of these stepping stones is activated by asking key questions. As you design your work together, you will select from these questions (or design others) to help you explore each stone as you lay it in place.

KEY QUESTIONS

- What is going on in the world right now that makes our work important?
- What are the challenges and opportunities we are facing?
- Why is it important that we do this work?

Step 1: Need

Need is the most compelling reason for doing anything. Sensing the need is the first step to designing a meeting or change initiative that is relevant. The need is outside of our work; it is the thing that is served by the work you are doing. Needs can be identified through dialogue, meetings, or individual interviews.

Step 2: Purpose

From the need flows the purpose. Purpose statements are clear and compelling ideas about where we're going. They guide us in doing our best possible work. However, working in a chaordic space – where things might change continually – means your purpose should be a direction, not a destination.

KEY QUESTIONS

- What purpose can we adopt to best meet the need?
- If this work lives up to its fullest potential, what do we imagine is possible?
- What could this work do/ create/ inspire/result in?
- Where should we be heading?
- What is the simplest and most powerful question we could keep at the core of our work?

Step 3: Principles

Principles of cooperation help us to know how we will work together. It is very important that these principles are simple, co-owned and well understood. They are not merely platitudes or words on a page somewhere. They are clear statements of how we agree to operate together so that in the long term we can sustain the relationships that make this work possible. Remember: the best principles help to guide us when the plan breaks down, so make them visible and easy to remember.

KEY QUESTIONS

- What key principles guide us in our work?
- What is important to remember about how we want to work with the participants in our initiative?
- What is the most important principle to remember as we design to meet the need and purpose?
- What unique ways of working and being together can we bring to this work?

KEY QUESTIONS

- Who is in the room?
- Who is not in the room, but should be and how do we bring them in?
- How do we use relationships to propagate the ideas generated by our work together?
- Who will be interested in the results of our work?

Step 4: People

Once the need and the purpose are in place and we have agreed on our principles of cooperation, we can begin to identify the people that are involved in our work. Mapping the network helps us to see who is in this work for us and who will have an interest in what we are doing.

KEY QUESTIONS

- What are we going to do together?
- How will we enable our work to happen?
- What resources are needed in terms of time, money and attention and where will these come from?
- What will happen with the results of the work?
- What logistical questions need to be resolved?
- What expertise can help us with our work?

Step 5: Concept

As we move to a more concrete idea of what our structures are, we begin to explore the concepts that will be useful. Coming up with a concept allows us to pause and check out our general direction with those who are enabling the work.

Avoid the temptation to jump immediately to a final design.

KEY QUESTIONS

- What basic elements, activities and processes may best serve our work?
- How will we ensure that our work reflects our principles?

Step 6: Structure

Once the concept has been chosen, it is time to create the structure that will channel our resources. This is where we decide upon a plan of action and define the roles and responsibilities of the people involved. It is in these conversations that we make decisions about the resources of the group: time, money, energy, commitment, and attention.

When we get to the point of designing structure, we can chart our meeting out using a simple table to ensure that all the aspects of the design are fully incorporated.

TIME/DAY	NEED/ PURPOSE	ACTIVITY	HARVEST	NOTES

Step 7: Practice

The invitation here is to practice working with one another in alignment with the designs we have created. This is where you keep in touch and keep things going by conference calls, email exchanges and to do lists.

KEY QUESTIONS

- What forms of harvest from our work will best serve the need?
- What intentional harvest will serve our purpose?
- How can we make our work visible and usable?
- How will we be able to measure or understand the effect of our work?
- How will we carry the DNA of our work forward?
- How will we stay open to emergent learning?
- What are the questions we need to take with us about what we are learning?

KEY QUESTIONS

- What do we need to do to sustain our work together?
- How do we maintain the spirit of our gatherings when we can't meet in person?
- How do we sustain relationships and support the work that arises from our gatherings?

Step 8: Harvest

There is no point in doing work in the world unless you plan to harvest the fruits of your labour. Harvesting includes making meaning of our work and feeding forward the results so that they have the desired impacts in the world. When we give feedforward, instead of rating or judging a

performance in the past (as we do with feedback), we focus on the development of our work in the future.

Please note that harvesting is an activity that needs to be planned upfront. Think of it this way: you are not planning a meeting, you are planning a harvest.



empathy

engage the knowledge well

Approachable appearance

Confidant

Engage & participate

Positive attitude

Flexible

Patient

centered

Communication Skill

has compassion/self-compassion

Take courageous conversation

Sit in the fire, conflict?

TRUSTWORTHY

? RELIANT

sense of humor ?

adaptable

Not teacher

Self-Confident

must be honest engaging talk?

Open Minded

must be active

humble

good listening for relationship with others

good techniques (hand)

Showing of rational/analytical participation

personal appearance

Nice Speaker

Talky

Walk the talk

rational

Self Study, Karate, Library

rephrase a key message ?

talkative ? ? ? ?

Brave ?

readable

5. Facilitating

These skills and tools will enable you to take a group session to the next level.

5.1 Listening to the group

In an effective group session, everyone should be on the same page, speaking the same language. To achieve that, make sure everyone has a chance to be heard and to hear each other. The best way to do that is to train your active listening skills and encourage your group to do the same.

Mirroring, paraphrasing, and tracking are three tools that can help with active listening.

Mirroring is when you repeat the speaker's words literally. It helps the speaker hear what he/she just

said, shows neutrality, and can help establish trust. Remember to keep your tone warm and accepting and to use the speaker's words, not yours.

Paraphrasing is a straightforward way to show the speaker and group that their thoughts were heard and understood. Paraphrasing, unlike mirroring, is when you use your own words to say what you think the speaker said: "It sounds like you're saying... [Insert paraphrased content]. Is that what you mean?"

Tracking is when you're keeping track of various lines of thought

that are going on simultaneously within a single discussion, helping to summarise the different perspectives and show that multiple ideas are equally valid.

Otto Scharmer (from Theory U) states that many failures at work can be attributed to a lack of listening, and therefore a lack of understanding of the situation at hand. He describes the different levels of listening in his **4 Levels of Listening model**, which he developed with his team while observing interactions between individuals at the organisational level. >

Levels of listening

Downloading

This is the most basic form of listening. It is very direct, and usually only occurs when someone is familiar with what they are hearing. People who download are only listening to confirm what they already know or think, which is likely not to change. Many organisational meetings exist at this level.

Factual Listening

This is the next stage, which involves listening with an entirely open mind and without any presumptions or prior judgements. People employing factual listening are attentive to new ideas and data. They are open to differences from what they already know. Factual listening opens a window for the potential of change.

Empathic Listening

Empathic listening requires an even deeper level of listening. For this,

you need to have a certain level of emotional intelligence. Empathic listening is the ability to truly connect with the person being listened to and to see the world, situation, subject or opinion through their eyes. It provides you with an emotional connection to the speaker and it opens you to alternative perspectives that can help you sculpt and refine your decision-making.

Generative Listening

This is the highest, most informative level of listening. Generative listening is about turning words into action and revolves around setting aside your preconceptions and being fully prepared to embrace the thinking and viewpoint of others to achieve a common goal. It is the kind of listening that is practiced by great coaches, leaders, and friends; people who listen to more than just our words.

5.2 Creating a safe space

In some working environments, it can be career-limiting for people to come forward with a different opinion or express criticism. As a facilitator you can create a safe space for doing this by suggesting your own views of why a project or idea may fail or why a decision could be wrong.

Alternatively, you can try to separate the issue in time and space. In other words, suggest that other people have tried this idea at other times

and in a different place and it did not work. For example: “This is a good idea but when this other organisation tried to do it last year it didn’t work!” Or: “This is a good idea, but we tried this at a previous place I worked at and there were numerous problems.” Your intention is simply to help make it safe to express alternative, and often unpopular, views. If you, as a facilitator, can bring in some of these views, it makes it easier for others to state their different view.



5.3 Checking in and checking out

Using a check-in and check-out is a good way to introduce a circle process in your meetings. It is a simple way for teams to open or close a process symbolically and in a collaborative way. Checking in and out invites each member of the group to be present, seen and heard, and to express a reflection or a feeling. Checking in emphasises presence, focus and group commitment; checking out emphasises reflection and symbolic closure. A check-in can help people to get 'into' the meeting and be truly present. Verbal sharing, especially of a brief story, also weaves the interpersonal net. A check-in usually starts with a volunteer, and proceeds around the circle. If a person is not ready to speak, the turn goes to the

next one, and another opportunity is offered after others have spoken. As for checking out, restating the key outcomes of the meeting will help the group to feel a sense of accomplishment. Asking participants to check-out verbally gives them a space to express final questions or concerns and creates meeting closure.

Powerful questions

check-in and check-out procedures are basically carefully crafted questions. When crafting questions consider the following:

- How much time do you have for the check-in? Think about how BIG your question is – does it invite a three-to-five-minute story from each person, or a sentence or two?
- How can the check-in connect

and support the rest of the agenda and the overall purpose of the gathering?

- What kind of tone do you want to set through the check-in? Playful? Serious? Connecting? Learning something new about each other?
- Is this a group very familiar with check-ins and do they meet regularly? Then maybe it is time to mix things up with some fun and playfulness!

A check-in question such as 'Tell us how you came into this work?' will open the story space and would likely be a longer check-in process. A check-in question like 'Say a few words on how you feel and what you might need to be present today' could be a shorter check-in.

5.4 Building an agreement

When participants come together in a circle and form a group, each person brings their own understanding of how to work together, how to talk, what defines them as a group et cetera. All these countless differences are where the energy of the group lies. However, as a group they need a co-initiation, a place where all the participants can start to build a common understanding about how they work, how they can stay focused and how they can take care of their needs. The process of building an agreement can be crucial for the group to be effective and to function safely.

The agreement you make is not just a standardised set of rules. The rules the group comes up with may be different for other meetings or

topics. Be aware of the pitfall that group members who are more voiced or opinionated than others take the lead in creating rules. Make space for everyone to reflect on what they need. Make sure as well that the agreement is not limited to what is obvious and what gets clearly stated. The agreement should also touch upon topics that are not easy to discuss. You can do this by asking everyone what their hopes and fears for this group/project/meeting are.


Safety rules

As a facilitator you are responsible for making, or gathering, the Safety Rules. The first Safety Rule is the premise: No one has a monopoly on the truth. This is the only Safety Rule that is provided by the facilitator. However, you may suggest an

extra safety measure, asking every participant to take proper care of themselves. This may require a rule that allows people to step out of the process if they need to. If this is agreed upon, let participants know it would be good if they can stay in the room while doing so. And that they can step back into the process whenever they want to.

Make sure that the group agrees with the Safety Rules. However, be careful not to get into an argument about them. If it feels unsafe in the room, slow down the process down and try to find out if anyone else has a Safety Rules they want to add. All must agree to the Safety Rules, so vote on each one. You can use the four steps of Deep Democracy (p. 24) to make sure every voice in the room has been heard and taken into account.

5.5 Go-Round



In a Go-Round everyone gets to speak for a short, equal period, taking turns, often going around a circle of people. As a facilitator, you can offer topics or guide contributions. You start somewhere in the circle, and every member gets to speak one by one. There is no cross-talking (with the rare exception of asking clarifying questions) and everyone tries to speak for about the same amount of time. Rounds are simple, but powerful: everyone gets a chance

to speak, everyone gets a chance to listen. You move forward as a group, like a flock of birds, always knowing where the other members are at. People who have been truly heard do not have to repeat themselves. The conversation slows down to a manageable pace. And in the long run, this saves time because you don't lose time dealing with emotional issues, misunderstandings or miscommunication.

Communication Vices

To resolve tension in a group, sound communication is vital. Be aware of the following communication vices that can create hurdles in the way.

Not being present

This happens when your body is present but your mind has left the room, for instance when you are attending meetings, which may not be directly related to your sphere of influence. You may be physically present, but you are thinking about something else.

✚ **Antidote:** Ask a simple yes or no-question and take a hand-raising vote. This ensures that everyone is involved.

Interruptions

Interruptions make it impossible to hear or be heard. If people are interrupting one another constantly, we often miss the point of what is said.

✚ **Antidote:** make people aware of the fact that they are interrupting and let them decide if they want to continue to do so. Some groups are perfectly fine with interruptions.

Radio broadcasting

People sometimes express their views without relating them to what other people are saying. It is as if each person is having their own conversation, and this sounds like a collection of radios broadcasting their own programme with no connection to one another.

✚ **Antidote:** Try to encourage people to connect to what others are

saying and not just leave the various threads hanging in space. Ask people for their views, specifically in relation to the last comment.

Indirect speaking

It is surprising how often we avoid direct exchanges by using vague references. We do this because we are afraid to offend someone or don't want to take responsibility for a point of view. This serves only to defer conflict temporarily and results in the person targeted feeling powerless and resentful. There are three common ways of being indirect.

1. Not speaking from the 'I', but instead using the third person ("Some people may find that offensive" or "One should not do that").
2. Speaking in general. Rather than expressing something directly, a person may say things about

someone in the room but not address that person directly. For example, someone says: "I really think we should do something about the sales department" when Esther, who is a salesperson, is in the room.

3. Angel winging. This means speaking on behalf of someone else, without giving them the chance to do that themselves. Speaking on behalf of others contributes to their sense of disempowerment and dependency.
 - ✦ **Antidote: Make sure people speak for themselves. If someone speaks on behalf of someone else, ask the person directly for their own view and encourage them to speak for themselves.**

Sliding rather than deciding

Bad listening habits can often pull a conversation off track. Too often we have conversations that move onto

totally different topics or change course without people consciously deciding.

- ✦ **Antidote: Make sure that the group is conscious of what direction the discussion is taking. This will help participants decide what they really want to discuss and ensure that everyone is involved.**

Questions

We often use questions — especially in group settings — as a way of making a statement in a soft or cushioned way. These questions are not a genuine request for information, but statements wrapped up in questions.

- ✦ **Antidote: To avoid this, gently challenge a question of that nature. Ask if the person is making a statement or if they really don't know.**

6. Limitations of facilitation

Facilitation is not a quick fix. Sometimes you have to tackle problems in your group, before you can move on.

So far, we have given an overview of the facilitation tools and techniques you can apply in your work. However, like any other method, facilitation is not a cure-all. You will encounter situations where your facilitation techniques are challenged. Be aware of the obstacles on your way and try to work around them.

Keeping pace

People who can follow formats easily have an advantage in our way of group facilitation. Others may find this difficult and fall behind more quickly. To allow those people to keep up, you can support them directly, use charts and posters on the wall and give clear requests. Inviting group members to speak up in rounds is a useful way to re-integrate and harmonize people whose contributions might not seem constructive initially.

Equal opportunities

Groups tend to lean towards group members who are persuasive and can form and express ideas quickly. To compensate for this bias, you can invite others to state their points last in the round when they need more time to formulate their ideas. You can also give the whole group extra time to think about what they want to say before you start the round, especially if some group members express that they need time or do not want to start first.

Power plays

Be aware of power plays within the group. Some people may have an addiction to power, with a tendency to speak or act for the whole group. Others may have an aversion to power and do nothing at all. Do not leave this unaddressed. If power relations are tense or there are hierarchy issues, the facilitation process can be impeded and lead to disappointment.

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