

Participatory Leadership Training

19 – 21 June 2019, Potsdam
19 November 2019, Brussels



In 2019 we held our first Participatory Leadership Training. The **AIM** was to empower our Members and partners with techniques that allow for a more **MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION**, within their organisations as well as towards external stakeholders.

To take account of this double intent, we **TARGETED** practitioners on the ground that regularly design stakeholder processes as well as leaders within their organisations that want to enhance their work environments by employing inclusive leadership techniques.

If you are looking for more in-depth information on the different techniques and methods used for Participatory Leadership processes, simply [get in touch](#). You are also invited to see impressions from our training [here](#). The following text is a **SUMMARY** of the idea behind applying Participatory Leadership methods, of methods we learned and impressions from the participants.

WHAT IS PARTICIPATORY LEADERSHIP?

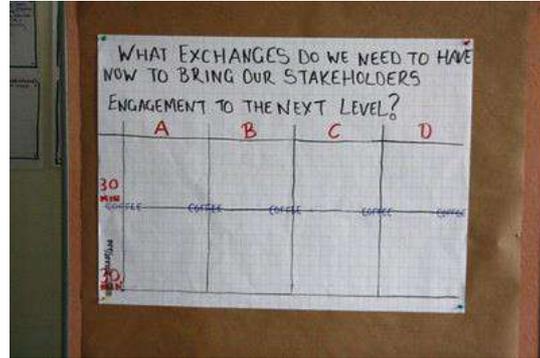
Participatory Leadership stands for an attitude: Co-intelligence, collaboration and self-organisation supported by a set of methods of participatory conversational formats. Working with participatory methods is done not by traditional 'command-and-control' approaches, but by:

- setting clear intentions
- creating hospitable conditions
- inviting diverse people to connect and interact.

„Finding consensus with an inclusive and open approach is key in proper acceptance and implementation of any outcome. And this is what the participatory leadership training offers: methods to work in big groups that allow an organic development of the solutions within a well-designed discussion environment.”

Irina Minciuna, European Commission

By employing this mindset, we can set up processes that are more inclusive and engage others in a meaningful and constructive way. It is both a collection of methods as well as a creative way of thinking and can be used for organising your team's work or to design workshops or stakeholder engagement processes. Processes designed and implemented with participatory methods are better thought through as they are looked at from many different perspectives – and therefore have a higher chance of making an impact.



"I am organising a work event at the moment and will use these methods to get people to talk to each other. We have a mix of younger and more advanced staff in my work team and it is continually growing. This is a good way of growing closer. At the same time, I hope that by using these methods the participants will feel responsible for follow-up tasks, making our work more effective and team-oriented."

Sebastian Knauf, Amprion

HOW WAS THE TRAINING DESIGNED?

The training consisted of three consecutive days in which the participants learned the theory behind and the methods of participatory leadership processes. A follow-up day was scheduled several months later where participants could exchange on how they applied their learnings.

During the training the following questions were addressed:

- How do we create a culture of collaboration and engagement in our teams?
- How do we generate new ideas for successful stakeholder engagement?
- What are the right mindsets and methods of Participatory Leadership to organise events and meetings with internal and external stakeholders?

By using a **COLLABORATIVE COACHING** style, the participants were actively engaged from the very beginning. After an initial introduction, participants were encouraged to sign up to host sessions themselves in order to apply learnings immediately and try out participatory methods first hand. The volunteers were coached in small groups on how to design their session. The new skills, tried out in a safe environment, enabled them to take their learnings outside and employ them in their work immediately. A **FOLLOW-UP TRAINING** then served to exchange on learnings "in the real world" and to answer new questions that arose since the initial training.

“All the participants faced common challenges in collaborating with different stakeholders. Some internally within their project teams, others in their work with external stakeholders. I learned that participative techniques can help building, in a pleasant and innovative way, solutions together. The key is to identify clear objectives, find the appropriate method and practice.”

Cristina Simioli, EMPOWERED

OVERVIEW OF METHODS TAUGHT AT THE TRAINING

Checking In and Checking Out



A good checking in or landing is the foundation of any meeting. It needs to have a suitable question that brings participants straight to the purpose of the event.

Checking out works as a counter-balance. The participants are invited to reflect upon their insights and find connections between them. It serves to round up the day, generates a feeling of closure and bridges the gap between the training and the day to day work.

These techniques also allow us to connect different sessions or different days of a workshop. There are endless ways of checking in and out. This includes the more well-known circle practice, but also pub quizzes, drawing impressions or paper balls flying through the air. The potential of these unconventional methods to activate participants is not to be underestimated.

Asking the right questions and harnessing the group power

One important element of the training is to teach meaningful communication and listening skills. Part of this is the importance of asking the right **QUESTIONS**. A high-quality question focuses on what is meaningful for the participants, triggers curiosity and invites us to explore further.

The methods taught to enhance these skills include

- Wicked Question Game
- Appreciative Inquiry
- Storytelling.

Furthermore, methods for **GROUP ACTIVATION** are taught to harness different expertise and broaden the mindset to take into account differing viewpoints. These methods include

- World Café
- Open Space Design
- Pro Action Café.



“The approaches to collective engagement that we learnt are disarming. They come across as informal, playful and even fun. However, they are powerful tools which provide great insights and feedback to those hosting and facilitating the events.”

Graham Parker, EirGrid

Topics

Group activation methods were trained with 'real world' challenges introduced by the participants, who received input of their peers to apply once back in the office. The topics included the design of specific stakeholder engagement processes, the continued exchange between practitioners, event organisation and conflict resolution.



Harvesting

Another important aspect of Participatory Leadership is to make sure the participants retain what they have developed together. Through **HARVESTING METHODS**, one can visualise outcomes, provide closure and set the path for implementation.

Harvesting can take many forms, tangible or intangible. The Participatory Leadership Training teaches different methods of how to wrap up and document in a meaningful and effective manner.



"When I first started I was a little sceptical as I wasn't sure of what the outcomes of the programme would be. As I went through the learning process, I started to see real value in each of the techniques used. There were plenty of 'lightbulb moments' during the process and I look forward to putting what I've learnt into practice!"

Carmel Carey, ENTSOE

THE FULL IMPACT

Trying to sum up on paper what Participatory Leadership means is difficult – you have to practice and experience it to capture its diversity of methods and potential of application. We therefore very much hope you will simply **JOIN US FOR THE NEXT TRAINING!**