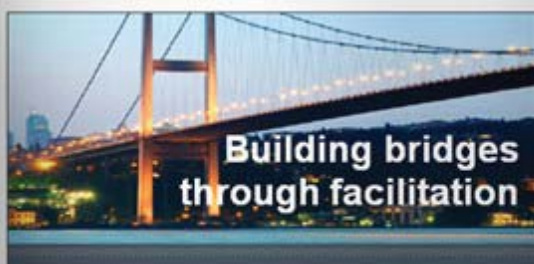


# IAF EUROPE NEWSLETTER

AUGUST '11



Volume 18 • Number 3 • Autumn 2011



**Building bridges  
through facilitation**

Journal of  
The Association for Management Education and  
Development



## ***Building bridges through facilitation***

*A special edition in collaboration with the International Association of Facilitators to mark their European conference, Istanbul, Turkey, from 14 to 16 October 2011*



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# THIS MONTH

## PROCESS, PARTICIPATION, AND COLLABORATION

# #08 AUGUST 2011



*Europe is one of seven regions within the International Association of Facilitators. The IAF Europe team members volunteer their time to plan and support activities and services for IAF members living in Europe, supported by Entendu Ltd. Contact us at [pamela.lupton-bowers@iaf-europe.eu](mailto:pamela.lupton-bowers@iaf-europe.eu); [robert.verheule@iaf-europe.eu](mailto:robert.verheule@iaf-europe.eu); [kristin.reinbach@iaf-europe.eu](mailto:kristin.reinbach@iaf-europe.eu); [rosemary.cairns@iafeurope.eu](mailto:rosemary.cairns@iafeurope.eu).*

*IAF Europe is currently the only region to benefit from having its own Administrative Office. Please make this your first point of contact for matters relating to your membership, the upcoming IAF Europe Conference or other activities in the region. Ben Richardson or Bobbie Redman are available during normal European working hours by calling +44 (0)1923 400 330 or just email [office@iafeurope.eu](mailto:office@iafeurope.eu).*

## ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

The IAF Europe Newsletter is published monthly by the IAF Europe Regional Team for members of the International Association of Facilitators living within Europe.

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**Cover picture:** 'Building bridges through facilitation' is the theme of e-Organisations & People, Vol 18 No 3, Autumn 2011. This special, themed bumper edition has been produced collaboratively by IAF and AMED, under the joint editorship of Bob MacKenzie and Rosemary Cairns, and with participation by 15 facilitator-authors from around the world. In anticipation of IAF Europe's Istanbul Conference Oct. 14-16, 2011, this edition focuses on how the profession of facilitation is evolving, and illustrates how facilitation is being used to create change and build bridges between disciplines in varied settings and at varied levels. For more details, see page 19-20 of this Newsletter.

We look forward to seeing you in Istanbul Oct. 14-16 for the IAF Europe Conference. You can see the brilliant program that is on offer at <http://www.iaf-europe-conference.org/>

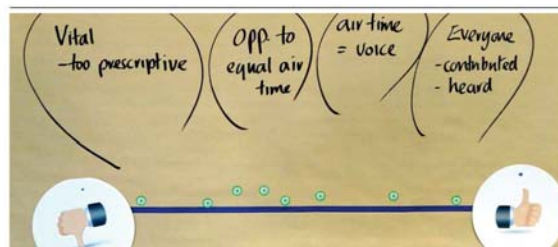
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# Designing Elegant Process

By Pamela Lupton Bowers

Last month, a few of us gathered for a one day workshop in Designing Elegant Process. When it was created some time ago to be run during 2011 for the Geneva Chapter, the rather academic working title had been 'The cycle and process of facilitation'. While I was assured the content would be interesting to some people, I was not particularly inspired by that original title. I have to admit that I stole the current title from Jo Nelson of ICA Canada who ran a short session at the Denver IAF Conference on a similar theme. Thank you, Jo. I did what Pepe Nummi in Finland refers to as 'stealing with pride'.

We had to deliver the workshop at short notice when our originally planned workshop was suddenly cancelled due to an unforeseen emergency for the presenters. However, eight enthusiastic people turned up, and lots of disappointed

RSVP's have asked us to reschedule with more advance notice. I think this is a lesson for all chapters scheduling events.

Our agenda included:

- a fun icebreaker called 'blow your own trumpet' which allowed people to share their strengths and competencies
- an exploration of our understanding of 'meta-models' and how they can be useful for getting a big picture view of the journey we'd like to make in a meeting
- a simple model to discuss the cycle of facilitation from contracting to reporting and follow up,
- the process of facilitation through which we could unpack the components of the actual meeting from setting state to agreeing outcomes and product



### A day of sharing

The models and concepts presented have evolved from my own facilitation experience, mostly out of efforts to explain to people in training workshops how I chose to do certain things rather than others. As with most facilitators, my approach has developed intuitively, and it is only when someone asks: 'how do you choose the introduction, or idea creation or icebreaker?' that I have had to reflect and attempt to find a way of putting the intuition into a rational model.

The day involved sharing these models and approaches, inviting my colleagues to see whether or not they might work for them, and also soliciting different models that we all could consider and perhaps adopt.

We explored what I call the 'Cycle of Facilitation' and agreed that key to preparing an effective agenda is first consulting with the client to understand the brief, and begin the building of relationship and trust. The other components of the cycle provided a simple way of getting clarity on the other high level components of a facilitation intervention. We mainly focused on free standing events, but the cycle can be used cyclically for a longer initiative of related meetings.

We used a preparation tool which many will recognise as the P's. My version, however, has 9P's.

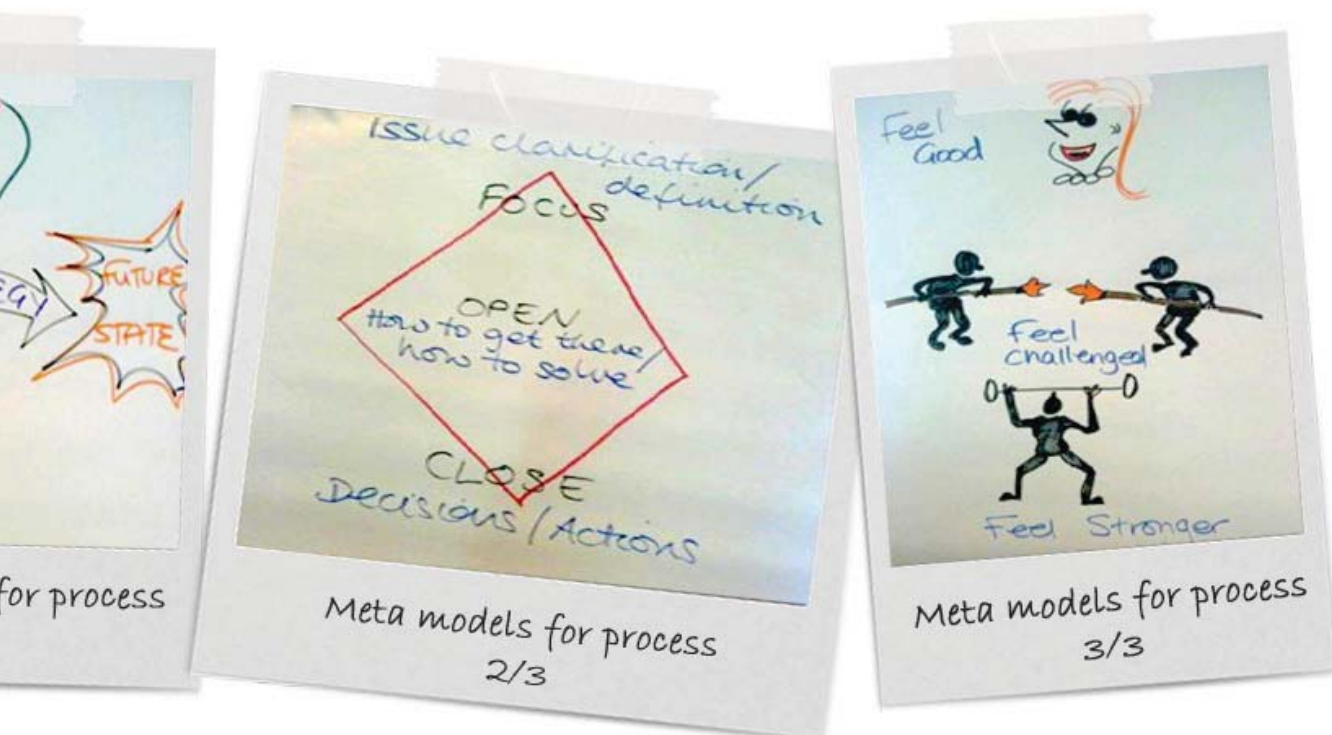
It's easy to remember because it chunks into three threes. It includes:

- Purpose
- Participants
- Problem
- Product
- Parameters
- Process
- Place
- pre-reading, and
- protocol (added because I do a lot of my work within the UN agencies).

The participants used their own real examples to practice using the tool to explore and deepen their understanding of the context in which the agenda would be designed.

### Meta models for process

We explored some meta models that can provide a framework for the meeting agenda. Models as simple as 'stop, start, continue', to more complex strategy models such as the third one from the left. The lovely simple yet powerful 'feel good, feel challenged, feel stronger' I learned from a young woman at the Denver conference, and recently used as a meta model for a great one day retreat for a client. And on the second picture from the right is a simpler variation of my own presented by one of the participants.



I then shared a more detailed model for the facilitation process which I have come to realise resembles Sam Kaner's, but actually is built from a communication model I learned from Charles Margerison of Team Management Systems in about 1996 when I was first introduced to TMS (although I do like Sam's descriptor 'groan zone' for that almost inevitable time when there is just too much stuff.)

The meta model I use represents the components I find essential to consider when designing an agenda for a meeting. The process starts with the 'problem' which can sometimes be messy, untidy and irrational and works towards a final 'solution' that ought to be clearer, tidy and more logical.

### Spend time on 'setting state'

The model describes five components:

- Setting state: establishing rapport, good relations and common ground
- Getting Clarity: An analysis of the issues or problem and generating ideas
- Fostering dynamics: Ensuring throughout that the emotional state of the meeting is good and addressing any potential 'groan zone' moments
- Making decisions: involves consolidating, weighting and prioritising, and deciding
- Agreeing outcomes: producing the agreed product for the meeting, identifying a solution, creating an action plan or strategy

I've come to realise that it pays to spend some serious consideration on 'setting state', which I refer to as 'nemawashi'. Nemawashi is a Japanese business term which refers to the traditional practice of personally handling objections to meetings in one-on-one sessions or small groups before the actual meeting. Some younger Japanese colleagues tell me nemawashi is being challenged in favour of a more transparent decision making process.

However, I use 'nemawashi' in its original meaning which comes from re-rooting trees and plans, and which derives from 'ne' meaning root and 'mewashi' meaning to turn. In my metaphor, this translates into working the ground of the meeting and the preparation of people's positions or prejudices to be transplanted, in order for them to be willing and ready to consider another perspective or paradigm.

As all facilitators will recognise, there are models within the meta model. We spent some time during the workshop exploring a model for choosing the appropriate 'nemawashi' activities. This model considers the group's familiarity with each other (close, unknown, positive or not so) and their familiarity or position vis-à-vis the topic (familiar/not familiar, for/against/unknown) as well as the size of the group to be involved in the meeting.

### Sharing ideas and fostering dynamics

The second component is 'divergence' and involves creating activities that encourage the sharing of different ideas about problem or potential solutions of an already identified problem. Again I shared a simple 'Boston box' model which captures my thought process for choosing the right idea creation activity, one that goes beyond brainstorming.

The model provides a framework to decide:

- Should the activity be individual and thus allow more introverted people the chance and space to think, or a more social interaction that allows the spontaneous creation that can come from building on expressed ideas, and
- Should the process allow for free association of ideas or is a more structured method desirable.

Other factors we looked at included how participatory the group was and whether we needed to stimulate interaction or to reduce the potential influence of more powerful members of the group.

The next component considers 'Fostering Dynamics'. For me, the consideration is about keeping the atmosphere positive and solution focused. It might included fun energisers etc but my approach is to plan in activities that generate energy and positivity rather than rely on solely on non-substantive activities.

For some people it seems that their obsession is about what corrective measure might be required if people end up in the groan zone. I have witnessed this phenomenon on several occasions and early in my career in facilitation, I admit to feelings of panic and doubt. I've learned some techniques to handle it over the years and I no longer get that 'deer in the headlights' reaction.

### Eliminating the 'groan zone'

However, I'd like to spend a moment talking about this phenomenon because in the facilitation training workshops that I run, participants always want to spend an inordinate amount of time on the 'dealing with difficult situations' and conflict resolution interventions. While some people are clearly traumatised by bad experiences, I truly believe that more forethought while planning the agenda can mitigate or even completely eradicate the unwelcome 'groan zone' reaction. It's not a matter of including 'groan zone' handling activities, but of recognising the potential for information overload which is typically the trigger for the psychological or social collapse that occurs.

A recent Newsweek article (March 2011) shed light on the 'groan zone' effect for me. The article describes the research of Angelika Dimoka, director of the Center for Neural Decision Making at Temple University, USA. She says the research has offered conclusive evidence that information overload doesn't just stress people out — it actually causes them to make bad decisions. Too much information, the article points out, overwhelms our brains to the point that "people's decisions make less and less sense." As the information load increased, Dimoka found, so did activity in the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (PFC), a region behind the forehead that is responsible for decision making and control of emotions.

As the "researchers gave the research subjects more and more information, "activity in the dorsolateral PFC suddenly fell off, as if a circuit breaker had popped." This inability to act because of the number of choices in front of them left people feeling completely overwhelmed.

For the same reason, says Dimoka. "frustration and anxiety soar: the brain's emotion regions—previously held in check by the dorsolateral PFC—run as wild as toddlers on a sugar high. They start making stupid mistakes and bad choices because the brain region responsible for smart decision making has essentially left the premises." The 'groan zone' is real, and if it occurs, sometimes the best solution is to take a break. You also need to have planned in ways of helping the group reduce the amount of information to digestible chunks.

### Planning convergence

Planning and providing clear, logical convergence methods are another way of getting people over and out of the 'groan zone'. The groan zone is not necessarily part of the agenda; with insight and planning you can create an agenda that will eliminate or mitigate the impact. At the very least, you can have a variety of responses in your back pocket.

What a group is looking for is a simple yet credible way of managing all of the information that has been created. Some facilitators have their tried and true methods and use them in almost all of their interventions. Others have a more dynamic facilitation approach and respond to the specific data that emerges.

I personally have some favourites but am not too prescriptive if the data suggests other methods or the group expresses a preference for a specific way of converging, I am happy to help support that. I've noticed that the medical and scientific groups I work with are more comfortable with more 'left brain' techniques than a typical HR department might be happy with. What gives me confidence is that I have planned a couple of alternatives and I don't have to think on my feet, I simply have to decide which alternative to suggest.



*Designing Elegant Process, 2011*



### Getting to a plan of action

Sometimes the convergence activities also deal with the decision making. The path to take appears obvious from the outputs. At other times you may have to use some methods of deciding to get from a larger group of alternatives to a practical one. Once again there are several ways to aid decision making; voting is the obvious one, but sometimes groups prefer more of a discussion towards consensus.

Your original preparatory work about the group will help you in this decision too. You will consider how large the group is and if it is possible to facilitate an effective consensus building discussion in plenary. The group's familiarity with and history of collaboration might also be a factor.

The final phase is the plan of action. The actual plan will very much depend on what was identified as the meeting's output or product. If the product was "three clear ideas for a new widget to be presented to the executive group", then the plan will be how and who will present the ideas to the executive group. If the expected product was 'five strategic directions that will lead us to achieve the vision by 2015', then as well as a Gantt chart detailing the five directions and outlining indicators of success, the plan of action would identify what the very next steps will be in finalising the plan, reporting on it, communicating it broadly.

Closing the meeting. Whatever social or celebratory closing is planned, I make it a com-

mitment to each group I work with that we do not close the meeting unless we have concretely agreed on the next immediate steps, even if the medium and long term plans have been documented. I usually end with a simple outline of 'who will do what by when?'

So, as far as I am concerned, there is no recipe or cookie cutter framework for designing an agenda. Each one is unique. Additionally, I anticipate it may change either because someone in the meeting was not consulted, or because the 'elephant' in the room isn't seen until we are all there to convene it.

At times protocol has demanded an agenda, but good facilitator common sense suggests that we validate it before we start. At times like this, I have presented a blank agenda on a flip chart with details of coffee and lunch and started from scratch. However the thinking and the planning you have done is never wasted. It builds your portfolio of ideas and adds to the confidence that you project to help the group through to a successful conclusion.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

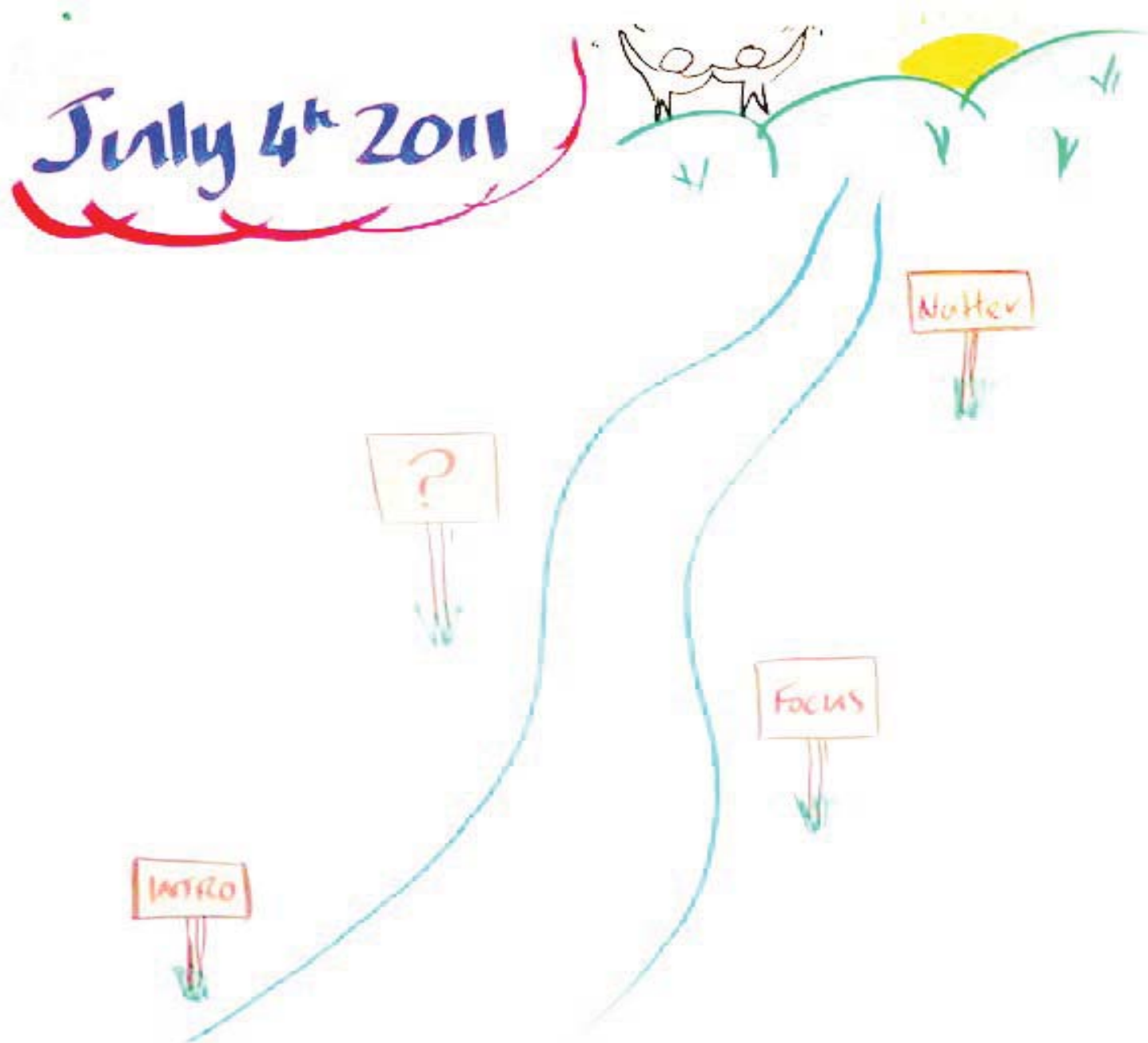


*Pamela Lupton-Bowers is a Certified Professional Facilitator, president of the IAF Geneva Chapter, and serves as the European region director for IAF. She is director of PLB Consulting Ltd. Pamela has designed and run facilitation and learning initiatives in 40 countries around the world for many international organizations. She has worked in adult education for almost three decades and holds degrees in sports education, applied linguistics, and adult education.*



Designing Elegant Process, 2011





## A DIFFERENT WAY TO HANDLE THE QUIET/SHY AND THE NOISY/VERBOSE

During the July 4, 2011 gathering of the UK Facilitators' Practice Group, Keith Warren-Price of Pinpoint Facilitation ran a short session on this topic. Here he shares a summary of his presentation, and the pinboards he used.

## A 45 minute agenda:

### Introduction:

All the books tell us to give encouragement to the quiet and shy and ask them for a contribution. Likewise for the noisy and verbose - encouragement and then ask them to allow others to have air time. On the surface this seems quite fair. However, let's think about what is going on.

Many managers spend time and money developing the 'ideal' team. They use all sorts of psychometric testing (16PF, Belbin, Honey and Mumford, to name but a few) to engage and recruit their 'drivers', their 'black hats', their pragmatists, their 'completer finishers' or whatever jargon is appropriate.

When it comes to a meeting, however, they suddenly and miraculously are all expected to behave in exactly the same manner. One wonders why.

Diagram B is taken from Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences. As a theory, I quite like it, as from experience it seems so valid.

In essence Gardner feels we all have a few preferred intelligences and those are the ones which work best for us when working and learning. We can learn to work with them all, but we have our preferred ones. Not many people, I feel, actually have linguistics as their preference.

We all do linguistics; we are brought up with it and it is the stuff of information exchange. Linguistics are measurable, academic, and we facilitators are trained to use PowerPoint, flip charts, work books and around the table discussion.

So, is there a way to get away from linguistically driven process and develop more the other areas of intelligence and thus get even more engagement? In my view the answer is yes.

### A meeting Starter – a Focus:

We call this a 'trailer'. It is designed to be one of the initial steps in a meeting and should take not much longer than five minutes.

Ask a question that can be answered by placing a single dot on a continuum (See Diagram A). Make the question straight forward and one that asks for an opinion. Don't worry about those who want to finetune it and start analysing what you mean. In the example we used, there is no value in searching out the sort of meeting and level of

attendee. The point of this process is to get people off their backsides and make a decision in the first few minutes, whilst getting their minds around the discussion topic that will follow. It shows that there is a variation of view in the room and that's okay.

When the dots are up, have a quick delve into the rationale behind why the dots went where they did. Ask for the information from volunteers at each end of the scale and one or two in the middle. Don't put individuals on the spot; use a question like, "What are the thoughts behind the dots going up this end of the scale?" Get a one liner - not a thesis.

In this exercise alone you have used 6 of the intelligences! Kinaesthetic, visual/spatial, linguistic, intra personal, interpersonal and, to some degree, logical.

It's friendly and does not put a shy person on edge. You need to ensure the 'one liner' instruction is adhered to - on the excuse that you have to write it down quickly. (When you and the group know Pinpoint better, this writing would be done by the participants on a card - reducing the chat!)

### Obtaining and sorting ideas:

Pose the question and get people to freely write responses - don't forget to advise on how to write the cards (one idea per card, to the point, etc). Collect (various ways to get a manageable number in a big group) and start the cluster process. (See Diagram C)

My feeling is that we should never get the group to do this on their own - the activists will rule the day and the reflectors will just get upset. Better to facilitate the process ensuring all cards are understood, writers are happy with the placing and you never, ever place a card without being told, by the writer/group where to put it.

Add titles to each group - checking that the clusters are correct and vote on whatever parameter you need for your next step. (There are lots of 'do's and don'ts' here - too many to write in this piece.)

Intelligences used are again multi-fold. However, the key is: quiet/shy people have given their thoughts (in extremis without saying a word!) and they have had influence through the voting process. The noisy/verbose have had their verbal input

*It is vital that each group member  
should have equal 'air time'*

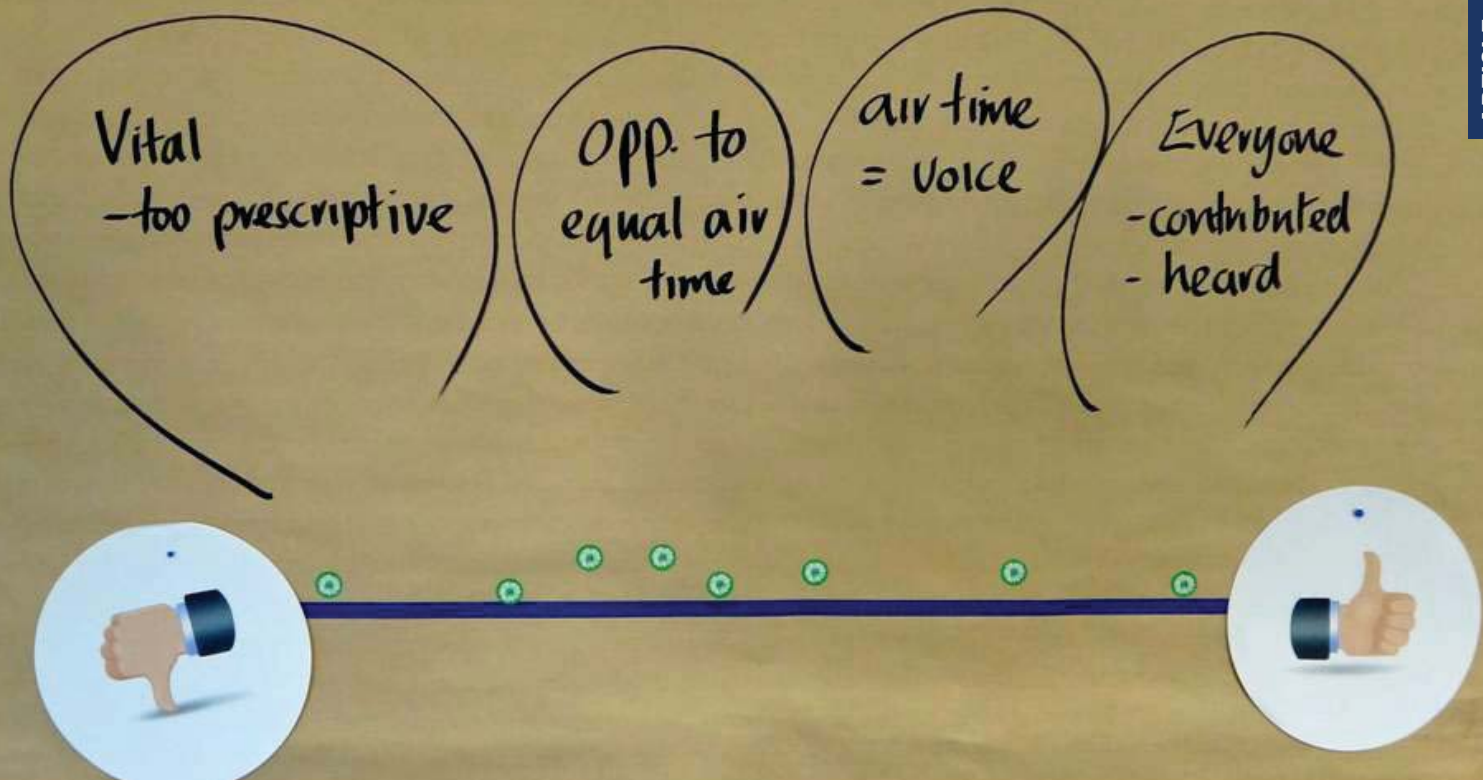
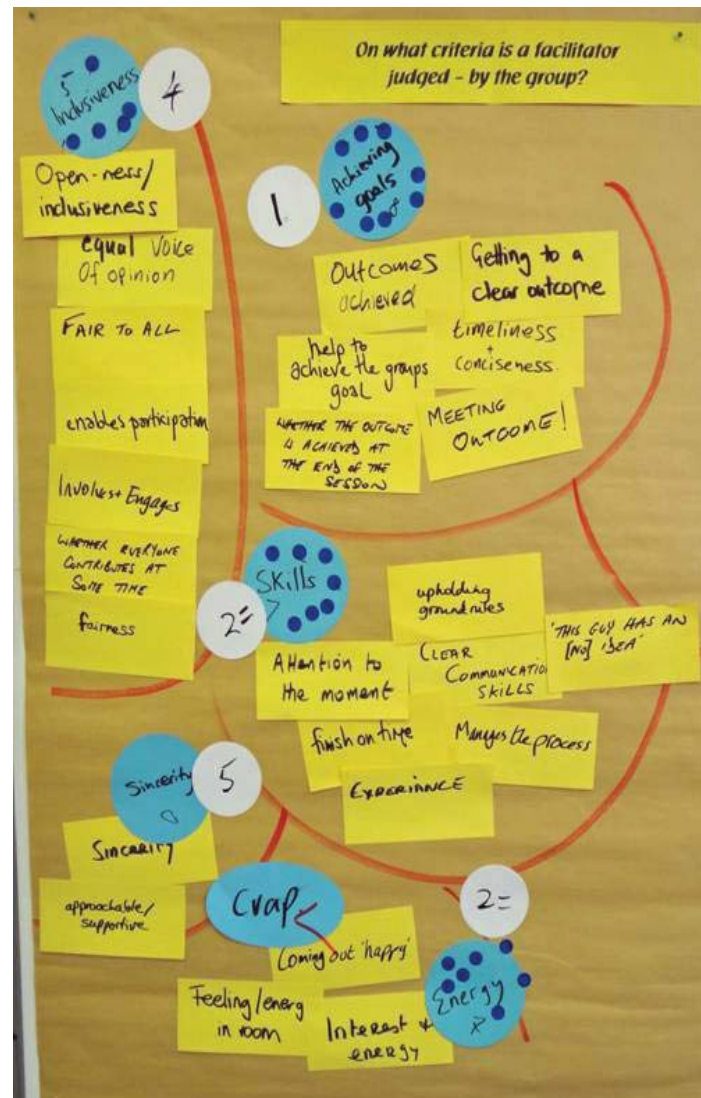


Diagram A

Diagram B

Diagram C

### Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence





restricted because they have been filling in cards, not talking. Their influence is the same as the others because of the voting process.

### What might be the next step?

There are many options, but this would be one. A template for sub groups to work on their selection of key topics. (See Diagram D below)

A minimum of three people and a maximum of five people ensures engagement by all, as the group will have settled by now and will perform.

The top card has, "The question we need to answer is....." The group decide their question based around the topic they have chosen. They card ideas, sort and then decide which cluster may have the best 'legs'. For this one they go to step 2 – and play devil's advocate.

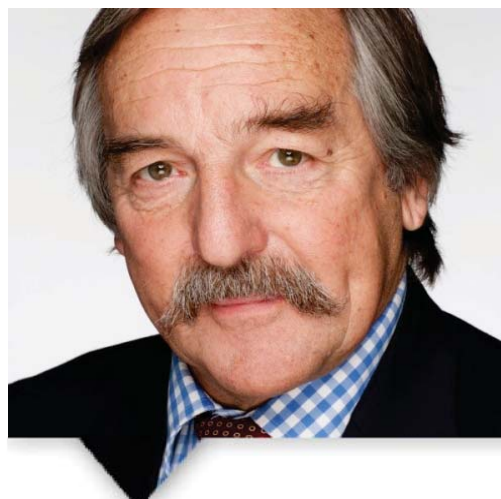
Having thought it through, they may be able to go to the final stage of recommendations. Here the card says, "To help achieve the objective, we recommend....." One or two recommendations are normally enough.

Next step – Action Plan.

### The review:

A review of each of the workshops was carried out by one of the group. The review facilitated by Steve Tulk is shown in Diagram E below.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



*Keith Warren-Price has been a member of IAF for many years and has presented at several IAF World and European conferences. Pinpoint Facilitation teach their particular facilitation process and sell and hire Neuland equipment in the UK. Visit [www.pinpoint-facilitation.com](http://www.pinpoint-facilitation.com), email Keith at [keith@pinpoint-facilitation.com](mailto:keith@pinpoint-facilitation.com) or find him on Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter him @pinpointkeithwp*

*The UK Facilitators' Practice Group meets next on Monday Sept. 19, 2011 in Oxford. To register your interest, contact Ashiq Khan at <http://tinyurl.com/3lsfbk3>*

Diagram D

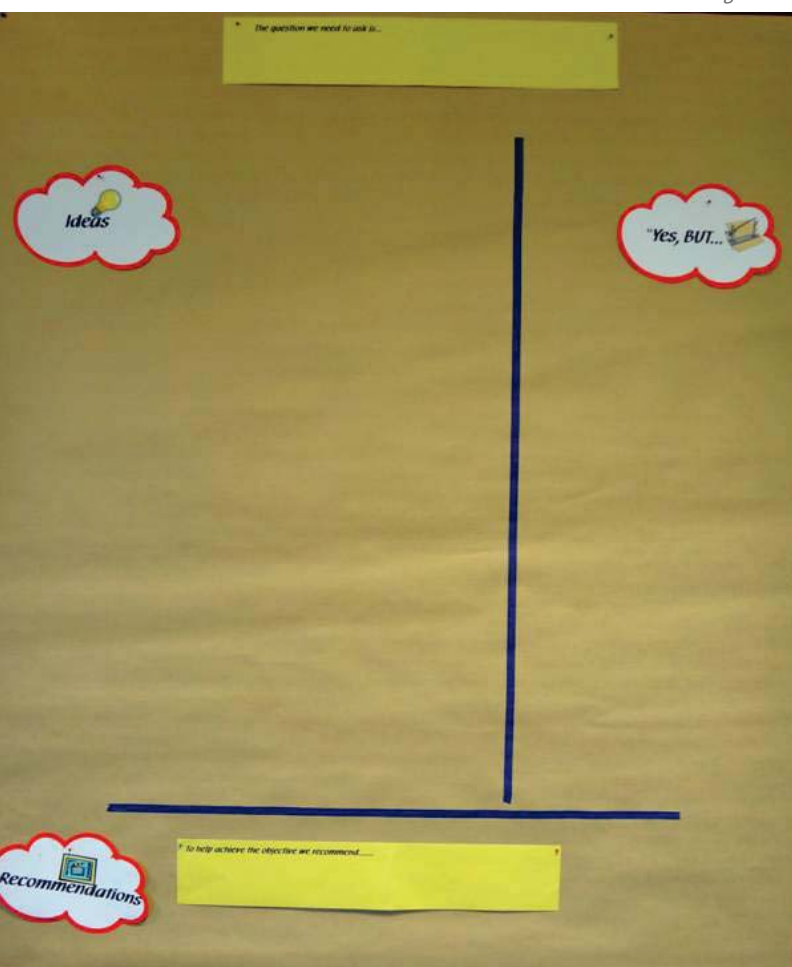


Diagram E





# Convening collaborations

*By Tanya James*

Like all large scale inter-organizational collaborations, the Stronger Families Alliance has been through three broad stages of development. All three stages require the Collaboration Convener to have a good working knowledge of different facilitation approaches and process design skills. Each stage also calls on the Collaboration Convener to play different roles and therefore use different knowledge/skill sets.

## Stage 1: Developing a vision

The first stage, problem setting, involves drawing all the players to the table and getting agreement that they share joint system level issues that require collaborative action. The primary first stage tasks are to:

- Develop a vision that engages home base support to set up the collaboration
- Identify and individually engage the potential collaboration members and
- Design relational workshop learning experiences that enable the participants to commit to the collaboration vision and to gain systems knowledge.
- The Convener's primary role in this first stage is that of 'facilitator'. I drew on the following

aspects of my professional background to support this stage:

- Social policy research (for human services best practice)
- Anthropology (for an understanding of systems)
- Organizational communication management (for stakeholder analysis)
- Mediation, appreciative inquiry and narrative therapy (for workshop design)

### Stage 2: Setting directions

The second collaboration stage involves direction setting. For the Stronger Families Alliance direction setting was done through early experimentation with putting new programs on the ground collaboratively and through writing the Child and Family Plan – the group's 10 year strategic roadmap.

During this stage, the Convener's role continues to include facilitator but moves to incorporate manager and leadership role attributes. Professionally I drew on the following aspects of my professional background in this stage:

Organizational development: Particularly the 'learn by doing' approach to adult education (which was applied to social innovation); strategic planning and leadership.

Communication management: Corporate level document production

### Stage 3: Structuring

As the Stronger Families Alliance enters the third collaboration stage, structuring, it is difficult to tell what will be required. This stage involves achieving the necessary shifts in structure, power and resources for the collaboration to implement its direction.

This year I am focusing on managing our governance structure so that its relational qualities become better institutionalized; designing and implementing a leadership program to strengthen our member's collaborative leadership & internal change-maker abilities; and implementing professional and public communication strategies about the Alliance's work.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



*Tanya initiated the development of the Stronger Families Alliance in 2006 as part of her work at the Blue Mountains City Council's Community Outcomes branch. The Alliance is a unique network that fosters collaboration between child, family, community, civic and business organizations to maximize the wellbeing and resilience of children and their families. The Alliance applies the best international research to the challenge of solving seemingly intractable problems – such as rising rates of child abuse, social isolation and the literacy divide. In 2010 the Alliance launched its Child and Family Plan – a ten year road map for the development of an outcomes based, unified and collaborative service system in the Blue Mountains. The Plan has been described by experts in the field as one of the best constructed and researched initiatives for children to be found anywhere in Australia.*

*For more information, including a list of Alliance members, go to [www.strongerfamilies.co](http://www.strongerfamilies.co)*

*Tanya James is an Organisational Development specialist with a focus on leadership & coaching, implementing strategy and culture development. She is known for her ability to design and facilitate transformative and strengths based processes for individuals, teams and large organisational and inter-organisational groups. She has a Masters Degree in Communication Management and is currently studying a Masters of Positive Organisational Development at Case Western Reserve University in Ohio, USA.*





## *Collaborative leadership*

# How to be a ‘process catalyst’

By Dr. Robyn Keast and Dr. Myrna P. Mandell  
The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth

Collaborations require a type of leadership that differs from conventional leadership in several ways. In collaborations, those in leadership roles are not ‘in charge’; their role is to get all members to interact in new ways that tap into, and leverage, individual strengths to create collective outcomes.

In this context leadership is focused on facilitating – rather than directing – and safeguarding the collaborative process. It is about making connections between the right people, bridging diverse cultures and getting members used to sharing ideas, resources and power.

Another feature of leadership within collaborations is that the role can be shared among multiple participants. The leadership role can shift depending on (a) the phase of the collaboration

---

*Such ‘influencing’ is achieved not through positional authority but by creating a sense of a ‘new whole’ that participants can embrace.*

---

and (b) the types of expertise of collaboration members.

For example, in its early phase, a collaboration may need leadership capacity in visioning and relationship building and moulding; latter stages



A multi-sector, experientially designed professional development event organised by ARACY in November 2010 (Photo courtesy of Tanya James)

may require expertise in acquiring resources and identifying and leveraging synergies.

It is also likely that there will be multiple leaders within the collaboration at any one time. The aim is for these participants to read the context and respond when necessary; that is, 'step up to' and 'step back' from the leadership role as required.

### Maximising synergies

Leadership in collaborations involves creating the conditions and processes to enable participants to learn about and from each other, appreciate individual strengths and limitations, and look for areas of commonality and joint effort.

Most importantly it is about facilitating and maximising synergies between agencies and pushing system and behavioural boundaries to have these realised.

"In collaborative leadership the emphasis is less on producing a solution to a known problem and more on developing new ways to reframe situations and develop unanticipated combinations of actions".

Effective collaborations nurture and build on relationships to produce mutually beneficial outcomes. Collaborative leaders also must sustain a balance between their facilitative or nurturing functions and the need to drive outcomes.

Clearly collaborative leadership calls for a different skill set, including abilities to:

- i. Chrislip, D and Larson, C (1994). *Collaborative Leadership: How Citizens and Civic Leaders Make a Difference*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- iii. Innes, J and Booher, D (1999). *Consensus Building as Role Playing and Bricolage*, *Journal of the American Planning Association* 65(1):9-26.
- iv. Mandell, M and Keast, R (2009). *A New Look at Leadership in Collaborative Networks: Process Catalysts*, in J Raffel, P Lesink, and A Middlebrooks (eds), *Public Sector Leadership: International Challenges and Perspectives*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, pp 163-178.





Firemen read to children as part of an ARACY program called Paint the Blue Read, an early literacy development program (Photo courtesy of Tanya James)

- initiate and nurture relationships
- be trustworthy
- build agreement around a collaborative vision
- articulate and communicate the collaborative vision and the advantages of working that way
- network within and across sectors to build support for both the initiative and collaborative ways of working
- influence within the collaboration as well as upwards and outwards to other groups and decision makers
- read and diagnose collaborative processes and actions and know when and how to intervene
- see the 'big picture': how members are connected and the opportunities for synergistic actions
- take risks and encourage others to be comfortable with taking risks.

The term process catalyst has been used to describe this new type of collaborative leadership<sup>iv</sup>.

#### Connecting participants

The process catalyst style of leadership draws on the ability to make connections among collabora-

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*The role of the process catalyst leader(s) is to encourage members to learn new ways of behaving and dealing with each other.*

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tion participants. This involves articulating what the participants can achieve together and how their joint action can benefit both their individual agencies and the broader community.

To do this, the process catalyst needs to focus on building trust and respect among participants. They must also have a broad vision for what can be achieved and be able to influence members to further shape this vision. Such 'influencing' is achieved not through positional authority but by creating a sense of a 'new whole' that participants can embrace.



Process catalysts must also create an environment that supports inclusiveness and openness and in which differences of opinion can be voiced and conflict can be effectively managed, harnessed and directed toward goals.

The role of the process catalyst leader(s) is to encourage members to learn new ways of behaving and dealing with each other. This can take considerable time and effort, so collaborative leaders must keep members engaged and committed to the vision through a regular process of checking-in.

As process minders, collaborative leaders must also constantly monitor and review the interactions and processes. If the collaboration is struggling, the interaction has become stagnant or stale, or commitment is wavering, leaders need to be able to respond — for example, by reinvigorating it with new ideas or implementing new processes.

Similarly, there is a need to remain alert for interaction blockages and ‘toxic’ members, including ‘fence sitters’, who contribute little and can undermine the collaborative spirit of other participants.

#### Getting ‘buy in’

Collaborative leadership also requires an understanding of, and focus on, the constraints and op-

portunities that result from the environment in which collaborations operate. This includes getting buy in, not only from participants within the collaboration, but also from their parent organisations and other key stakeholders that could have an impact on the success of the endeavour.

Collaborative leaders will also be actively engaged in ‘selling’ the advantages of the initiative and promoting the spirit of collaboration to influential decision makers within government, business and the community sector.

Effective collaborative leadership requires the ability to recognise, and capitalise on, the unique features of the collaboration process. This is not the type of leadership that most sectors or professions are producing or demanding. But when this type of leadership is enacted in a collaboration, it can make a difference to the success and outcomes of the effort.

Such ‘influencing’ is achieved not through positional authority but by creating a sense of a ‘new whole’ that participants can embrace.

The role of the process catalyst leader(s) is to encourage members to learn new ways of behaving and dealing with each other.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

*Dr Robyn Keast has an extensive background as a practitioner, policy officer and manager within the public and non-government sectors in Australia, New Zealand and Canada. She works with the Queensland University of Technology as a Senior Lecturer with interests including networked arrangements, network analysis and innovation, global trends in business management and government/business relations. In addition to her internationally recognised research, Robyn is a practitioner, having led and consulted on a wide variety of collaboration projects.*

*Dr Myrna P. Mandell is Professor Emeritus at California State University, Northridge, an Adjunct Faculty at the School of Management at Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Australia and a Visiting Faculty at Southern Cross University in New South Wales, Australia. Her work includes articles and chapters on a number of different facets of networks, including: how to organise and manage networks, performance measures for networks, citizen participation in networks and leadership in networks. She is currently involved in research on networks in the international arena.*

#### About ARACY

*This is one of a series of Fact Sheets produced by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY), a national non-profit organisation working to create better futures for all Australia’s children and young people. ARACY aims to reverse the decline in many aspects of the health and well-being of Australia’s youth, and tackles these complex issues through building collaborations with researchers, policy makers and practitioners from a broad range of disciplines and through sharing knowledge and fostering evidence-based solutions. See [www.aracy.org.au](http://www.aracy.org.au)*

# The power of knowing patterns and doing less

By Rosemary Cairns



Rupert Ross, who was a Crown attorney working in the Canadian North, tells a story about being out on a lake with aboriginal guides who had been fishing and guiding on this lake for decades. Suddenly, while the sky was still blue with not a cloud to be seen, the guide said it was time to go back to the lodge – a storm was coming. Ross could see no evidence whatsoever of a storm, but he trusted the guide's knowledge. They went back to the lodge and shortly thereafter, the storm arrived.

How did the guide know? Ross concluded that, from years of being on the lake and seeing it in all weathers, the guides had become attuned to patterns that were invisible to him but clear to them. When they recognized the pattern, they exercised their leadership – to protect their group – and said it was time to leave the lake. But if they were asked to explain why, they could not do so in words. Some level of pattern recognition, of instinctive knowledge, was at work but not one they could put into words that made sense to others who did not have the same knowledge of the lake they had.

I have been thinking about this story often as Bob MacKenzie and I have worked during the past six months on preparing a special 'facilitation' edition of AMED's *e Organisations and People* journal. I have been struck, as I watched the articles take shape, of how often facilitators have developed an intuitive understanding of patterns in groups and activities – but how difficult it can be to describe why we know what to do at a particular time and in a particular circumstance.

What makes this edition of the Journal quite extraordinary for me is that so many facilitators have taken on that challenge of trying to describe

how we know and work with those invisible patterns, in a variety of different settings. Clearly, we are continually striving to learn more, to understand better – but oddly, it seems that the more we understand, the less we might actually seem to do in a group.

I first glimpsed this paradox when we held an Open Space conference in Valjevo, a small gem of a city located in the middle of western Serbia, and I had the opportunity to work with Harrison Owen, who developed Open Space Technology. So I saw how he organized the room, how he prepared the agenda wall, and most particularly, how he prepared himself. Early in the morning, he sat alone in the centre of the room and meditated for several hours.

After the room had filled up and people were sitting in two outer circles, he walked around and then into the centre of the circle, opening the space so participants would feel comfortable walking into it and shouting out their ideas for topics they wanted to discuss. People quickly took up the invitation and soon were sitting in various rooms talking together. We, however, sat on the hotel steps, looking out on the square – and yet, we were part of the process. I could feel the energy ebbing and flowing as we 'held the space' for the participants.

On behalf of IAF, thank you to all the facilitators who have taken the time to share their thoughts, ideas and knowledge with us through this special *e-O&P* edition, and thank you to AMED for partnering with IAF to carry out such an exciting endeavor. We hope it will be just the first of many such activities.



For over 25 years, *Organisations and People* has appeared quarterly as the journal of AMED. In that time, it has been connecting the worlds of work, theory, ideas, innovation and practice by making new knowledge and original thinking accessible to developers, facilitators and their clients through persuasive and stimulating writing.

***e-Organisations & People* Vol 18 No 3, Autumn 2011  
'Building bridges through facilitation'**

The Autumn 2011 issue of *e-O&P* is a special, themed bumper edition, produced as a close collaboration between IAF and AMED, each of which has contributed a joint editor, in anticipation of IAF's Istanbul Conference in October. It focuses on how the profession of facilitation is evolving, and illustrates how facilitation is being used to create change and build bridges between disciplines in varied settings and at varied levels.

Contents include:

- Editorial: Rosemary Cairns (IAF) and Bob MacKenzie (AMED) on bridges as metaphor, and an overview of the contents.
- Ann Alder on facilitating the development of learning capacity
- Ann Lukens and Jonathan Dudding on facilitating for change
- Annette Moench and Yoga Nesadurai on the power of transformative facilitation
- Bob MacKenzie on self-facilitation
- Jeremy Wyatt on facilitating impact evaluation
- Pamela Lupton-Bowers on transforming trainers into facilitators
- Richard Chapman on the development of personal process facilitation
- Rosemary Cairns on facilitating local peace-builders
- Sarah Lewis on facilitators as temporary leaders
- Simon Koolwijk on the art of online facilitation
- Vicky Cosstick on the role of facilitators in transformative conversations
- Viv McWaters and Johnnie Moore on facilitation training for the real world.

It will be published on the AMED website [www.amed.org.uk](http://www.amed.org.uk) on 26 August. IAF Members who are not also AMED Members can purchase this special edition at a special price of £14, which represents a 50% discount.



AMED is the Association for Management Education and Development, [www.amed.org.uk](http://www.amed.org.uk). A long-established membership organisation and educational charity, AMED welcomes individuals and groups who are devoted to developing people and organisations. AMED exists for people who want to share, learn and experiment, and find support, encouragement, and innovative ways of communicating. Conversations are open, constructive, and generally facilitated. Spamming and direct selling is not tolerated, although people are able to advertise their forthcoming events on the AMED online Calendar, provided they offer AMED Members a reasonable discount.

AMED exists for the benefit of its members and the wider society. Exclusive Member benefits include excellent professional indemnity cover, free copies of the journal *e-O&P*, and discounted fees for attendance at a range of face-to-face events, various Special Interest Groups run by volunteers, as well as access to our interactive website. AMED builds on its three cornerstones of knowledge, innovation and networking in the digital age. Wherever it can, AMED seeks to work with like-minded individuals and organisations, such as IAF, to generate synergy and critical mass for change.

In addition to full Members, Networkers and guests are very welcome to register free on our website. They can then also attend AMED events and share in all those resources and benefits that are generally available to the public.

To find out more, visit the AMED website [www.amed.org.uk](http://www.amed.org.uk), or contact our Membership Administrator, Linda Williams, AMED, PO BOX 7578, Dorchester DT1 9GD, E: [amedoffice@amed.org.uk](mailto:amedoffice@amed.org.uk), T: 0300 365 1247

**About the post-publication, post-conference event in London**

Watch for details on the IAF and AMED websites of our highly participatory workshop in the months after IAF's Istanbul Conference. This workshop will include opportunities for authors, conference participants and others to continue or catch up with conversations about facilitation. There will also be opportunities to experiment with different perspectives and approaches to facilitation.



# Nominations for the IAF Board are now open

By Julie Larsen

## Dear IAF Members,

I am delighted to serve as 2011 Chair of the Board Nominations & Elections Committee. I am especially looking forward to building upon last year's inaugural process and ensuring that as many IAF members as possible take part in the election process – either by joining the Nominations & Elections Committee (it is not too late!), by nominating themselves or excellent IAF colleagues to stand for election, and/or by casting their vote when the elections are announced later this fall.

This message is to invite your involvement in the following ways:

### 1) Consider joining the 2011 Board Nominations & Elections Committee

To date, I am pleased to confirm the appointment of the following IAF members to the 2011 Board Nominations & Elections Committee: Ulla Wyckoff, Linda Mather and David Wayne. We welcome additional members. Because we work together as a team, the time commitment is shared and therefore not onerous for any one of us! If you have a few hours to spare each month between now and November, please be in touch with me (julielarsen@mac.com) to join the 2011 Committee.

### 2) Nominate yourself or an IAF colleague to stand for election

It is essential for the IAF Board to attract all the necessary skills and expertise to govern and manage the Association effectively, as well as to reflect the diversity of the membership and the profession. In 2012, the following positions will be open:

- Secretary
- Director of Communications & Publications
- Director of Conferences
- Director of Sponsorships, Endorsements & Partnerships

Three Regional Director positions on the Board, which are elected by the members of those regions, will be open as follows.

- Regional Director for Asia
- Regional Director for Canada
- Regional Director for Latin America & the Caribbean

Descriptions of these roles are available on the IAF website at: <http://www.iaf-world.org/AboutIAF/BoardofDirectors.aspx> Please think carefully about whom you know who may be an excellent candidate. I look forward to receiving your suggestions! The early deadline for receiving completed nominations is Monday, August 22, 2011 to allow the Committee ample time to review submitted applications with the candidates.

### 3) Make a commitment to vote in the 2011 IAF Election

We anticipate holding the elections for the Global Board in September 2011. As a member, you share in the leadership choices of the Association. Last year, in IAF's first-ever global election process, just over 30 percent of the membership voted. This year, let's aim to at least double that! I count on you to do your part, so please stay tuned.

Should you wish to discuss any of these opportunities to support and engage with the IAF, or others that may be available, or have additional thoughts and suggestions regarding the IAF's Global Board elections, please do not hesitate to be in touch.

Warmest regards,

Julie Larsen (julielarsen@mac.com)

Chair, 2011 IAF Board Nominations & Elections Committee.

## Setting the record straight

By Rosemary Cairns

I made a mistake in the July newsletter that I would like to correct. The article Online Facilitation – Adapting to a Virtual Environment with Free(mium) Tools, on pages 16-20 of the July 2011 Newsletter, was written by Elisabeth Crudgington. I listed Gillian Martin Mehers as a co-author in error. My apologies for both Elisabeth and Gillian, who share the brilliant welearnsomething.org blog but who generally

author posts individually.

You can reach Elisabeth as follows:

- Elisabeth Crudgington
- [www.brightgreenlearning.com](http://www.brightgreenlearning.com) (Atadore SARL, Switzerland)
- Blog: [welearnsomething.org](http://welearnsomething.org)
- Skype: [lizzie.crudgington](https://www.skype.com/en/contacts/voice/lizzie.crudgington)
- Twitter: @lizzie\_BGL

## Welcome, new and returning members

(June 2011)

We would like to warmly welcome the following new members who joined IAF in June:

- Shirley Fenster, UK
- Andrew Harrison, UK
- Trevor Stewart, Germany
- Karen van der Valk, Netherlands
- Annette Bonar, UK
- Elaine Clark, UK
- Nick Henderson, UK
- Avril McColl, UK
- John McCormack, UK
- Karen McLean, UK
- Tom McManus, UK
- Lucy Mulvagh, UK
- Janet Sanders, UK
- Linda Swift, UK
- Rupert Ward, UK
- Teresa Doxen, Saudi Arabia

We also want to welcome back returning members who renewed their IAF membership in June:

- Nils Gunnar Aakvik, Norway
- Ann Alder, UK
- Maria Eliasson, Sweden
- Suresh Gunaratnam, Turkey
- Markus Lang, Austria
- Pia Larsson, Sweden
- Lars Leiram, Sweden
- Isobel McConnan, UK
- Kate Monkhouse, UK
- Clare O'Farrell, Italy
- Neil Oliver, UK
- Kristin Reinbach, Germany
- Sara Sjöblom, Sweden
- Min-Min Teh, UK
- Francoise Trine, Italy

## Facilitation Workshops and Meetings 2011

Find out more details about specific events listed here by visiting the Workshops and Meetings section of the IAF Europe Forum (<http://www.iaf-europe.eu>) If you would like to let others know about an event you are organizing, please email [rosemary.cairns@iaf-europe.eu](mailto:rosemary.cairns@iaf-europe.eu).

### AUGUST 2011

- Foundations of Appreciative Inquiry, Aug. 29-Sept. 2, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (Ralph Weickel)

### SEPTEMBER 2011

- Group Facilitation Methods, Sept. 1-2, Gateshead UK (ICA:UK)



- Fast-track Facilitation Skills Workshop, Sept. 6, York, UK (Facilitate this!)
- Group Facilitation Methods, Sept. 7, Manchester UK (ICA:UK)
- Action Planning, Sept. 8, Manchester UK (ICA:UK)
- Circle Intensive, Sept. 12-14, Brussels, Belgium (Christina Baldwin and Ann Linnea, organized by Ria Baeck)
- Training/Seminar, Sept. 12-16, Brussels, Belgium (PCM Group)
- UK Facilitators' Practice Group, Sept. 19, Oxford
- PeerSpirit Circle Practicum, Sept. 19-24, Frankfurt, Germany (Ann Linnea and Christina Baldwin)
- Facilitator Masterclass, Sept. 20-22, Hunton Park, Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire, UK (Kaizen Training)
- Open Facilitation Skills Workshop, Sept. 21-22, Harrogate, North Yorkshire (Facilitate this!)
- Fast-track Facilitation Skills Workshop, Sept. 21, Harrogate, North Yorkshire (Facilitate this!)
- IAF Benelux Conference, Sept. 23, Netherlands
- (Preconference Session) The Virtual Facilitator, Sept. 26-Oct. 10, online (Simon Wilson and Carol Sherriff)
- Kaizen 101: Essentials of Continuous Improvement, Sept 27-29, Hunton Park, Hertfordshire, UK (James Rosenegk, Kaizen Training)
- Participatory Strategic Planning, Sept. 28-29, Manchester UK (ICA:UK)

#### OCTOBER 2011

- Brain Friendly Learning for Trainers, Oct. 11-13, Hunton Park, Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire, UK (Kaizen Training Ltd.)
- **Preconference event** CPF Certification events, Oct. 12-13, Istanbul, Turkey (IAF)
- **Preconference event** Facing up to change: understanding the challenge by using metrics. Oct. 12-13, Istanbul, Turkey (Tony Mann)
- Preconference event Facilitated learning: optimizing facilitation skills to transfer knowledge and transform the experience,

Oct. 12-13, Istanbul, Turkey (Pamela Lupton-Bowers & Amanda Carrothers)

- **Preconference event** Introducing Kumi: a new facilitation method designed to enable social transformation in situations of conflict, Oct. 12-13, Istanbul, Turkey (Jonathan Dudding & Ann Lukens)
- **Preconference event** The secrets to facilitating strategy: building the bridge from strategy to action, Oct. 13, Istanbul, Turkey (Michael Wilkinson)
- **Preconference event** Person centred facilitation: an experiential workshop for facilitators, Oct. 13, Istanbul, Turkey (John Dawson)
- **Preconference event** Developing learning power: how effective learners learn and how great facilitation develops individual and team learning capability, Oct. 13, Istanbul, Turkey (Ann Alder)
- **Preconference event** Pragmatics: behavioural aspects of human facilitation, Oct. 13, Istanbul, Turkey (Jan Lelie)
- **Preconference event** Improvisation for facilitators, Oct. 13, Istanbul, Turkey (Stuart Reid)
- **Preconference event** 'Walking the Power of Now in Istanbul', Oct. 13, Istanbul, Turkey (Partners in Facilitation)
- **IAF EUROPE CONFERENCE, OCT. 14-16, ISTANBUL, TURKEY**
- Power & Systems UK Accreditation for the Organization Workshop, Oct. 17-21, The Cotswolds, UK (John Watters)
- Group Facilitation Methods, Oct. 25-26, London UK (ICA:UK)

#### NOVEMBER 2011

- Introduction to Group Facilitation, Nov. 15, Manchester, UK (ICA:UK)
- Group Facilitation Methods, Nov. 16-17, Manchester, UK (ICA:UK)
- CPF Certification Event (in Dutch), Nov. 17, Rossum, Netherlands