

IAF EUROPE NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER '11



#12 DECEMBER 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; robert.verheule@iaf-europe.eu; kristin.reinbach@iaf-europe.eu; rosemary.cairns@iaf-europe.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@iaf-europe.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.

Editor: Rosemary Cairns

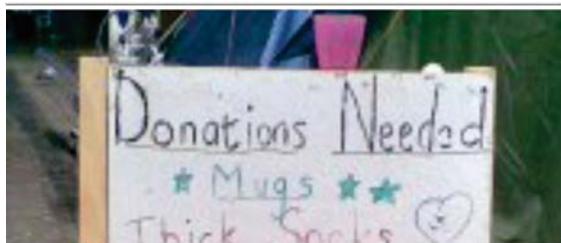
Design: Christian Grambow | www.christiangrambow.com

Contributors: Alison Cretney, Steven Cretney, IAF Methods Database, Maureen Jenkins, Gillian Martin Mehers, Tracy Meisterheim, Penny Walker

Cover picture: The year end is a great time to look back at the year's work. And in our case, at a year's worth of IAF Europe Newsletters. If you missed any of them, you can find them under the Resources tab at www.iaf-europe.eu.

Please send your contributions to your Newsletter to rosemary.cairns@iaf-europe.eu

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Occupy *movement* *the revolution will* *need marker pens*

By Story and pictures by Penny Walker

On my bike, between meetings last week, I was passing St Paul's Cathedral in London so I wandered through the Occupy London Stock Exchange 'tent city'.

Occupy LSX has divided opinion. At the meeting I was going to – a workshop of organisational development consultants, facilitators, coaches – some people made rather snide remarks about the likely impact of the first cold weather on the protesters, and about unoccupied tents. There's a re-tort here about the infamous thermal imaging scoop.

Others were interested in and sympathetic to the dissatisfaction being expressed, but frustrated by the lack of a clear 'ask' or alternative from the occupiers.

Emergent, self-organising, asks and offers

What struck me, however, were the similarities between the occupy area itself, and some really good workshops I've experienced. There was plenty of space given aside for 'bike rack', 'grafitti wall' and other open ways of displaying messages, observations or questions. There was a timetable of sessions being offered in the Tent City University, and another board showing the times of consensus workshops and other process-related themes.

There was a 'wish list' board, where friendly passers-by could find out what the protesters need to help keep things going. Marker pens and other workshop-related paraphernalia are needed, as well as fire extinguishers and tinned sweetcorn.

I saw these as signs of an intentionally emergent phenomenon, with a different kind of economy running alongside the money economy. Others have blogged about the kinds of processes honed and commonly in use at this kind of event or camp, in particular if you're interested there's loads on the Rhizome blog.

Don't ask the question if you don't already know the answer?

I recognise the frustration expressed by some of my OD colleagues about the lack of clearly-expressed alternatives. This kind of conversation often occurs in groups that I facilitate: someone (often not in the room) has expressed a negative view about a policy, project or perspective.

The people in the room feel defensive and attack the grumbler: "I bet they couldn't do any better" or "what do they expect us to do?" Some management styles and organisational cultures are fairly explicit that they don't want to hear about problems, only solutions. (Browsing here gives some glimpses of the gift and the shadow side of this approach.)

But I see something different here: a bottom-up process where people who share broadly the same intent and perspective, coming together to explore and work out what they agree about, when looking at the problems with the current situation and the possible ways of making things better. They are participatively framing a view of

the system as it is now, and what alternatives exist. This takes time, of course.

They are also, as far as I can tell from the outside, intentionally using consensus-based processes rather than conventional, top-down, leader-led or expert-led processes to organise this. Understandably frustrating for the news media which rely increasingly on short sound-bites and simple stories with two sides opposing each other. And it could get very interesting when the dialogue opens up to include those who have quite different perspectives on “what’s really going on here” (for example mainstream economists, bankers, city workers).

The other thing I notice about this expectation of a ready-made coherent answer, is how similar it is to some group behaviour and the interventions made by inexperienced facilitators and coaches. When I am training facilitators, we look at when to intervene in a group’s conversation, particularly when to use the intervention ‘say what you see’. (This makes it sound very mechanical – of course it’s not really like that!)

The trainee facilitator is observed practising, and then there is feedback and a debriefing conversation. Perhaps they chose not to intervene by telling the group what they observed. Sometimes during this feedback and debrief, a trainee will say something like “Yes, I noticed that, but I didn’t want to say anything because I wasn’t sure what to do about it or what it meant.” They are assuming that you can only ‘say what you see’ if you know what it means and already have a suggestion about what to do about it.

But it also serves a group to say what you see, when you haven’t a settled interpretation or clear proposal. (In fact, it is more powerful to allow the group to interpret, explain and propose together.) All questions are legitimate, especially those to which we don’t (yet) know the answer. Ask them. Guess some answers. And this – for the time being – is what the occupy movement is doing.

The revolution will need marker pens

All this consensus-based work and open-space style process needs plenty of marker pens (permanent and white-board). So if you have a bulging facilitation toolkit and you’re passing St Paul’s, you know what to do!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Penny Walker is a CPF, specialising in change, stakeholder engagement and sustainable development. She blogs at <http://penny-walker.co.uk/blog>

This piece originally appeared November 14, 2011, on her blog at <http://tinyurl.com/7flcoop>

Plan for the harvest

insights from strategic sustainable development research

By Tracy Meisterheim, Steven Cretney and Alison Cretney

This article was excerpted from **The Weave, Participatory Process Design Guide for Strategic Sustainable Development**, prepared by Tracy, Steven and Alison during their 2011 Masters in Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability (MSLS) thesis research at Blekinge Tekniska Högskola, Sweden.

This guide includes the collective input of 22 sustainability and hosting practitioners from around the world, including the founder of the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD), Dr. Karl-Henrik Robèrt, and co-founder of the Art of Hosting, Toke Paludan Møller.

Our work was recognizing overarching patterns and synthesizing them into principles and strategic guidance for process design. We gratefully acknowledge this generously offered wisdom and offer it back to the practitioner community as prototype Version 1. Theories and methodologies of participatory leadership have been integrated with the FSSD, creating systematic guidance for strategic planning process design.

The Weave v1, which can be freely downloaded from www.weave.info, has not been field-tested. It is our hope that you will be inspired to contribute to the continued development of this prototype and we welcome your input. The thesis, *Integrating Participatory Processes in Planning for Strategic Sustainable Development*, is available at www.bth.se/msls.

The Weave introduces the five phases, how to structure them, outlines guiding principles for process and template design, explains dialogue-based methodologies and harvesting outcomes, and outlines guiding principles for leading participatory processes. This excerpt outlines the seven guiding principles for process design that emerged from interviews with practitioners.

Involve the Right People at the Right Time

Being intentional in identifying those with the expertise, passion or skills is one strategic way to use people's time wisely and make the planning process efficient and effective. Time is the biggest barrier to doing this work. By inviting the right people, there will be no need to 'sell' the plan

because they will have been involved in creating it. The extra time invested in the beginning will pay off in the end.

Plan for the Harvest

Just as a farmer plans for the harvest before planting the seeds, planning for the capturing of outcomes from participatory processes can also be approached strategically. Outcome harvests must be communicated in a format that suits the organization.

It can be strategic to invite the person receiving the information to help design the output format. Planning the harvest is as important as planning the engagement. Backcast from the required outcome for every stage, keeping in mind the form in which the information needs to be communicated.

Give attention and energy to harvesting the non-tangible outcomes: relationships, trust and energy. These are often the drivers of lasting change; consider ways to carry them forward.

Ask Powerful Questions

Powerful questions invite inquiry and new possibilities. There is strategy and logic in designing a powerful question. Take time to design the questions that need to be asked – a good question will be specific and clear, get to the heart of the matter and make the work easier. The wrong question will make the work useless. Two

threads, personal and professional, can be addressed throughout the entire process. If we



only address the professional, the personal may not be committed and the work may lack the heart it needs to be done well.

Reflect at Every Step

Stay in alignment with the need and purpose by building in reflection and learning loops at every phase. Build reflection into every stage of the ABCD strategic planning process as well. Slowing down to reflect on the shifts in learning allows the important lessons to be recognized and incorporated. Before moving on,

check in with the purpose, and reflect on progress, learning and remaining questions. Invite a learning attitude in one another.

How are we doing? Are we on track with our purpose? With our principles? What questions are we sitting with? What new questions are arising? What have we learned? What are we bringing forward to inform the next stage?

Know the Boundaries

Boundaries create the safe container in which creativity can emerge. Just as the sustainability principles are the boundary conditions for all strategic planning, the boundary conditions for a successful engagement must be defined. Set yourself and your client up for success by knowing when to say no. Lack of a mandate can lead to disempowerment; lack of time or resources can limit the effectiveness of the work and there-

fore the outcome. Agree to work within your own parameters of success and be clear what can successfully be accomplished within the parameters offered by the client. This principle is the critical element in the Exploration phase and again in the Design phase.

Weave the Methodologies

The methodologies are the vessels that hold the conversations that matter. No one methodology serves all purposes, and every engagement design is unique. It is in the weaving of the methodologies that the 'magic' arises. Weaving the methodologies primarily occurs in the Design phase.

Define Context before Choosing Methodology

Identify the context of the organizational challenge before selecting the planning framework and specific methodologies or tools. Complex adaptive systems need a planning framework and tools suited for complexity, adaptability, resilience, flexibility and responsiveness because outcomes are not predictable or linear. A tool designed for a linear problem will not serve a complex one. For problems that are predictable, tools informed through analysis and by expert knowledge may be needed. Participatory processes are designed for complex situations, allowing people to be in learning together. The Cynefin framework (page 11) can help inform these decisions.

Facilitators: To Your Health!

By Gillian Martin Mehers



I prepared a 54-page Facilitator's Guide for the workshop this week, a master list of materials, a session-by-session description of what job aids to make in advance of the event, and a mock-up of every flipchart we would have to draw on site. We had a detailed facilitation agenda, and a script ready for each session that would be lead, we even had a minute-by-minute design for our pre-event facilitation briefing.

However, in the instructions I created to help prepare our 8-person facilitation team, one piece of guidance was clearly missing - *take care of your health*.

I didn't say, make sure to get good sleep in the week before you come, take your vitamins, drink plenty of water, and don't stay out too late. I didn't say, don't try to get absolutely everything out of the way in the nights before you take that transcontinental overnight flight, and don't cut it too close on arrival so you can rest before we start our very full programme of activities.

Maybe Facilitators think they are a bit super human, dealing with the emotions of large crowds, handling stressful environments, holding the hopes and dreams and fears of a group of

passionate people, getting up early and staying up late setting up the room and moving dozens of chairs, or running miles to find hotel staff and trying for the 100th time to get them to turn off the aircon in the room.

But on our preparation list in the future must absolutely be the husbanding of our own resources in the days before a big event, and during it. Otherwise, we risk being taken out by an opportunistic bug, wicked jet lag exacerbated by sleep deprivation, or worse. And while it is no fun for us, it is also no fun for our team members and our partners.

It hit home again today, I am not sick myself, but as the leader of the facilitation team and seeing it around me, I am sorry that I didn't write that note. And at the same time wonder, even if I did, if the Facilitation Team members would have done something different in preparing themselves for this event? I know this community. I write this at nearly midnight in Bangkok after a long long day, and after promising myself an early night.

Once I push "Publish" I'm off to bed, I promise myself, to take my own good advice...

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

IAF Europe Newsletter columnist Gillian Martin Mehers is director and head of learning at Bright Green Learning @Atadore SARL, in Crans-près- Céligny, Switzerland. She blogs regularly about facilitation and learning at <http://welearnsomething.blogspot.com/2011/12/facilitators-to-your-health.html>

You can reach Gillian at gillian@meheers.com.

Be the change and SEE the change

at the next IAF North America Conference in 2012

May 9 to 12th, 2012 are the dates for your diary. The place: Dalhousie University, Halifax NS.

IAFNA 2012 is open for registration. Register early and save \$150 on the Conference Fee. The early registration Conference Fee is just \$549. Quite a deal!

New ideas, new content and a great price

With 50 Conference Workshops and Dialogues to choose from, you have lots of choice. The highlights:

- There is much more about the business of facilitation
- We have joint presentations with customers and facilitators
- Work with Internal Facilitators and Graphic Facilitators
- There is more about social media and ways to improve your marketing
- Gain new insights from the world of emergency and crisis management
- 8 Dialogues to tackle some of the key issues we face in our profession

To liven things up, we have high energy Fast-Talks and to slow things down, we have a Reflection Space and Workshops to help you focus, relax and manage your inner self.

You can invest in even more learning among the 23 1- or 2-Day Pre-Conference Workshops on the 2 days before the Conference starts. Learn

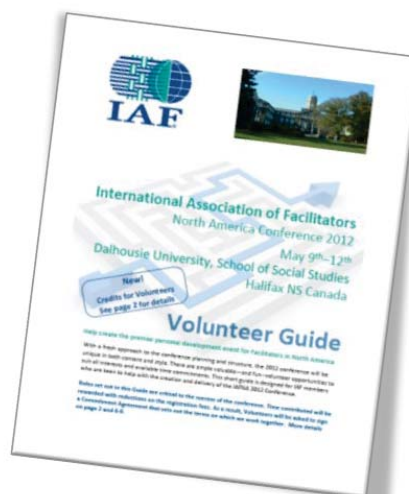
new skills, practice new techniques and grow your practice. Or take in the TEDx event happening the night before the Conference which is focused on facilitation, the wisdom of groups and participatory decision-making.

Volunteers needed

All this work needs hands to help. Tamara Eberle is the Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator. The Volunteer Guide lists all of the roles that need to be delivered to run a successful Conference. The Volunteer page in www.iafna2012.org has the details. Earn Conference credits by helping out!

Stay in touch

The IAFNA2012 LinkedIn group is IAF North America Conference 2012 at www.linkedin.com under the Groups tab. Click any of the LinkedIn links on the pages of www.iafna2012.org to join the group and stay in touch as we approach the Conference. Follow us on Twitter at @iafnaconf2012



Be the change.

Method of the Month – Wall of Woe

By the IAF Methods Database - www.iaf-methods.org

This month's method is from Judith van de Geer of the LEF Future Center of the Ministry of Environment and Infrastructure in the Netherlands. What can you do when a group comes to a session already convinced that they are hopelessly blocked by some external situation, policy or event? One possibility is to try a Wall of Woe.

Purpose

To enable participants to externalize their own negative perspectives toward a situation they must manage. This is intended as an opening exercise at the beginning of a workshop.

Preparation

Provide a very large wall space, sticky wall or whiteboard. At the top, write "The Wall of Woe" and below that the name of the project, phenomenon or event which the participants feel is blocking their way. The Blocker can be anything -- for example: "the travel freeze", "the new contracting policy", "job cuts", "Unfair competition from ABC Inc.", etc.

Steps

1. Context: introduce the Wall of Woe – here is a place to collect all of the many issues that

they have with the Blocker. Take some time now to itemize what your issues, concerns, feelings and problems are.

2. Have participants write as many as they can think of directly onto paper or posted with cards or post-its. Some blues music as background could be suitable here. Let them continue until they have filled the wall space.

3. When everyone has gotten their woes on the wall, have participants gather their chairs around the wall, and reflect together on what you see:

- What is something here on the wall that strikes you?
- What are some things that are new for you? What's familiar?
- What touches you?
- We all have matters within our sphere of influence – things we can change – and also things that may concern us but that we cannot change—our sphere of concern. Looking at the wall, take your marker again and underline only the items that lie within your sphere of influence.
- When the group has finished their underlining, ask: What do you notice?

New developments at the IAF Methods Database

By Maureen Jenkins

I am delighted to introduce Ester Mae Cox and Ann Shofner, who have joined the IAF Methods Database as Associate Editors. To start out, Ester Mae is editing the text of the existing database to make it more readable and Ann is adding new methods. During 2012 we plan to confer virtually as a team and look

at new ways to diversify what the IAFMD can offer you.

You can reach me at editor@iaf-methods.org. Visit the IAF Methods Database at www.iaf-methods.org to subscribe or unsubscribe.

Continued on next page...

Ester Mae Cox

Ester Mae Cox, MA, CTF, is a mentor trainer of ICA-USA ToP (Technology of Participation®) courses, and a “retired” educator from Iowa State University Extension. She is also an independent consultant/trainer/ facilitator. In her encore retirement work; she worked as a trainer with Principal Financial Group in Des Moines, and assists World Learning groups creating action plans with participants who will implement projects when they return to their home countries.

For more than 10 years, she has trained ToP Facilitation Methods and ToP Strategic Planning with her long-time trainer partner Deb Burnight in Prairie River Partners training consortium. She met Sheila LeGeros at the International Association of Facilitators meeting in 2008, and since then she and LeGeros set off on an adventure to design and learn virtual facilitation methods and teach them to others.

Together they have written materials and trained ToP Virtual Facilitation Methods courses in US and at United Nations (FAO) in Rome. Ester Mae lives on an acreage near Winterset, IA, with her husband, numerous animals, an abundant garden, and four grandchildren close by.

You can reach Ester Mae at estermae.cox@iaf-methods.org

Ann Shofner

Ann Shofner is an experienced educator with significant expertise in virtual classroom, program management, curriculum development, and training facilitation. She holds a bachelor's in education from Vanderbilt University and a master's in educational psychology from The University of Memphis.

She has more than 20 years of national and international training, curriculum design and communication successes, working with companies such as Cisco Systems, Inc., Apple Computer and Bull Information Systems. Prior to her corporate training experience, Ann devoted 8 years to teaching in both elementary and secondary classrooms. Ann is a native of Tennessee, who enjoys writing, dining on southern confections, and visiting beautiful beaches all around the world. She is organizational president of the Shofner Lutheran Chapel in Bedford County, Tennessee, a family chapel that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In the role of IAF Methods Database associate editor, Ann will bring her devotion to instructional facilitation and lifelong learning. Her significant expertise in virtual, in-person and blended learning environments will allow her to contribute new activities that will help you reach your facilitation goals.

You can reach Ann at ann.shofner@iaf-methods.org

Congratulations to new CPFs!

Five new Certified Professional Facilitators have been added to IAF's roster of CPFs following the Dutch certification event held in Rossum, Netherlands, on November 17, 2011. We extend our congratulations to all of you on this great accomplishment.

- Jolanda Buter, CPF, MDF Training en Consultancy
- Antoinette Middeldorp, CPF, Ministry

of Internal Affairs

- Jolien Koole, CPF, Koole Communicatie
- Laura Zschuschen, CPF, FMV, Nationale-Nederlanden
- Gert van den Dries, CPF, Infram B. V.



Welcome, new and returning members

(November 2011)

We would like to warmly welcome the following new members who joined IAF in November 2011:

- Jean Arifon, France
- Dave Barratt, United Kingdom
- Sharon Bentley, United Kingdom
- John Burns, United Kingdom
- Ann Camus, United Kingdom
- Mary Kate Dickie, United Kingdom
- Roberta Faulhaber, France
- Jan Halliday, United Kingdom
- Sarah Holiday, United Kingdom
- Lynn Jolly, United Kingdom
- Tem Kaluwa, United Kingdom
- Thi Lan Huong Le, France
- Criz McCormick, United Kingdom
- Ann Marie McIntosh, United Kingdom
- Danielle Moore, United Kingdom
- Sedef Duru Ozkazanc, Switzerland
- Nicole Picthall, Switzerland
- Anne Seaton, United Kingdom

- Petrit Shala, United Kingdom
- Lorna Smith, United Kingdom
- Anniken Solem, Norway
- Helga Stewart, Germany
- Judy van zon, Germany

We also want to welcome back returning members who renewed their IAF membership in November 2011:

- Liz Brabender, United Kingdom
- Elizabeth Crudgington, Switzerland
- Gerardo de Luzenberger, Italy
- Daniel De Roo Van Alderwerelt, Belgium
- Gillian Martin Mehers, Switzerland
- Jim Newkirk, Serbia
- Gitte Pedersen, Denmark
- Dawn Reeves, United Kingdom
- Louise Robb, United Kingdom
- Bart Segers, Netherland
- Janine Smedley, United Kingdom
- Annina Van Logtestijn, Netherlands
- Robert Verheule, Netherlands

Worthwhile reading...

The Art of Hosting

A great video explanation of what Art of Hosting is about can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/cd2ssdw>

Asset-based Community Development – explained by Cormac Russell, at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6EkaMpAgdE>
Also visit the new ABCD Europe ning site at <http://abcdeurope.ning.com>

Conferences that Work

Adrian Segar, author of *Conferences that work: Creating events that people love*, was interviewed during the EIBTM meeting in Barcelona earlier this month. (EIBTM is the leading global event for the meetings and events industry.) The interviewer was Maarten Vanneste, winner of the 2011 MPI RISE

Award for Meeting Industry Leadership. Adrian explained why participant-driven and participation-rich events are becoming increasingly popular, responded to Maarten's question about whether people only want to come to events to listen to experts, and provided a couple of tips on learning about and formatting participant-driven and participation-rich events. Watch the interview at <http://tinyurl.com/7vtcevc>

Building bridges in the Muslim world

SciDev.Net has an interesting article about making science and technology relevant in the countries belonging to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, at <http://tinyurl.com/cs2nudk>, that is worthwhile reading for anyone facilitating in this area.

Facilitation Workshops and Meetings 2011-2012

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.

DECEMBER 2011

- Art of Hosting Practitioner, International Learning Village, December 2-4, Copenhagen, Denmark
- Facilitators Practice Group, Dec. 12, London, England. For details, see their new website at <http://www.ukfpg.wordpress.com>

JANUARY 2012

- Unlocking Leadership - Moving from Silo to System, The Art of Hosting Organisational & Systemic Change, January 5-8, Co. Clare, Ireland (Lorraine O'Rahilly, Chris Chapman and Chris Corrigan)
- Facilitation Skills Training Public Programme, January 10-12, London, England (circleindigo)
- "People making change: sharing approaches that work", ICA:UK annual conference and AGM, January 21, Manchester England
- Brain Friendly Learning for Trainers, Jan. 24-26, Hertfordshire, England (Kaizen Training)

FEBRUARY 2012

- Dynamic Facilitation and Wisdom Council Seminar, Feb. 15-17, Vienna, Austria (Jim and Jean Rough)
- Facilitator Masterclass, Feb. 21-23, Hertfordshire, England (Kaizen Training)
- Communication Mastery, Feb. 28-29, England (Kaizen Training)

MARCH 2012

- Brain Waves: An Introduction to the Brain for Coaches, March 1-2, Berkshire, England (Kaizen Training)

- Dynamic Facilitation and Wisdom Council workshop, March 5-7, London, England (Jim Rough)
- Joint IAF Europe/AMED Workshop 'Building bridges through facilitation', March 23, London, England. Get your copy of the Autumn 2011 issue of e-Organisations & People, 'Building bridges through facilitation', online at <http://tinyurl.com/ceou5rg>. IAF members pay only £14 (the cost to others is £27.50).

APRIL 2012

- Facilitating vision creation and vision empowerment, April 2-8, 2010, Berlin, Germany
- 2012 World Appreciative Inquiry Conference, April 25-28, International Convention Center, Ghent, Belgium

MAY 2012

- Dutch language CPF assessment, May 31, Netherlands (application deadline Feb. 29)
- Facilitator Masterclass, Hertfordshire, England, May 29-31 (Kaizen Training)

OCTOBER 2012

- Dynamic Facilitation and Wisdom Council Seminar, Oct. 15-17, Vorarlberg, Austria (Jim and Jean Rough)

