



Art of Participatory Leadership New Lanark 29th Sept - 2nd Oct 2015

A summary of the 3 day Art of Participatory Leadership training in New Lanark, Scotland

Questions that informed the training:

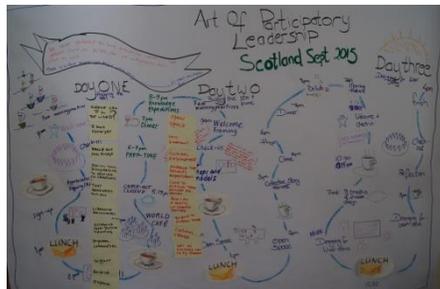
How can we engage all voices to shape the Scotland that is emerging?

How do we create a culture of participation where contribution is valid?

How can we nourish the conditions and potential for change that is so alive at the moment?

How can we transform the ways we work together for more effective meetings and wiser decision making?

Content



Over the three days we trained in methods, explored mental models and

learned from case studies to build our capacity to lead change rooted in real needs.

Methods such as The World Cafe, Circle Practice and Open Space Technology were used to both, allow the group to be in conversation with itself about issues of importance to them, as well as gaining direct experience of using participatory methodologies. These methodologies enable small and large groups to surface shared clarity, make strategic choices and move into collaborative action.

Mental Models were offered that provide the framework for delivering well planned strategic intervention and provide the basic architecture of designing participatory processes. We studied the four fold practice and the Eight Breaths of process architecture, among others.

Case Studies allowed us to draw practical inspiration from other places to inform how we act in our own contexts. Stories included embedding the practice

of participatory leadership in a large institution, the European Commission, using conversation in post-conflict situations and participatory approach to planning.

Day 1– Preparing the keel

On Day 1 participants heard how the training will unfold, and they got straight into experiencing some of the key methodologies at work and learning about some of the core principles underpinning the practice of AoPL.

To begin, circle was used to hear all voices in the room and everyone spoke as to why they had chosen to be here.



Using a light Appreciative Inquiry approach, we worked in pairs to explore what is happening when we work well in a team and what we dream is possible for our

work. We saw patterns emerge of trust, ability to make mistakes and the importance of shared goals.

In the afternoon an input was provided on the four fold practice, a framework for how to practice participation on a day to day basis.



This was followed by a World Café, a process for collaborative dialogue, where we identified the potential to apply participatory leadership across a range of places, including education, engaging communities, in workplaces and at home.

Day 2 - Building the ribs and frame

Day 2 continued to build on the learning and experience of Day 1, with more input on key frameworks, experiencing more of the methodologies in action, and opportunities for participants to step up and host.



We began with an input on 'need, purpose and powerful questions' which encouraged participants to think about the building blocks of any participatory process.

Moving straight into Open Space Technology, space was given for participants to have the conversations that mattered most to them. Conversations were called on topics as diverse as 'How do we respond to other's fear of chaos and change?' to 'How do I get an orchard set up in my street'

In the afternoon, Collective Story Harvest was used to hear 5 stories of how participatory leadership is being used across the world, from the European Commission to Cote D'Ivoire. The stories, told separately,

allowed the group as a whole to identify themes around leadership, responding to challenge, and creating conditions for change.

Debriefing the process afterwards, participants noted the power of stories and their ability to inspire and create empathy.

The evening provided some well-deserved relaxation as we were lead in a traditional Scottish ceilidh of stories, dance and song offered by participants.

Day 3 - Designing for Wiser Sailing

Having experienced some of the key processes and main models that are used in the practice of participatory leadership, Day 3 was an opportunity to really get to understand how these practices can work on the ground, in application.



A teach on the 8 breaths of process design offered an understanding on the process for calling and organising participatory events. Moving from this teaching we went straight into 'Designing for Wiser Action', a peer coaching process to develop projects brought by the participants.



Designing for Wiser Action Projects

- New economics and peace making meetings - Amrita
- Art of hosting on global Climate Change in Waterloo, Canada - Alisa
- Designing a half day programme for LEADER conference in March to encourage cooperation between Local Action Groups - Jody
- Rural summit 2015 - Sandy and Lorraine
- Gathering experiences and Stories from people and Professionals about the Health and social Care system for Local and national learning and Improvement - Shaun and Joanna
- How Communities can reshape Local Governance via a series of Open conversations - Ian
- How can we create the environment for skeptical auditors to believe work can be different? - Diane and Fiona
- Co-creating a reflective garden for my town - Gordon

In the final check-out of the process, participants offered reflections on their learning and experience over the past 3 days and suggested how they would like to move forward as individuals and stay connected as a group.

Harvest

A harvest team was tasked with capturing and making sense of the processes being used, and the learning being surfaced, throughout the course. Using poetry and other creative methods, the team demonstrated that creativity is critical to both capturing learning, and helping participants understand and make sense of what they are learning and experiencing.

The full harvest can be viewed at:

<http://aoplnewlanark.weebly.com/>