

THE DIALOGUE HAND BOOK

The art of
conducting
a
dialogue

...and
facilitating
dialogue
workshops

Mette Lindgren Helde



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The Dialogue Handbook



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a dialogue and facilitating dialogue workshops

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INTRODUCTION

Dialogue is necessary in a modern world characterised by contrast and change. This is a world where we meet each other, want to cooperate – and indeed have to do so, across borders, cultures, viewpoints and motivations.

Dialogue can help overcome prejudice and create understanding of other people's perspectives. It can show us new ways of perceiving the world. And it can expand our horizon. Dialogue enables reaching across an abyss of difference, as long as we see and recognise each other for what we are: different yet all human beings in the same world.

It sounds simple, but it can prove fiendishly difficult in practice, especially when we want to enter into a dialogue with those with whom we disagree profoundly. Here the dialogue is a major challenge, and may seem impossible. Yet this is also where dialogue proves its true worth, because it is capable of something else. Dialogue is exceptionally good at enabling us to exchange opinions and viewpoints in a manner that develops ourselves and our work. By means of dialogue, we can attain insights which we did not even know existed, and we can chart new paths – together.

Background

This book springs from the project *Ambassadors for Dialogue*. Here young volunteers from Jordan, Egypt and Denmark have expended both time and lifeblood on becoming better at dialogue. The project's objective is to foster understanding between young people in Denmark and the Middle East by means of dialogue.

45 young people from those three countries have been trained as 'dialogue ambassadors'. They have become familiar with a toolkit full of dialogical methods, which they have helped design. And they have conducted dialogue workshops for 3,500 young participants in those three countries.

Stereotypes and prejudice, equality and social orders, religion, gender differences, dreams for the future and everyday life are some of the issues that have been on the agenda. The goal of each workshop was for participants to move beyond the usual ways of discussing and debating, where you fight to win the argument, or where you try to reach agreement. Instead, the potential of dialogue was put to the test. And to great success. The dialogue demolished prejudices, enhanced insights and boosted understanding across the difference divide. It let the participants discover how much they had in common.

In the course of the project, the dialogue ambassadors have amassed a treasure trove of experiences, methods and valuable insights about dialogue and workshop facilitation. This book aims to pass on this treasure, so that it may benefit others as well.

About the dialogue ambassadors

The project Ambassadors for Dialogue seeks to foster understanding between young people from Denmark and the Middle East, and to spread knowledge of dialogue as a value and a method.

Funded by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the project springs from cooperation between East & West Centre for Human Resources Development (WE Center) in Jordan, the Egyptian Youth Federation and the Danish Youth Council (DUF).

In the period from 2009_2011, 45 young Jordanians, Egyptians and Danes – all volunteers in youth organisations – were trained as dialogue ambassadors and subsequently facilitated interactive dialogue workshops for 3,500 young people in those three countries.

In 2012_2013, the dialogue ambassadors continue with a new phase and a team of 28 new ambassadors from Egypt, Jordan and Denmark.



Hopefully in years to come, even more young people will learn about the vast potential of dialogue – with help from this book.

Purpose and content of the book

We believe you are holding this book in your hands because you have a special interest in mastering the art of dialogue. You might be an activist in a youth club, some other kind of organisation or a political party. And you appreciate the value of using dialogue as a tool to develop people and projects.

This book is a guide to creating dialogue in practice. It is published in Danish, English and Arabic. It is first and foremost intended for young people who want to conduct workshops for their peers with a focus on dialogue. We hope it will also serve to inspire others who wish to explore dialogue – as a concept, as a basic value, and as a dynamic way of interacting in the day-to-day.

The book contains:

- A fundamental understanding of the concept of dialogue
- Hands-on tools to communicate dialogically
- Knowledge of how to plan and carry out a workshop
- Insights into the role of the workshop leader and facilitator
- A wide array of exercises and activities suitable for dialogue workshops

The making of the book

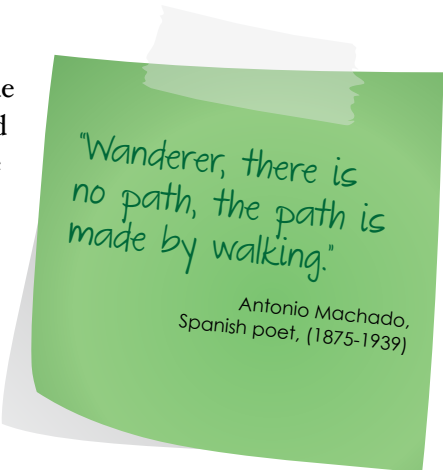
The book is based on commonly known principles for how to plan, lead and facilitate workshops. The exercises have been chosen against the background of the project's experiences of activities that were particularly suitable for dialogue workshops. They have been collected by the

dialogue ambassadors and others involved in communication, dialogue and conflict resolution. In that part of the process The Danish Centre for Conflict Resolution has played a particular role.

The writing of this book has been informed by field practice during the project. It is intended that the spirit of the project *Ambassadors for Dialogue* is conveyed to the reader. It draws on experiences of teaching communication and dialogical conflict resolution in numerous contexts.

The ambassadors' own invaluable contributions have also been highly enriching. They have described the activities and, with few exceptions, tried them out in practice in Denmark, Jordan and Egypt. The ambassadors' specific experiences and stories have been valuable contributions which we hope enliven the book and make it more useful as a hands-on tool.

We owe massive gratitude to the dialogue ambassadors for the inspiration and learning arising from exploring the potential of dialogue together, as well as for their constructive and dialogical feedback on the book script. Many more people have been of invaluable assistance in the effort to write this book, none mentioned, none forgotten. Thank you!



"Wanderer, there is
no path, the path is
made by walking."

Antonio Machado,
Spanish poet, (1875-1939)

Towards dialogue

The work with dialogue is like starting out on a voyage of discovery, in which whatever happens along the way is more important than arriving anywhere in particular. The journey is the destination.

Nevertheless, the travel must be prepared. Where should I set course for? What do I want to see and experience? And what luggage should I carry? A



guidebook is a precious planning tool, and is pored over initially. However, as one begins to settle into the role of the traveller, the book is cast aside. As well it should be. Because in a voyage of discovery, at least as important as foreknowledge is daring to be curious and keeping one's mind open to what happens in the encounter with the foreign and the unfamiliar.

The same applies to the preparation of dialogue workshops. In this book, you can read about the principles for dialogue and get ideas for planning. You also get inspiration for exercises that create dialogue. And you gain understanding of the role of the workshop leader and facilitator. However, the book is not a ready-made package solution that feeds you everything you need to know about the topic. It is not until you get into the nitty-gritty of actual dialogue work that you truly discover what dialogue is capable of. As you harvest your own experiences, you gradually gain deeper understanding of the nature of dialogue, which is what enables you to practise it.

On your voyage of discovery, we hope the book will serve as a dear and inspiring companion. One that helps you stand on a firm foundation, provides you with specific direction on how to do it, and gives you the courage to try it out for yourself.

Instructions for readers

The book can be read from cover to cover. This is recommended if you have limited experience of dialogue and workshops. Chapter 1 describes the nature of dialogue more theoretically. This is a useful foundation for explaining the concept of dialogue during a workshop. Chapter 2 is about dialogical communication, setting out hands-on tools to conduct a dialogue in practice. In Chapter 3, the planning of workshops takes centre stage, while Chapter 4 focuses on the role of the workshop leader and facilitator. Chapter 5 presents a brief guide to planning and structuring a workshop, as well as a step-by-step account of 18 different activities. Finally, there are suggestions for further reading, links to relevant websites and references to literature.



If you already have substantial experience of conducting workshops, you may jump straight to Chapter 5. In that case, you can use the book as a reference work or to refresh your knowledge. As you discover what you need to know more about, you can read and immerse yourself in the other chapters.

We hope the book will inspire you in the lifelong learning that it takes to become better at dialogue in order to guide others. Remember that, like any other kind of travel, dialogue moves in mysterious ways and is best entered into with an open mind. The same maxim applies to dialogue as to many other key challenges in life: the best teacher is your own experience, especially if you are willing to let go from time to time. We wish you a pleasant trip into the wondrous universe of dialogue.



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WHAT IS DIALOGUE?

The word 'dialogue' comes from Greek dialogos, which means 'through the word' (*dia* = through and *logos* = word). In everyday language, the term is widely used in the same sense as 'conversation', but dialogue is more than just talking to one another. It is a complex concept. When you wish to work purposefully with dialogue, it is necessary to comprehend more exactly what it means.

Definition (for the purposes of this book)

Dialogue is a special form of communication, in which participants seek to actively create greater mutual understanding and deeper insight.

“... special form of communication...”

Dialogue is like a movement, where those taking part in the exchange explore new possibilities. The goal is not to produce a particular outcome, such as persuading someone, winning the argument or reaching agreement. Participants are open, listen and ask questions. They take their time to savour and digest other viewpoints. Together they try to figure out what makes sense for one party, what makes sense for the other party, and what sense they can make in concert. This is what makes dialogue 'special'.

“...participants seek to actively create. ...”

Participants in a dialogue actively explore both the subject on the agenda, the viewpoints on the subject matter, and the underlying beliefs. This type of conversation gives rise to trust, reassurance, confidence and a deeper degree of contact between the parties communicating. This strengthens the relation and bridges the various beliefs and values in play.

“... greater mutual understanding ...”

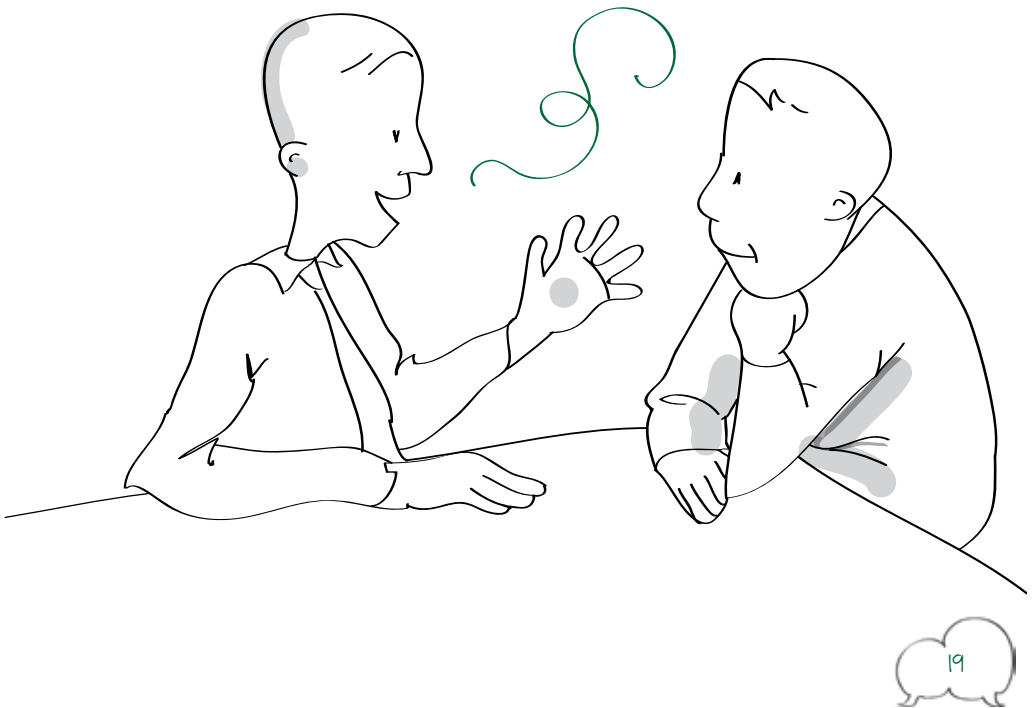
When differing values, beliefs and views clash, our own categorisations and prejudices are often barriers to understanding. In a dialogue, one tries to take in the perspective of the other party, though being



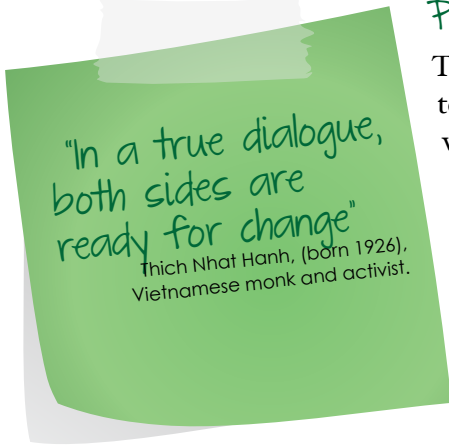
aware that one sometimes just cannot understand, let alone accept, their opinion. Merely recognising this fact gives rise to greater mutual understanding of each other as the distinct human beings that we are. Thus, dialogue creates deeper respect for differences and an opportunity to become wiser. Because when we share our differences, knowledge and insights, something extraordinary emerges: a synergy effect. In somewhat simplified terms, this means that several people create something together that exceeds the sum of what each of them creates on their own.

”...deeper insight ...”

When we manage to move beyond viewpoints and prejudices – both our own and those of others – it creates an opportunity for entirely new insights. Insight denotes understanding at a deeper level given the kind of person you are, including your experiences, values and feelings. Insight is related to ‘aha!’ experiences and realisations. It arises when what you used to think or understand is perceived in a new light. It happens through dialogue and reflection, when we put our thoughts



into words and listen to those of others. In this joint pursuit of new and shared meanings, we arrive at a deeper insight.



Principles of dialogue

There are four basic principles which together make up the foundation on which the dialogue rests. They are: trust, openness, honesty and equality. The four principles are interrelated and constitute preconditions for dialogue. They foster dialogue and are in turn fostered by dialogue. Consequently, they must always be kept in mind when working with dialogue.

Trust

When there is trust between persons in communication, it is easier to express opposing views. However, trust is not always a given when people wish to enter into a dialogue. On the contrary, opposite opinions can give rise to distrust and unease. Thus the dialogical form per se can help build that trust. One party listens, while the other feels heard. It is reassuring to feel listened to. It gives rise to trust and courage to open up. The parties dare to communicate their views and profound values more honestly, even when they differ from each other. They begin to listen to one another and are inclined to ask more exploratory questions. Thus a virtuous circle is set in motion.

Openness

Openness is both being honest about what you represent and being open to what the other suggests. You are open to understand the other's views and what underlies them, without necessarily having to accept them or agree with them. Openness is related to the building

of trust. Communication driven by inquiry and curiosity signals openness and introduces trust into the conversation.

Honesty

Honesty is about authenticity in being who you are, both in your words and your way of being. Honesty fosters openness and trust, while dishonesty fosters mistrust. Honesty is required in communication to let the recipient gain insights into the needs and values that underlie the viewpoints. It is necessary to build trust in the relation and to come across as authentic.

Equality

Dialogue is based on the value that everybody has something to say, regardless of status, gender, ethnic background, etc. In a dialogue everybody joins in on an equal footing. They may differ in status and power, but all voices have the same right to be heard. Notwithstanding differences in status, dialogue means seeking to communicate as equals. This calls for paying attention to the implications of status and power in the relation. It might be necessary to compensate for discrepancies in status and power, say, by showing special consideration for a weaker party.

The nature of dialogue - a way of existing

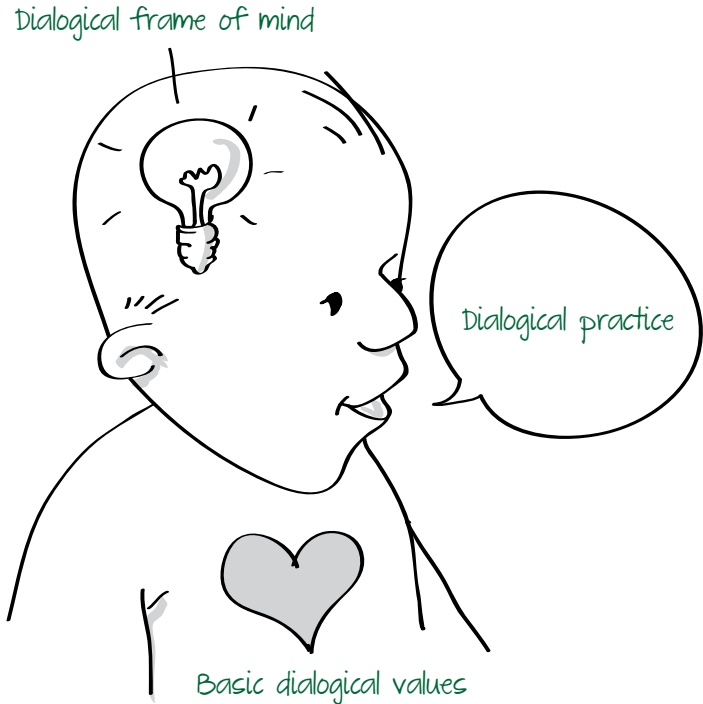
To reach someone else through dialogue, the dialogue must come from the heart. This also applies if you want to guide others in conducting a dialogue. You need to believe, fundamentally, that dialogue is a good idea and an appropriate form of exchange. And you need to be able to communicate dialogically, or at least have the desire to do so. It is necessary to be aware of the basic values underlying the dialogue and of what a dialogical frame of mind entails.

All this forms a whole: the nature of dialogue. Dialogue is not merely a technical skill and a collection of tools. It is a way of existing. It is – like that actual act of dialogue – a movement and a lifelong aspira-

tion. Because you never cease to develop your dialogical abilities, and indeed why should you? It is one long voyage of exploration which brings with it new experiences and insights. Not only do you discover what other people believe and feel about our shared world. You also open your eyes to where you stand yourself and which direction you are heading.

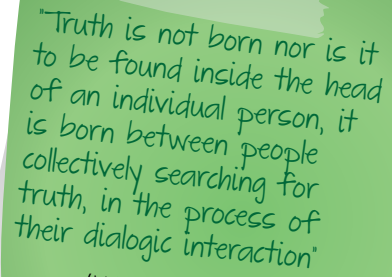
The nature of dialogue comprises three dimensions: basic values, frame of mind and practice. To become better at dialogue, it is essential to develop these three dimensions.

THE NATURE OF DIALOGUE



Basic dialogical values

In what do I believe? What is my view of human nature? For what do I want to use dialogue and why? These are relevant questions to ask yourself in the effort to develop your own basic dialogical values. The crux of the matter is to become aware of how the dialogue is linked to your own values.



"Truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born between people collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction"

(M.M. Bakhtin, 1895-1975). Russisk sprogteoretiker og litteraturhistoriker.

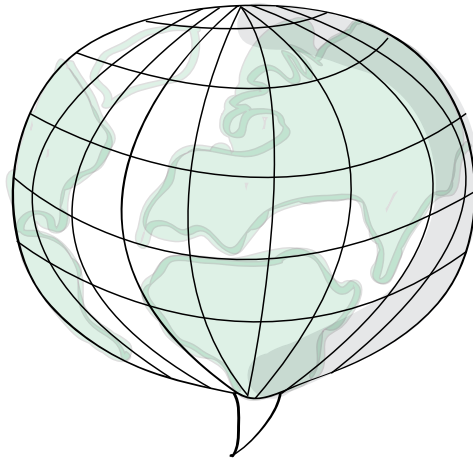
This book is also built upon basic values. We defined dialogue as an opportunity to create greater understanding and deeper insights. This definition, in turn, is founded on a particular view of human nature, namely that we want to understand each other, and that we harbour a desire to be together with others in a proper manner. The human being has potential for both good and evil. Although we are not always good in our deeds, it is possible to stimulate this. Dialogue is considered an option towards choosing to act more reasonably rather than violating, imposing by force and destroying one another. It is no panacea capable of curing all ills, but it is one of the ways in which to build bridges between people who are different.

Dialogue is perceived as a form of communication that is particularly suitable in handling divergence and conflict. By fostering mutual understanding and insight, dialogue builds relations in a manner that boosts the will to find solutions. Thus, dialogue also turns into a method that helps make it easier to take decisions that can stand the test of time.

Embedded in our basic dialogical values is the belief that we must respect other people's various views, because we are equal in worth. One person's standpoint need not be invalid just because it differs from that of the majority. This implies recognition that there is more than

one answer to each question. As individuals we might be convinced of our answer and consider it to be *the* truth. However, standing on the ground of dialogical values, it must be accepted that somebody else can have *his* answer as the one and only. By using dialogue to challenge our own ingrained truths and gain insights into those of others, together we are expanding truth to bring it closer to our shared reality.

(See note 1; Annex 4: Notes, references and suggestions for further reading).



Dialogical frame of mind

The need to belong to a community, to create and develop together, and to understand one another, is a deep-seated feature of our human biology, just as is the urge to destroy and do evil. However, research shows that the desire to create and build is stronger than the desire to exclude and do away with one another. Even so, war and devastation are constantly wrought all over the planet due to differences of opinion.

We know that it is wise to listen and try to understand when we communicate. It is usually plain sailing, as long as we agree to some extent. But when we come across viewpoints that are in outright conflict with our own, it is difficult to practise, especially if the divergent opinions concern profound values and moral issues. Or if they are uttered by people whom we perceive as utterly different from ourselves.

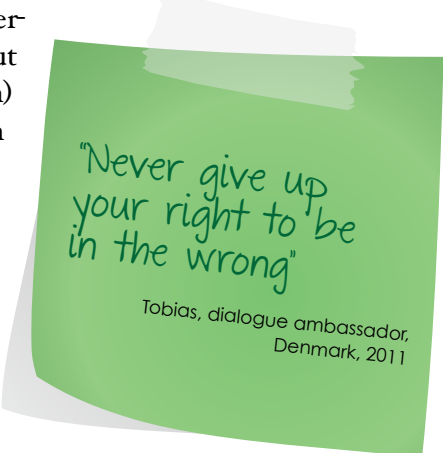
This is unavoidable in the meeting of human minds. Consequently, the attitude with which we arrive at the encounter is critical to how it turns out. Do we want to fight and win? Or do we want to enter into a dialogue and try to understand? A dialogical frame of mind entails a willingness to be open, exploratory and dialogical towards others, even in the face of profound disagreement. It is a personal choice, and it hinges on whether we have a genuine motivation to take part in a dialogue. Only when the dialogue is truly desired will it work in practice.

Dialogical practice

As regards our action, we also face a fundamental choice. What do we want to achieve through our communication? And how do we want to communicate in practice?

When confronting viewpoints that are diametrically opposed to our own, the knee-jerk reaction of most of us is to try to persuade the other that he is wrong. We discuss, debate, argue and negotiate. Or we even manipulate and polemicise. All these forms of communication are, on the face of it, at odds with conducting a dialogue.

In a dialogue, inquiry and curiosity take centre stage. People listen and ask questions, trying to understand. You can read more about dialogical practice (communication) in Chapter 2, when we elaborate on the relation between dialogue and discussion, because it serves to illustrate the nature of dialogue when contrasted with its apparent opposite.



"Never give up
your right to be
in the wrong"

Tobias, dialogue ambassador,
Denmark, 2011

Discussion or dialogue - or both?

Somewhat crudely, the differences between dialogue and discussion are as follows:

DLIALOGUE	DISCUSSION/DEBATE
We try to learn	We try to win
We try to understand	We try to persuade with arguments
We listen to become wiser	We listen to identify flaws and errors
We try to express our own views and values as clearly as possible	We defend our position
We tolerate each other's differences	We have become more alike, or we have adapted
Nobody loses, both parties win	The loser surrenders
The destination is the journey towards greater understanding and deeper insight	The goal is to win the argument
Picture: a circle	Picture: a boxing ring

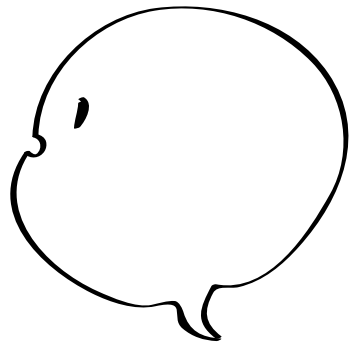
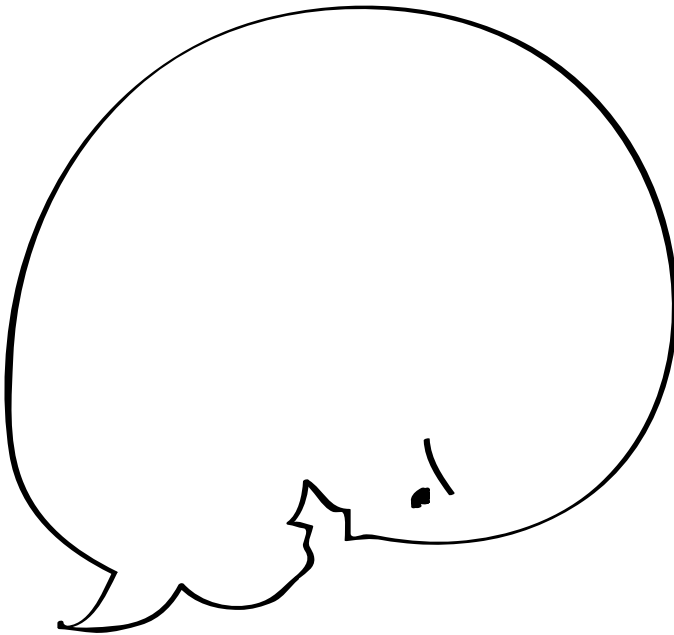
(See note 2; Annex 4; Notes, references and suggestions for further reading).

In the table, it is the negative version of discussion that is compared to dialogue. This does not imply that discussion is always wrong. It can be entirely appropriate to try to persuade others of one's views, to assert one's opinions or claim one's rights in the face of disagreement. There are plenty of day-to-day situations when this is essential.

In a discussion, the emphasis is on convincing and persuading. You argue in order to win based on the premise that he who has the best arguments wins. Discussion and argumentation are often employed in

negotiations, where the goal is to devise solutions, arrive at joint decisions or reach agreement in order to move on.

Nevertheless, in a diverse world, where people with different views, values and interests live side by side, the actual manner in which we assert our standpoints become crucial to coexistence, as well as to the chances of solving problems and taking decisions.



In other words, there is a vast difference between a destructive and a constructive type of discussion (see Annex 1, which elaborates on differences between dialogue and discussion).

Two types of discussion

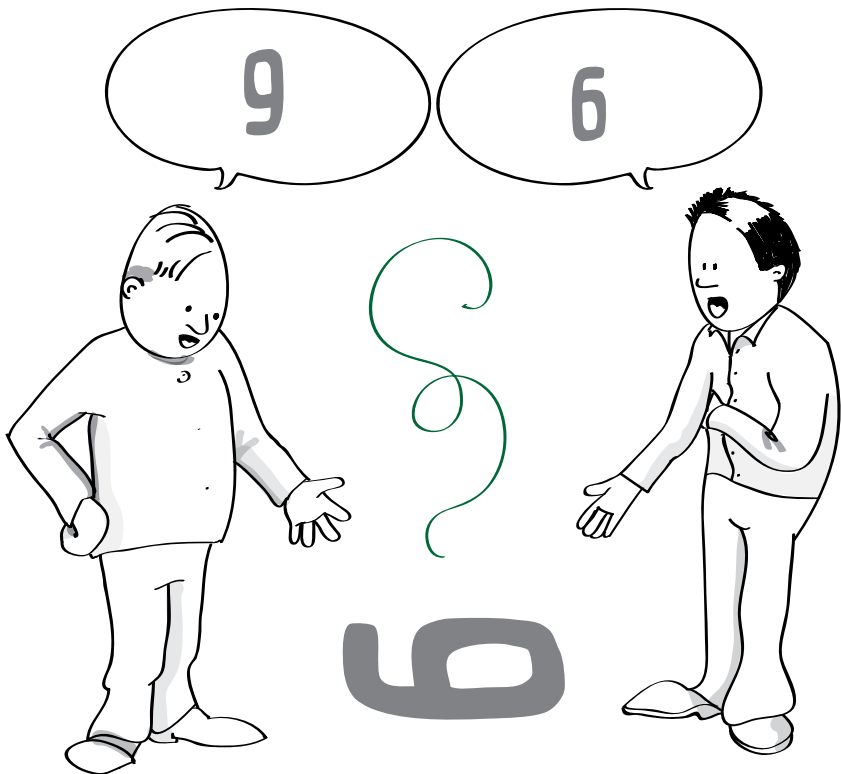
In a destructive discussion, you do not listen very attentively. You focus on preparing your next argument and wait mainly to have your say. It does not lead to very much except deadlocked positions. It does not break any new ground. Disaster looms even larger when the goal becomes to impose your truth or will by offending, ridiculing or disparaging. Or by lying, manipulating or abusing power. This type of discussion is outright damaging and fuels conflict.

In a constructive discussion, dialogical principles of trust, openness, honesty and equality are upheld. People listen with a frame of mind that is open, inquiring and patient enough to digest both their own and the other's arguments. This is stimulating and exciting. There might be some focus on winning, but also on achieving understanding and adherence to one's viewpoints, and on exploring the scope for agreeing. While a destructive discussion is like fisticuffs in a boxing ring, the constructive discussion is like a dance, where it is all right to change positions in response to what arises from the conversation. Objective and sober arguments prevail. What is said is substantiated, ideally by facts. Respectful negotiations may lead to a compromise or a win-win solution. As in the dialogue, participants challenge each other's truths and discrepancies through conversation, but here the winner is the one with the best argument.

“He who wants to debate should seek truth in the same spirit as he who searches for a lost item. He doesn't care if the item is found by himself or a helper. He considers his conversation partner as a friend and not a foe.”

Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, (1058-1111), Persian theologian, jurist and mystic.

In a dialogue, it is not an end in itself to change one's views or reconsider one's values. Nevertheless, this is a distinct possibility, perhaps much more so even than in the case of a discussion. There is a special, almost magical dynamic in being listened to and feeling understood. It makes it easier to introduce light and shade into previously static perceptions. People remove their blinkers to see the world from entirely new perspectives when they feel recognised. And suddenly those unyielding positions turn out to be not so fixed after all. At the same time, participants become clear as to what their own views are and why.



This provides them with a better foundation for spotting what they have in common despite their disagreements, even for finding some third common ground, which was hidden in the beginning, when everyone was so preoccupied with asserting their own views.

“There are only two ways of solving a conflict. You can fight it out and let the strongest prevail. Or you can talk it through and use conversation to arrive at a more balanced and reasonable understanding of the problem behind the conflict. The latter is democracy.”

Hal Koch (1904-1963), Danish philosopher and democrat, declared in 1948.

Dialogue as an active choice

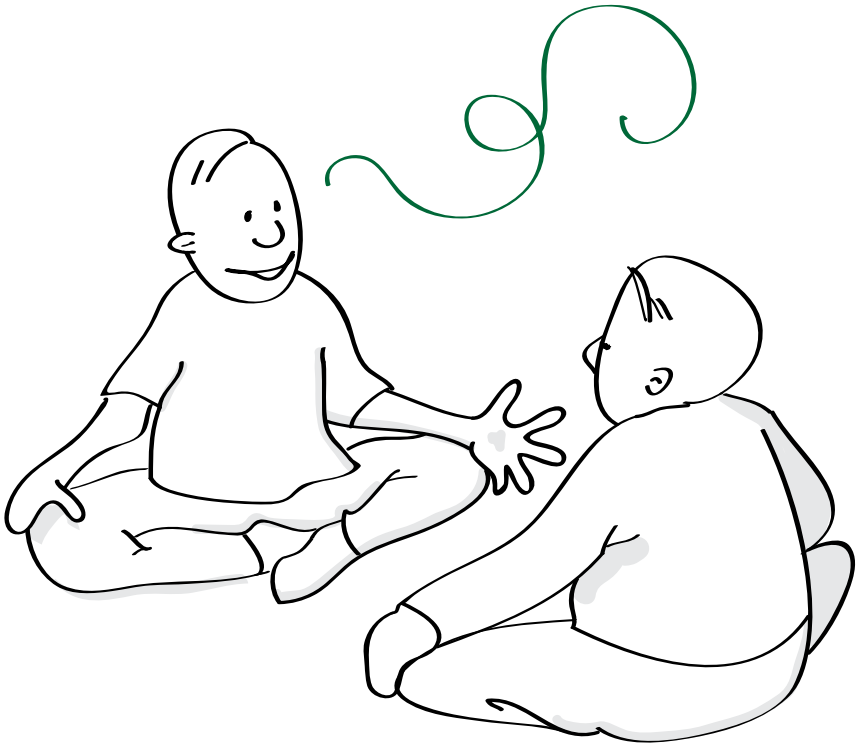
Accordingly, dialogue is not exclusively a means of creating understanding between fellow human beings, though this is meaningful enough in itself. Dialogue is a valuable tool in all the contexts in which we need to reach agreement and take concrete and well-founded decisions in order to act. Not least in the context of democracy.

Here, dialogue, either in its pure form or hand in hand with some type of sober argumentation, can help make decisions better thought-through, more participatory and enduring.

It is difficult to completely avoid argument, debate and persuasion in our communication, when we disagree. Nevertheless, more often than we think, dialogue is an opportunity that we can deliberately choose to take in order to handle differences between us in a more constructive and beneficial manner.

*“Respect for yourself.
Respect for others.
Responsibility for
our actions.”*

The 14th Dalai Lama (born 1935).



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DIALOGUE IN PRACTICE

“At a workshop, there were two participants who really couldn’t work out how to enter into a dialogue. They both, particularly the girl, kept discussing fiercely and emotionally with each other. The issue was whether or not you agreed on how the police had handled a demonstration, where several protesters had been killed. We thought: why can’t she hold a dialogue? Nevertheless, things began to improve as we helped them along. Afterwards the girl told us she had lost her cousin in that demonstration. We were deeply moved by this. She said the dialogue had still helped her listen to the other’s viewpoints, although it was very hard. From this we learned not to judge people for their actions. You never know why they do what they do. And we learned that dialogue is also useful even when it touches on a sore point.”

Gitte from Denmark and Yahia from Jordan, dialogue ambassadors, 2011

Dialogue about what?

You can conduct a dialogue about anything. However, some subjects and issues are more controversial than others and tend to make for heated exchanges. They become ‘inflammable subjects’ or ‘burning issues’. This can be because they touch on an event in our own personal story, or because they relate to values of importance to us. It happens in fields such as gender roles, politics, religion, environment or others considered to be major social concerns. It can also be areas in which we have a deep and personal commitment in our own lives. What fires us up may well vary from one person to another.

Cultural differences are typically seen as ‘inflammable’, but need not be so.



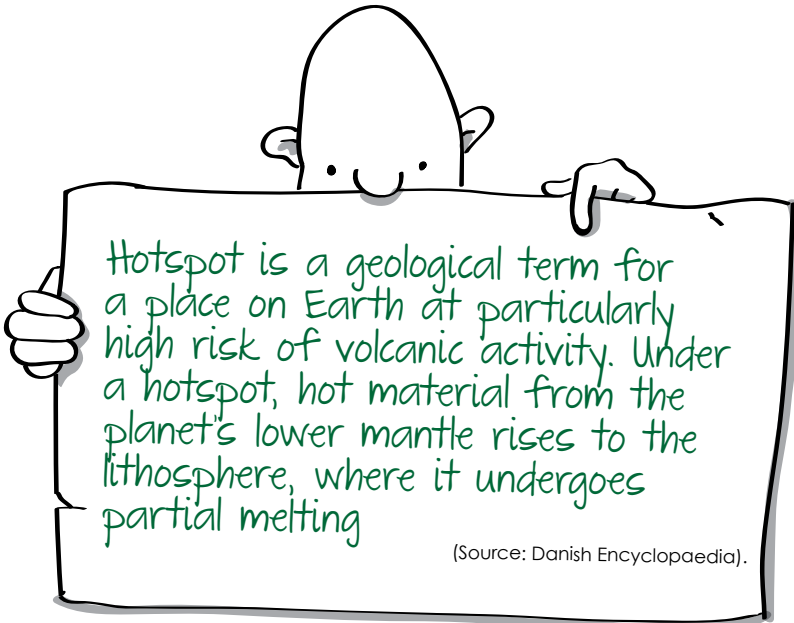
Which differences make a difference?

All people are different from one another, since we have different backgrounds, do things differently, and look different. However, not all differences make a difference. In the intercultural encounter, as in any other arena where people meet, some differences have greater implications than others.

Two people from the same cultural community can be at each other's throats just as much as two people of differing cultural backgrounds. And it is quite possible to have more in common with a person you have just met, and who lives on the opposite side of the planet, than with your neighbour living next door for your whole life.

The mere perception of one another as hailing from a 'different culture' can provoke a fixation about what divides us, unnecessarily widening the gap even further. Culture serves to rationalise disagreement which may simply spring from different tempers, or from someone getting out of the wrong side of the bed. You focus on the most immediate contrasts. And you overlook the common ground.

When we meet people with completely different views and values regarding controversial issues, these areas of conversation often turn into some kind of 'hotspots' in our communication.



(See note 1; Annex 4: Notes, references and suggestions for further reading).

In terms of communication, it means that, when a conversation hits a hotspot, we become emotionally fired up and easily provoked. What lies behind the views, such as key values and norms, 'rises' and erupts through our otherwise sober-minded approach to the subject. We 'boil over' or 'see red'.

Examples of hotspots and burning issues

Religion: All faiths have systems of values, morality, doctrines and maxims. However, the systems differ from one another. *Which religious systems should prevail in society? Who is to decide? How do we handle different views of issues related to religion?*

Morality and ethics: Morality determines what we perceive as right or wrong to do in various situations, also called norms. Ethics concerns our contemplation or scrutiny of morality, i.e. the philosophy or values behind particular norms. *Is the death penalty acceptable in homicide cases? Do women have the right to free abortion? Must we adapt completely when moving to another country, or is it all right to preserve our own traditions?*



Body and gender: All cultural communities have traditions, norms and rules which regulate our behaviour as regards the body and relations between the sexes. *What is the proper dress code? How much of our body can be revealed in public? What form of contact can boys and girls have with each other, where and when? Is circumcision acceptable, for boys and for girls?*

Communication forms and actions: This area covers everything we say and do. The patterns it conforms to vary from one cultural community to another. *Do you raise a subject directly or indirectly? Do you use professional terms or slang? Do you answer your email the same day, or is it okay to wait for a week? Do you decide by voting or negotiating? How do you address your teacher, by first name or surname? How do you greet people? Do you take your shoes off before entering someone's home?*

Culture and cultural identity

When you want to work with dialogue about issues that are linked to cultural differences, you must be good at recognising when hotspots are about culture and when they are merely about us being different individuals. You must also be alert as to how you apply the concept of culture. A wide and dynamic concept of culture makes the most sense when working with dialogue. This defines culture as the way we think, communicate and act within a social community. Culture is in constant flux, just as we are as persons. Culture is shaped by people and shapes us as people.

As fellow citizens of a globalised world, most of us consider that we belong to several cultural communities at the same time. Exactly which one you feel attached to depends on the context. If you travel abroad, you become more aware of your own nationality or of the linguistic community to which you belong. If you travel to another part of your own country, regional differences stick out more. And if you meet people with a different professional background or field of study, that aspect of your cultural belonging comes to the fore.

(See note 2; Annex 4: Notes, references and suggestions for further reading).

One of the most fundamental and vital human needs is to belong to a community. Accordingly, our cultural affiliation is closely associated with our self-perception and self-worth, constituting an important part of our identity. Identity has to do with where we feel that we belong, and where we are recognised and accepted as who we are. At the same time, cultural identity serves a compass by which we orientate ourselves. Our cultural affiliation evokes strong emotions in most of us. Our cultural identity matters to us, even though we belong to several cultural communities.

When we disagree with people who do not share our fundamental values, there is a tendency for more to be at stake than the actual divergence over the issue. Our reason may tell us that it is all right to hold different views. However, if the issue is linked to an important cultural value, our strong feelings mean that we are more easily provoked. Perhaps we start to discuss, persuade and try to win the argument. But it is hard to argue matter-of-factly when emotions reach boiling point. It is even harder to become persuaded by arguments which we might perceive as questioning our values. Suddenly the conversation is no longer just about our various views, but about our very identity.

In such a situation, it is entirely human to feel threatened and to put up defences. We resort to a destructive form of communication, where we may go on the verbal attack by offending the other. This adds even more fuel to the fire. Or we may withdraw from talking with the other, thus losing an opportunity to examine what lies behind his view.

In this kind of conversation, dialogue serves to uphold a more peaceful and respectful interaction, in which the contact is maintained. If we manage this, we reap the added bonus that our horizon is expanded. Because precisely those conversations which touch a nerve, challenge or provoke us, provide the most fertile soil for new insight, both for ourselves and for the other.

(See note 2; Annex 4: Notes, references and suggestions for further reading).



Challenges in communication

Interpretation

It is a fundamental premise of communication that we interpret whatever we experience from our own vantage point. What we call reality is not an objective entity, but a personal (subjective) interpretation of what we go through. Interpretation is a complex psychological process. In simplified terms, interpretation takes place as we handle our impressions by sorting them and putting them into different pigeonholes (categories).

Categorisation adheres to a particular pattern, which we use to ascribe meaning to everything that we see, hear and all other sensory data.

The system is our pattern of interpretation, and works like our own personal navigation map as we move around in the world. Accordingly, our understanding is always based on interpretation. It is through interpretation that we ascribe meaning to the world. For this reason, our pattern of interpretation is utterly indispensable. It is what makes us able to even communicate about – and within – a complex reality. Without such a navigation system, we would get totally lost in trying to handle the myriad impressions of daily life.

Our worldview

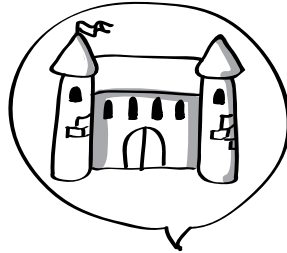
The family you grew up in, the school you went to, the town you lived in, the course of education you chose, the friends you surround yourself with, the trips you have been on, and the media you use: all this has shaped you, continues to mould you, and is part of what has made you into the unique person that you are. These influences have led to your fundamental outlook, your worldview. Together with the very personal experiences accumulated throughout your life, your worldview is inextricably linked to your cultural identity.



Interpretation is based on different worldviews



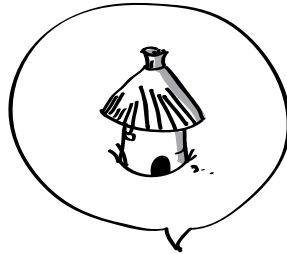
I have a house...



Which kind?...



A small house...



Which type?...



A small wooden house...



Which colour?...



Black and white...



Oh, now I understand...

A worldview is composed of a complex of fundamental assumptions, values, norms, attitudes and viewpoints. It indicates the cardinal directions of how to communicate in each situation, what we think is 'right or wrong' and 'true or false'.

Our patterns of interpretation are rooted in our worldviews. This means that whenever we 'understand' something, it is always an *interpretation* occurring through the filter of the worldview. In the day-to-day we do not perceive that our understanding is an interpretation based on a particular worldview. We perceive it as 'this is how it is'. The reason is that our own worldview is, in a sense, invisible to us. It is inextricably linked to our identity: the person each one of us 'is'.

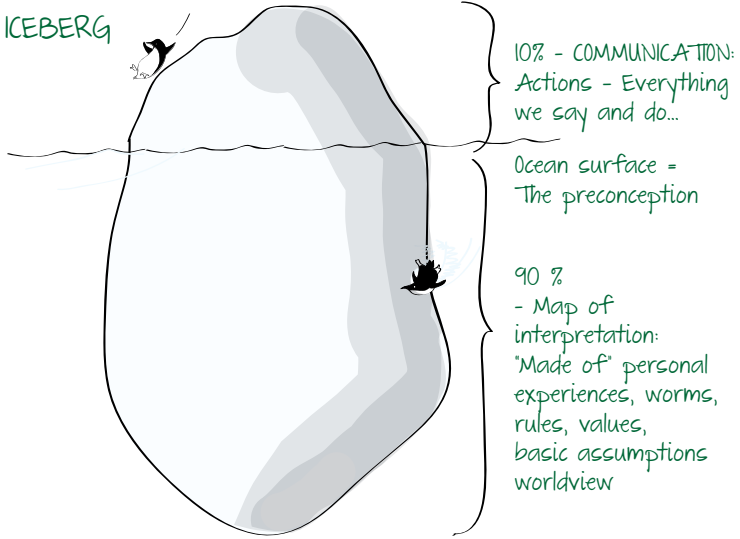
Not all people have the same world map (pattern of interpretation). This means that we can interpret the same things in completely different ways depending on the pattern of interpretation being followed. Thus our own worldview can become a barrier when we communicate with others.

The challenge in communication is that what we send and receive (i.e. the transmission of sensory data, what we see, hear etc.) is, metaphorically speaking, only 10% of everything that happens within the field of communication. The remaining 90% is the actual complex interpretation process based on our worldview. The 90% is invisible in the sense that the bulk of what the worldview contains (our own values, norms and views) is subconscious to us. We perceive it as 'normal' and 'how the world is'. Just like 90% of an iceberg, it is hidden to ourselves and to others beneath the surface of the ocean. We are rarely aware of how and according to what worldview we go about interpreting reality. And we cannot see why others interpret like they do. We only have access to what they express (send), when they communicate and act, and hence to the 10% that we can hear, see and sense. And they only have access to our 10%.

(See note 3; Annex 4: Notes, references and suggestions for further reading).

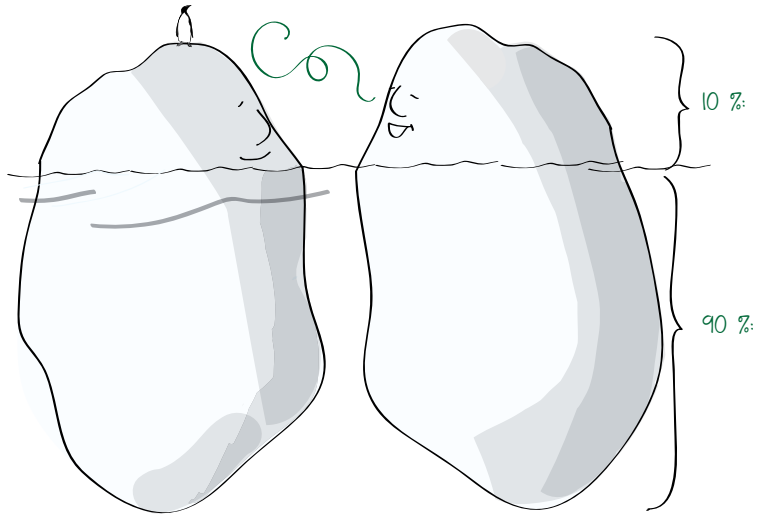


THE ICEBERG



WHEN TWO ICEBERGS MEET

Communication and interpretation can be different



When we communicate within the same cultural community, the world maps from which we take our bearings are, notwithstanding personal variation, largely similar. Perhaps we speak the same mother tongue, have more or less the same habits, traditions and preferences. Communication tends to be somewhat smoother, although we may still run into misunderstandings and differing interpretations within the same cultural community.

If the maps are different, there is less chance of an encounter with one another. In the meeting between people of different cultural backgrounds, both what is visible and what is beneath the surface are likely to differ. This is a challenge in itself. But what is even more challenging is that you can never know to what extent or in which areas the differences are to be found. What you see is not necessarily what you believe it is. Because you interpret based on your own pattern. A veil can be perceived as a symbol of a woman's emancipation and independence in one context, as male oppression in another, and as her wanting to look good and being fond of wearing a veil in a third. It depends entirely on who sees the act of wearing a veil.

Cultural glasses

The cultural communities to which we belong influence our patterns of interpretation. In a way we look at the world through a pair of cultural glasses. We cannot take them off, but we can become aware of how they colour what we see. This is what happens when we meet someone who looks differently at the world. And who navigates according to highly dissimilar maps. In such an encounter, we also discover ourselves, and we have an opportunity to become wiser as to how we see the world, learning more about our own cultural glasses.

Thus, embedded within this encounter is a unique opportunity both to get to know completely new worlds and to become wiser about yourself. Provided, that is, you do not just set out to confirm your own assumption that your view of the world is the only right one.



You have to choose to seize the chance to expand your horizon.

This returns us to the nature of dialogue. If we stand on a foundation of dialogical values and arrive at the encounter with a dialogical frame of mind, we are well on our way to bridging the differences. And by making use of dialogical communication, in which we meet the other in an exploratory and inquiring manner, we can dive under the surface and swim to the other side. In order to better understand what the other understands, why he acts as he does. And to discover how much we have in common.

What is dialogical communication?

Dialogical communication is curious and exploratory. You set out to create contact and bring the principles of dialogue – *trust, openness, honesty and equality* – into play.

In practice, this means that you:

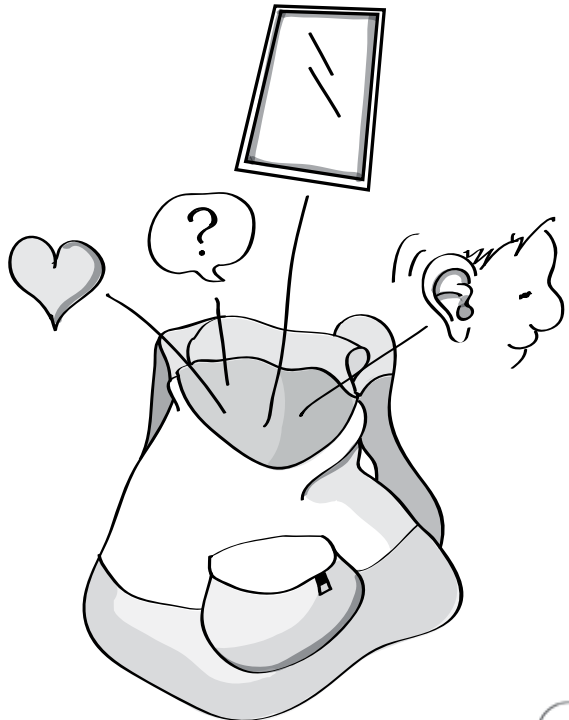
- are trustful, open, honest and equality-minded in your communication;
- are personal and speak on your own behalf and not of that of your group, culture or country;
- express empathy and try to understand others;
- ask about feelings and values, and take responsibility for your own feelings and values;
- speak in complete statements and remain matter-of-fact;
- are direct and specific in a respectful manner.



There are four key tools of dialogical communication:

- Engaging contact
- Active listening
- Mirroring
- Exploratory questioning approach

These tools are adapted depending on who you speak with and on the context of the conversation. The relation between the parties and the situation at hand also play a major role. It is not the same, for instance, to talk to a colleague about a project or to a brother about a personal dilemma. Or to be acting as a workshop leader tasked with getting others to enter into a dialogue. It is also important to pay attention to culturally-determined differences in communication, such as linguistic style and body language. The meaning of being 'straightforward' and how close it is appropriate to stand to one another while talking, for example, differ widely according to custom.



Tools of dialogical communication

Engaging contact

We cannot help notice it when we enter into engaging contact. However, it is hard to describe in words what it means exactly. This is a paradox, because engaging contact is among the most life-giving – and necessary – experiences for us as human beings. When engaging contact is established with another person, you feel a strong mutual connection, and you may be allowed to catch glimpses of the other's soul. When you experience engaging contact with yourself, on the other hand, you have a fundamental sense of being in balance, in your element, or in a flow, a state in which you become oblivious to time and place.

Dialogue brings us into engaging contact. And communication endowed with this quality, in turn, nourishes the dialogue. You feel heard, seen and understood. You experience that you are truly seeing, hearing and understanding the other. She does not come across as a representative of viewpoints, groups or cultures, but as a nuanced human being. Exactly like yourself. It is unimportant who is right or wins. You feel touched because there is a meeting between fellow human beings at a deeper level. And you are able to move on having been enriched.

You yourself have to be engagingly contacting, focused and present in mind to be able to create an engaging contact with others. What matters is to be at the only place where you can be at the only time that is possible: right here and right now.

To pull this off, it is a good starting point to know your own views and values, and to be in touch with your own feelings and needs. For most of us, this is a bit of a challenge. Not least because we live in an age where access to portable electronic media 24 hours a day, advertising in public spaces and a high pace of life are constantly vying for our attention.



The ability to enter into engaging contact can be trained in many ways. One of them is to work with self-reflection and attention to your own reactions to, and feelings and thoughts about what you experience. The other three tools – active listening, mirroring and exploratory questioning – contribute to creating the engaging contact in communication which so nourishes the dialogue.

(See note 4; Annex 4: Notes, references and suggestions for further reading).

Active listening

Active listening is a simple and effective tool to show that you have really heard what the other has said. You express genuine interest and curiosity by being fully tuned into what the other is saying. You ask questions and use confirmatory and appreciative body language, such as eye contact and nodding. You signal that you really do want to understand what is on the other person's mind.

In its purest form, active listening means disregarding yourself. This is a key point to notice. We tend to want to take to the stage to have our say. And we want to help. There is nothing wrong with that. But in conversations where actively listening has been deliberately chosen as a tool to stimulate dialogue, you must resist the temptation to speak your mind. You refrain from giving advice and suggesting solutions. Unless you are asked directly. Otherwise, you are about to take over the conversation and hog the limelight. And this is not nearly as conducive to engaging contact and dialogue.

In a dialogue between two colleagues or friends, you will typically take turns to assume the position of the active listener. Just like in couple dancing. In leading a workshop, active listening is one of the most important tools to get dialogue into play. (This is elaborated upon in Chapter 4).

Mirroring

Mirroring means rendering, word by word, what the other has just said. It is a simple technique also used in active listening. Mirroring signals to the other that you have heard what was said. At the same time, there is a certain mechanical effect enabling you to understand something better when you have said it aloud. Hence the expression of 'savouring' the viewpoints of the other person. In some situations it may seem contrived to mirror what the other is saying, especially if you repeat whole sentences. Often a couple of words will do for the other to feel listened to, say, the last few words in the other person's sentence, and for yourself to better understand what was said. It works a bit like a gentle push from behind during a difficult climb. It feels good and adds a little momentum. The person speaking continues her train of thought and her reflection, and may even think deeper. You understand more. The dialogue is in motion.

You can also mirror the other person with your body language. For example, you can lean forward when the other does so; put your hand under your cheek, when the other does the same; or take up eye contact, when the other invites you to do so. We do this all by ourselves once the engaging contact has been established, and when we want a deeper contact to be there. But we can also stimulate the contact by deliberately mirroring the other.



Examples:

1: Discussion without mirroring

A: *“I think it’s simply a disgrace that so few people sign up for voluntary work when it’s so enriching!”*
(Heartfelt statement about something that matters to A).

B: *“That’s not a disgrace, surely it’s up to people themselves to decide!”*
(Puts forward the opposite standpoint and enters into a discussion).

A: *“To me it’s about people being so tremendously selfish.”*
(Puts up defences and becomes judgmental about how others are).

B: *“Well, how about yourself? I guess everybody is selfish.”*
(Generalises, accuses and criticises).

2: From discussion to dialogue by means of mirroring:

A: *“I think it’s simply a disgrace that so few people sign up for voluntary work when it’s so enriching!”*

B: *“It’s so enriching?”*
(Mirrors the last words based on a hunch that this matters a lot to A).

A: *“Yes. I’ve had many great experiences as a volunteer.”*

B: *“You’ve had many great experiences as a volunteer?”*
(possibly: “tell me some more.”) (Mirrors the last words based on a feeling that there are underlying personal experiences that are important to uncover in order to get deeper into the conversation).

A: *“Yes, there was once when I ...”*
(Recounts an experience).

B: *“So what did you get out of it?”*
Or:

“What was important to you regarding that experience”
(Changes into exploratory questioning mode).

(A tells some more and then asks B).

A: *“Do you know what I mean?”*

The conversation moves from the standpoint of ‘it’s a disgrace’ to deeper values and needs surrounding the issue of ‘reasons for doing voluntary work’. A gradually becomes more personal and factual, narrating her own experiences. Contact has been established and the dialogue is underway with scope for deeper insights into each other’s lifeworld.

Exploratory questioning

You ask exploratory questions in order to clarify and elaborate on what you might not understand on the face of it, regarding both the actual issue being talked about and the views of it. You also inquire into what lies behind the views. That is, the worldview, fundamental assumptions, values, norms, feelings and personal experiences. (See the iceberg model on p. 42).

Open-ended and exploratory questions may well start with an interrogative, that is, words like what, how, which, who and when. Or with encouragement such as “Can you say some more about it?” It is preferable to avoid the interrogative why. In this context, it may come across as if the person is held to account and has to justify something. But perhaps the person has not fully made up her mind about it, and anyway, the intention here is the opposite, that is, to move towards greater clarification by means of conversation. The questions must not be closed or leading. Nor should they convey your own (covert) view. And to the extent possible, they should not be answerable with a yes or a no.

Examples of closed and leading as well as open-ended and exploratory questions

1: *“Don’t you think it’s awful that so many people die in the traffic every year, just because people don’t observe the speed limits?”*

(Leading question which reflects the questioners own view and bias. It is more of a statement of opinion than an exploration of the other person’s standpoint.)

“What do you think about the new statistic which shows the number of traffic victims continues to rise?”

(An open-ended question based on facts. It encourages shedding light on the views and their underlying rationale.)

2: *“So, are you always on time yourself?”*

(The question assumes that ‘being on time’ is an objective category and suggests an answer of either yes or no).

“How do you see time?”

Or:

“What’s important to you as regards showing up at the agreed time?”

(Open-ended and exploratory question assuming that perceptions of time are relative).

It may seem awkward to use these tools in the beginning. However, it is a question of training and of adapting the technique to the situation at hand and the person you are talking to. By ‘just doing it’, it gradually becomes second nature to you.



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PLANNING A WORKSHOP

“In the beginning, I doubted the effect of dialogue. Does it work at all? We carried out three workshops in Denmark and Egypt and received fabulous feedback. My golden moment was when it dawned on me that, yes, we really do make a difference. We change something through dialogue. We change something in real life. In the world.”

Mohammed Anis from Egypt, dialogue ambassador, 2011.

A successful dialogue workshop both imparts the fundamentals about the nature of dialogue and shows in practice what dialogue is. Participants gain greater understanding of the potential of dialogue, when they conduct one on an issue, and when they are trained in using hands-on tools of dialogical communication.

In order to bring into play exactly what you want, you have to carefully think through how best to put together the workshop. You need a plan.

What is a workshop?

A workshop is a planned, structured learning process for a group, which actively involves the participants, and which has a particular purpose. It always offers scope for participants to contribute actively (hence the ‘work’ part of ‘workshop’).

Just like a story, the workshop has a basic structure and moves over time in a process.

The elementary design is composed of three parts:

1. *Introduction:* opening and setting the framework
2. *Action:* the activities (introductory talks, exercises, dialogue, reflection, conversations, etc.)
3. *Finalisation:* summing up, rounding off, and evaluation.

Naturally, a dialogue workshop is always about *dialogue*.

However, how the workshop goes about it is up to you, as long as what happens makes sense to and engages the participants. The workshop has to be coherent. It must be dynamic and captivating.

(See note 1; Annex 4: Notes, references and suggestions for further reading).

The basic structure serves as a template for planning, in which content and form vary depending on the purpose of the workshop and the needs of its participants.

What is a dialogue workshop?

Dialogue is a movement where the journey is more important than reaching any particular destination. Accordingly, it makes sense for the workshop to be not just about dialogue, but also to bring participants into a dialogue with one another.

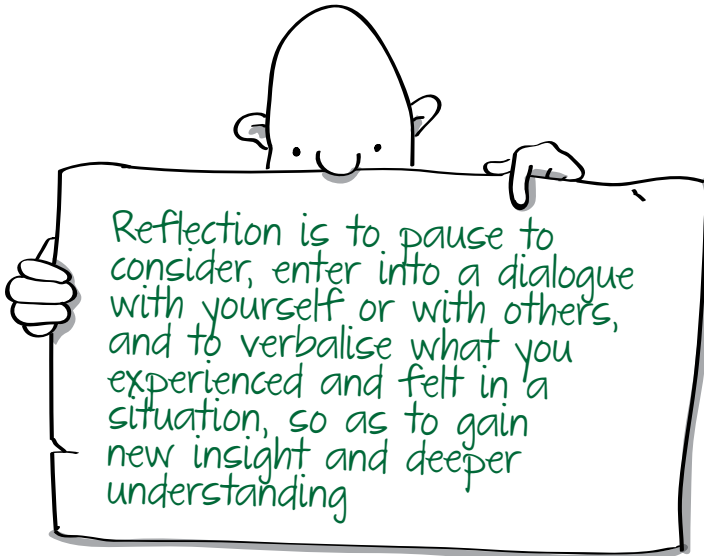
We distinguish between two prototypes of dialogue workshops:

- A. Workshops ABOUT dialogue, where the chief aim is to teach dialogue as a concept and a method. Participants learn about the nature of dialogue and, through examples and training, about tools of dialogical communication.
- B. Workshops WITH dialogue, in which the primary purpose is to conduct a dialogue on a particular issue. Participants become wiser about the subject matter and each other's views of it by means of dialogue as a method. At the same time, they acquire – more indirectly – a greater understanding of the nature of dialogue.

Preferably, participants should be aware of the type of workshop they have signed up to. Consequently, the contract, i.e. the agreement on what is to take place, must be clear. All participants should be clear as to what the workshop is about, how it will work with dialogue in practice, as well as how and to what extent they will be involved in the process. In reality, these two workshop prototypes will tend to overlap. However, in the planning process it is useful to distinguish so as to optimally choose what the workshop should contain and how it should be managed.

A successful workshop

At a successful dialogue workshop, you talk about dialogue, conduct a dialogue, and learn through dialogue. By means of shared reflection on what goes on in the dialogue between participants, learning and new insights arise. Accordingly, reflection is pivotal in the effort to ensure a successful dialogue workshop.



Reflection is to pause to consider, enter into a dialogue with yourself or with others, and to verbalise what you experienced and felt in a situation, so as to gain new insight and deeper understanding

Recipe

The basic recipe for a successful workshop contains three main ingredients. With those in mind, it becomes easier to decide how the workshop is to be structured, and which talks, exercises and games are to be included.

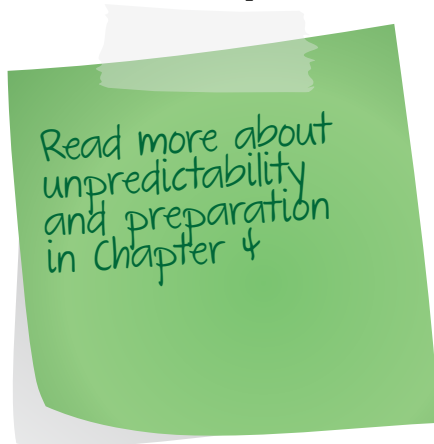
1. The workshop must be tailor-made to its participants on the basis of their needs and the overall purpose of the event. This calls for making up your mind on the following: Where do I want to go with my workshop? What do the participants need?
2. No activity without reflection, out of reflection comes learning. An activity in terms of an introductory talk, exercise or game does not generate much learning by itself. This only happens in the reflection process, when you put into words the feelings, aha! experiences and insights that an activity or conversation set in train. Consequently, any activity must be followed up by reflection among participants and by summing up what they have learned.
3. Variation makes for dynamism. A successful workshop is a dynamic and lively process, which holds participants' attention and involves them actively. Accordingly, variation must be at the heart of the planning. Thus, after a talk during which participants have been sitting down and listening, you run a physical activity for them. This can be followed, for example, by reflection in small groups, after which you sum it all up in a plenary session, and so forth.

(See note 2; Annex 4: Notes, references and suggestions for further reading).

Principles

During the planning, it is useful to be guided by a few fundamental principles:

- 1. Learning springs from disruption:** When it comes to dialogue, learning and development are two sides of the same coin. Participants learn and develop by being challenged regarding what they already know and believe. They have to be ‘disrupted’. The disruption should not be so strong that they disengage after being scared off. Nor should it be so weak that it merely affirms what they knew beforehand. The disruption must be ‘just right’ and make sense. It should both challenge and relate to what participants know. This is a balancing act, both when planning and implementing the workshop.
- 2. Unpredictability:** With all the planning in the world, you never know what will happen until you start to interact with the participants. You must be open and flexible, leaving scope for deviating from your plan without losing sight of the workshop’s purpose. Or you need to have a Plan B in reserve. This makes it just as important to prepare for the role of being responsible for the workshop as to plan the actual workshop.



3. The planning must take into account that the workshop has three dimensions:

- A. Content: *What will the workshop be about? What is going to happen?*
- B. Form: *How should the process be structured? How is it going to happen?*
- C. Process: *How do you prepare for the dynamics and what is to take place between the participants? To what extent are the participants to be involved and how?*

Read more about the three dimensions of the workshop in this chapter on p. 77



Recipe and principles for a successful workshop

Basic recipe

Tailor it to participants and be clear about the purpose

Think in terms of activity - reflection - learning

Create dynamism through variation

Basic principles

Learning springs from disruptions

Unpredictability calls for preparation

Planning concerns content, "form and process"

A simple and a thorough approach

Planning is about making conscious choices. There are myriad ways of doing this. The crux of the matter is to strive to produce a tailor-made process that is carefully based on the needs of participants. Experience shows that this approach makes for the most relevant and enlightening processes.

The simple approach to planning a workshop is to start from the basic recipe and the three basic principles mentioned above. The basic workshop structure – *introduction, action and finalisation* – is used as a template for planning, for devising a script and drawing up a programme (see below).

You choose a fitting headline, as well as the activities and exercises that you find most suitable (see Chapter 5). Using these guidelines, in addition to your common sense and perhaps some good colleagues, you can throw yourself into it. You will be able to design a fine process, the participants will gain greater understanding of the nature of dialogue, and you will reap valuable experiences.

You may also choose to go about it in a more thorough fashion and immerse yourself in the planning. This will be your first step towards developing more competent processes over time, as well as towards developing yourself – not least – in the workshop facilitator role.

(Read more about planning in this chapter on p. 67).

Regardless of the approach that you choose, there are a few aspects that you must take into account.



You have to select an issue or a burning question for the workshop. You need a script to set out a structure, and a programme listing the specific activities to be included. If you are working together with other facilitators on the workshop, this must also be incorporated into the planning design. You have to consider what form is most apt to underpin the content. And you should make up your mind as to how you will involve participants and manage the process. Lastly, there are some practical matters which will also have to be attended to.

Issue

The workshop will seem more compelling to participants if, in addition to dialogue, it also features a specific issue. This is phrased like a heading or a question, such as: how can dialogue be used in international project work?

The issue chosen should depend on what motivates and engages the participants (see also Chapter 2). They should be able to associate it with their own lives and identify with the dilemmas that it raises. By demarcating an issue rather precisely, it will be possible to go into greater depth. With a more general heading, say, 'Dialogue and Prejudice', you run the risk of participants perceiving it as neither here nor there, ending up in a discussion of general views instead of an insight-generating and personal dialogue.

It is fine if you choose an issue that makes you tick and the exercises that you feel most familiar with, as long as it all chimes with the higher purpose of the workshop and the needs of the participants. It is always advisable to ask yourself one more time if this is really the case. And to be ready to skip whatever might be your passion, if it is not.

“The icebreaker game called 1-2-3 requires a high level of energy, and some might find it to be a bit silly. In a workshop with about 20 young people, there were two men around 50 years of age, who were also to take part. As facilitators we never even imagined they were going to do the exercise. Still, we chose to involve them anyway. As it turned out, the two men really thought it was a fun exercise. They took part by laughing heartily with everyone else. Our worries were put to shame and showed us that we, as facilitators, also need to challenge our own prejudices.”

(The 1-2-3 game is icebreaker no. 2.1 in Chapter 5) Dialogue ambassador 2011

Script

A script or a roadmap is your most important aid, both in the planning and the implementation of the workshop. While writing the script, you think through the process, make a plan, and get to grips with the kind of activities you want to include. The script does not have to be a fully-fledged and detailed roadmap. It serves more to guide you through your planning, as well as to give you peace of mind and breadth of view when you stand on the floor leading the workshop. It does not matter much if it is inserted into a detailed table, is on a handwritten sheet of paper, or on shining gold cards with lists of cues.

While working on the script, you also assess how much time you expect to spend on each activity. In one's zeal to make the perfect event, there is a tendency to become overambitious and a bit of a 'time optimist'. You want to include many activities, and end up allocating too little time for each exercise. A stressed-out facilitator who is hell-bent on getting through an unrealistic programme helps nobody. In that case, it is better to include fewer elements. This will make it more possible to get immersed into the subject matter. There must also be plenty of time for participants to take to the stage. There is no learning without reflection, but reflection is also to enter into a process with participants, which is rather unpredictable. It takes time, hence you must also be ready to keep time. You are in charge of the process, not vice-versa.



In addition, you should decide what parts of your programme can be aborted, if the timetable proves overambitious.

(See suggestions for specific scripts in Annex 3).

“A programme is not sacred! To me good teamwork also means you have made agreements regarding your cooperation and how to communicate when you take to the floor. Is it all right, for instance, to spontaneously interrupt with a suggestion for something that departs from the plan? In this way the script-writing process within the team is as important as drawing up the actual programme.”

Janet from Jordan, dialogue ambassador, 2011

Cooperation between several facilitators

When you are several facilitators together, the planning becomes a joint undertaking. This may usefully revolve around the writing of the script in order to clarify the casting, i.e. assigning the roles. You agree who is responsible for what before and during the workshop.

Systematic preparation of your own process and cooperation is just as important as the script. This takes place by means of teambuilding, in which you forge relations within your own group.

This is when you openly and honestly compare and reconcile your different expectations of the cooperation. You do not have to agree on everything. However, the more you know about each other and each person's views of what you are about to do together, the better you will be able to handle the job. You talk to each other about your strengths and weaknesses to take this into account in the planning. If one person feels confident about a particular exercise, this might be where she should take over. Or perhaps someone wants to challenge herself by trying out a completely new activity.



It is also important to share out the roles, so one person takes on chief responsibility for the content, i.e. for what exactly is to take place. Another is responsible for the process, i.e. the dynamics between participants and what emerges along the way. This is important if and when you suddenly need to change your plan. It is awkward if one facilitator decides to skip an exercise due to time pressure, while another believes it would have been better to cut down on time for shared reflection. You also agree who will be in charge of each exercise, and how you intend to make the transitions smooth and meaningful, just as in a good narrative.

“In one exercise, which aimed to help participants understand the difference between dialogue and discussion, the point was not clear to them. Even if we had, together with them, drawn many fine conclusions, such as ‘dialogue is listening and asking questions’. In the end, one of us jumped in with the ‘talking stick’. She said to two of them: “try it with this!” They carried on their conversation using the talking stick, and it was quite clear that this was the moment of their aha! experience. It was my golden moment, not just because the participants understood a very important point in depth, but also because our team cooperation worked so well. We improvised on the spot and adapted to the situation.”

(The talking stick is from Exercise 3.8: Dialogue with talking stick).

Clara from Denmark, dialogue ambassador, 2011

Form

The form is the way in which things are done and is difficult to disentangle from the content. Form and content make up a whole, and ideally they go hand in hand. The form at a workshop concerns, for instance, how tables and chairs have been placed, and how you come across as a facilitator through your communication (everything you say and do). It includes, for example, how personal or formal you are, as well as your way of instructing, reflecting and holding dialogues. During planning, you make conscious choices so that the form underpins rather than contradicts the content.

For instance, placing chairs in a circle is standard in a dialogue workshop. But you should always consider if this is really the optimal solution for this particular group, day and programme. And even if you have a strong sense of humour, it may not be the personal characteristic most appropriate to exhibit with this particular group and subject matter. Everything you say and do is amplified and interpreted more keenly when you take to the floor and all eyes are on you as the leader of the workshop. This calls for additional thoughtfulness and for striking the right balance between being yourself as you are and being conscious of how your form comes across to others.

Process

In a workshop, participants are always involved in the process. However, how and to what extent must be looked into during the planning. Their involvement comes naturally in connection with the myriad dialogue activities throughout the workshop. In the opening stage, it obviously happens when participants have to agree on the rules. They can also have their say on what issues should be placed on the agenda, how many breaks should be held and when, and about their expectations as regards what they hope to gain from it. When you compare and reconcile expectations, you start from the contract, that is, what has been agreed beforehand, checking with participants if they are okay with this. If not, the programme is adjusted as much as possible to their needs. This approach is an advantage if you have decided to favour a high degree of participants' involvement in the process. It will make them jump right into having a dialogue with one another about something they can all relate to.

Towards the end of the workshop, participants can be involved more or less directly in the summing up and rounding off. And always in the evaluation. In the latter, you must keep in mind that there are two tracks: What have the participants learned that was new to them (their gains)? And how did they like taking part (feedback to you as a facilitator)?



Practicalities

When you are responsible for a workshop, there are also some practical matters to attend to. It is a shame if practical oversight lets down an otherwise successful planning. This is why you should not take anything for granted, but remember that those who have ordered the workshop do not necessarily know in detail what you need. Accordingly, you also compare and reconcile your expectations with those who feature as clients or event organisers and/or lend their premises for the event. Your own wishes must be manifested as clearly as possible, given that the quality of the event depends on properly taking care of practical matters as well. You may enter into clear agreements on who does what and when, etc. It can be useful to set this down in writing, perhaps just an email as an aid to memorise what has been agreed. The room, timetable, resources (fees, food, cleaning, materials for the workshop) and technological aids are among the conditions that should usually be clarified beforehand.

See the checklist in Annex 3, which serves to get on top of the practical aspects.

Thorough planning

Thorough planning is, metaphorically speaking, like flying in a helicopter to see everything from above, and then diving under the water to explore what lies beneath what you want. This is a so-called didactic approach to planning, and it sets the stage for systematic and thoughtful planning of a process that meets participants' needs and one's own purpose for the workshop.

Didactics

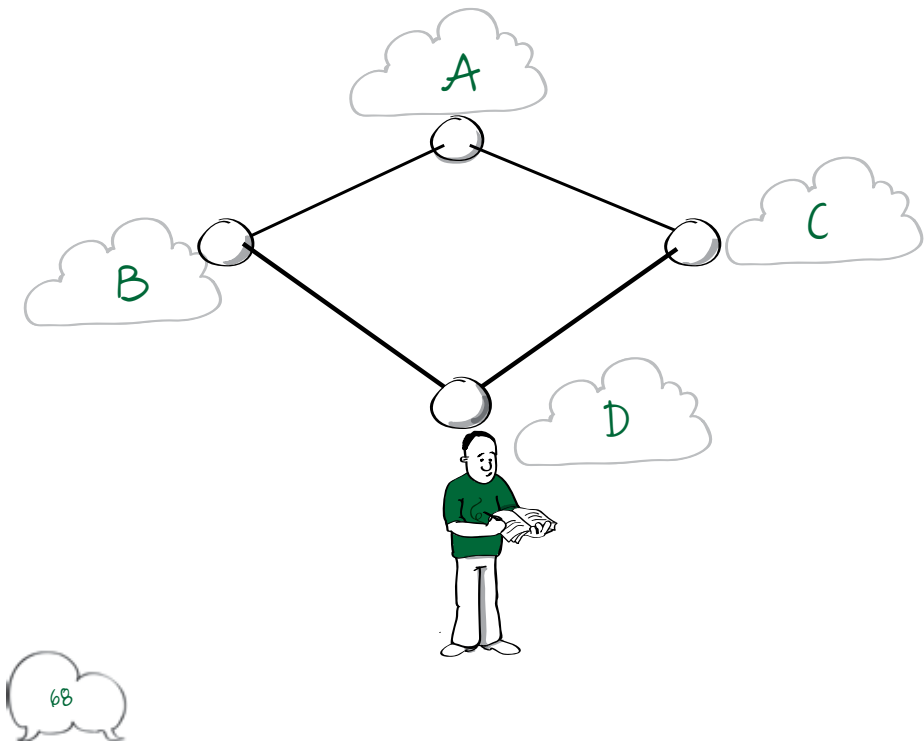
Didactics is the field of learning about how learning occurs. A didactic planning focuses on the link between means and ends. The end concerns where you want to go with your workshop and what you want to achieve. The means has to do with the methods to be employed to get there.

Didactic planning has four corners which need to be visited:

- A. Content: *What should the workshop be about, and how should the process be structured?*
- B. Participants: *What is the target group for the workshop?*
- C. Purpose: *Where do I want to go with the workshop?*
- D. Motivation: *Why do I want to do the workshop?*

It is less important which corner you go to first, as long as you get around all four of them in the course of the planning. You often start out with a vague idea of the issue, say, a workshop about human rights in an organisation of volunteers (content). Or you have been contacted by a group of people who want to ‘learn about dialogue’, say, an upper-secondary school class (purpose).

Throughout the planning, adjustment is constantly required, for example, because you realise that not enough time has been allocated to the activities, because you get new and better ideas for exercises, or



because you have talked with the target group and have become wiser as regards their needs. It is important to test your ground. And to see planning as a dynamic process in which you move from one corner to another in a reflective dialogue with yourself and/or the people you work with.

In each corner, there are some questions for reflection and clarification which you can use to guide your planning.

Corner A: Content

What should the workshop be about, and how should the process be structured?

The planning in this corner aims to make the workshop run smoothly from the outset, get the dialogue to unfold along the route, and ensure that the event is wrapped up so as to send participants away with a new understanding and deeper insight. The planning of specific content adheres to the elementary workshop structure:

- 1. Introduction:** opening and setting the framework
- 2. Action:** the activities (introductory talks, exercises, dialogue, reflection, conversations, etc.)
- 3. Finalisation:** Summing up, rounding off and evaluation

1. Introduction

The introduction must capture the participants' attention. It needs to give a clear idea of what the workshop is about, and it should motivate participants to get involved. The introduction comprises the opening and the setting of the framework for the workshop.

The opening serves to establish a common understanding within the group as regards the purpose, content and form of the workshop.

The setting of the framework aims to ensure an optimal process by fostering an atmosphere among participants that is conducive to dialogue and learning. This is achieved by bringing the principles of dialogue – trust, openness, honesty and equality – into play. Participants need to feel at ease, become keen and muster the courage to join in. You do this by agreeing on a set of rules for the workshop, and by using icebreakers, in which participants ‘discover’ one another and begin to enter into contact.

“There was one participant who, in the beginning, was quite straightforward about his not being able to trust us, since he had only known us for an hour. He compared this to the deeper kind of trust that one feels towards someone known for a long time. And he asked who one might prefer to confide a personal problem to. In the course of the workshop, he began to take part in an increasingly open and committed manner. And afterwards he invited us home for lunch. We saw this as a sign of how trust had been built between him and us in the course of the workshop. It was a golden moment!”

Janet from Jordan, dialogue ambassador, 2011

The opening and setting of the framework typically comprise:

- Entry – before you start. Readyng the room and yourself.
- Welcome, including presentation of workshop facilitators and participants
- Presentation of the programme, issue and contract
- Practical information
- Rules of the game
- Icebreakers



A less experienced workshop facilitator can be tempted to race through the introduction in order to get on with the dialogue. However, consider that the dialogue has actually already begun, especially if you involve participants in, for example, laying down the rules.

Read more about making a good introduction in Annex 3.

Questions for planning

- *How do I get off to a start so that everything I want becomes possible?*
- *How long should the opening last, and how should it be structured to make for dynamism and variation?*
- *What rules of the game and icebreakers are relevant?*
- *How much do I want to involve participants in determining the framework and the contract?*

Read more about the introduction and find suggestions for activities in the sections Framework for dialogue and Warm-up to dialogue, Chapter 5.

2. Action

The action is the workshop 'core' and what tends to take up the most time and attention. It comprises introductory talks, activities, exercises, sessions of shared reflection or of group work, discussion, questions and answers, dialogues and monologues. This is where the dialogue is deepened and unfolds in earnest. In general, you must constantly consider whether the choices that you make are optimal in view of the issue, purpose, target group and workshop type (see pp. 55).



Questions for planning

- Which activities, introductory talks, exercises, group work sessions, etc. should be included?
- What flow and linkage should there be between the various activities? What must be done specifically to carry out the various parts, say, to prepare introductory talks?
- How do I do it, and if there are several of us, who does what?

Read more and find suggestions for activities in the section *Challenge through dialogue* in Chapter 5.

3. Finalisation

The final stage aims to bring together any loose ends and properly say goodbye. This is important for the sake of participants as well as the workshop facilitator. The finalisation comprises three parts: *Summing up* of the content, *rounding off* of the process, and evaluation in terms of feedback from participants on the workshop.

The summing up focuses on revisiting key points, pearls of wisdom, and aha! experiences that came to light throughout the workshop. The participants are reminded of what they have learned, and they get an opportunity to reflect on their own learning. A workshop about dialogue often touches on profound values and unleashes powerful emotions. A proper rounding off helps the participants (and the facilitator) to leave the workshop in an emotionally appropriate state. It highlights the process and what it has been like to take part in it.

The evaluation moves along two tracks: What have the participants learned and what are their views of the actual workshop process? It enables the workshop facilitator to get – and the participants to give – some feedback on what everyone has just been through together. Be careful that you ask the right questions to get feedback on the aspects that you need.

The rounding off and evaluation typically comprise:

- Summary of what has happened
- Key points, aha! experiences and realisations
- Rounding off the process
- Evaluation of what participants have gained
- Feedback to the facilitator
- Goodbye and thank you

Questions for planning

- *How do I sum up what participants have learned?*
- *How do I round off the process so participants leave the workshop in a satisfactory manner?*
- *How will I evaluate?*
- *How will I examine what participants have gained as regards, for example:*
 - *dialogical tools?*
 - *understanding of and insights into dialogue?*
 - *understanding of and insights into the issue?*
 - *What do I need to know about participants' experience of the workshop?*
 - *On what would I like to get feedback?*
 - *How do I make sure I get it?*

Read more about the workshop finalisation and suggestions for activities in the section Framework for dialogue, Chapter 5

"As for the participants, never overestimate their knowledge and never underestimate their intellect."

Else Hammerich (born 1936), founder of the The Danish Centre for Conflict Resolution.



Corner B. Participants

What is the target group for the workshop?

It is the participants who have to learn more about dialogue, and hence they must take centre stage. In this corner, you look at the group's composition and the participants' motivation, needs and expectations. The more you know about them, the better you can tailor the workshop to them. With some groups, you will be able to do everything you can dream of, with others just a small part of it.

The participants' motivation to attend the workshop and their needs for learning and development are some of the factors influencing their expectations of the gains.

Something that is relatively easy and highly useful to find out is how participants are distributed by category, such as gender, age, education, ethnicity, language, etc. Needs and interests are not the same in a group of 22-30-year-old Danes of varied ethnic backgrounds working in a voluntary organisation as they are in an upper-secondary school class of 17-18-year-olds, who know each other well and have virtually the same cultural background. They all want to work with dialogue, but the workshop must be designed differently in each case in order to engage them.

It is always ideal to talk with one or several participants in connection with the planning to get to know more about who they are and what they would like to get out of the workshop.

Questions for planning

- *How are participants distributed by gender, age, ethnicity, education, job, interest, etc.?*
- *How much do they already know about dialogue?*
- *What is the context of their participation (e.g. a school or some other educational establishment, church, workplace, or organisation of volunteers)?*



- *Is it a homogenous group or an assortment from quite different backgrounds?*
- *Do they already know each other? If so, what are their internal relations like?*
- *Do they feel at ease with one another or are there certain tensions?*
- *Have they come of their own accord, hence being more motivated? Or are they attending as part of obligatory teaching (in which case their motivation is likely to vary)?*

"It's important to know something about participants beforehand, so you can plan your workshop and prepare the room you are about to enter. But it's just as important to be open in the situation, so you can change your preconceived opinions about who they are!"

Tobias from Denmark, dialogue ambassador, 2011

Corner C. Purpose

Where do I want to go with the workshop?

The purpose is formulated based on participants' needs, according to what you believe that they need. It can also be arrived at depending on what you want participants to gain from it. The purpose is your own intention with the process; what you hope is going to happen, though it will never be possible for you to guarantee it.

Some examples of what the purpose might be:

- To disseminate knowledge about dialogue
- To give participants a better understanding of dialogue
- To break down participants' stereotypes
- To give participants greater understanding of cultural differences
- To let participants talk, in a dialogical manner, about an issue or a particular case at hand, which interests them.

Your personal motivation might easily be confused with the actual purpose. It is fine if they correspond, but they are not necessarily identical.

Questions for planning

- *What do the **participants** need to learn about dialogue?*
- *What would I like the participants to learn about dialogue?*
- *Are the answers to the two above **in agreement**? And is it possible to meet those wishes given the participants and circumstances (time, resources, etc.) available?*
- *Does my own personal motivation mean that I am blind to some other purpose that is more relevant?*

Corner D. Motivation

Why do I want to do the workshop?

The motivation for what we do springs from our personal value system. It differs in each one of us how it makes sense, at a deeper level, to work with dialogue. That is, why you do it, and how what you do makes sense to you. The more you are clear about your motivation, the easier it is to get it to make sense for others too. This is why your underlying motivation is important to look at when planning a workshop.

Some examples of what your personal motivation might be:

- To disseminate knowledge about dialogue
- To be in the limelight
- To learn to become a good facilitator
- To gain experience of value to your career
- To change society
- To create a better world
- To earn money



Our motivation can be linked to ideals, but can also be mixed together with entirely personal needs for, say, development or recognition. There is nothing wrong with that. But a dialogue workshop aims to create understanding and deeper insight among participants. Accordingly, it is better if a part of your motivation springs from something that also makes sense to them.

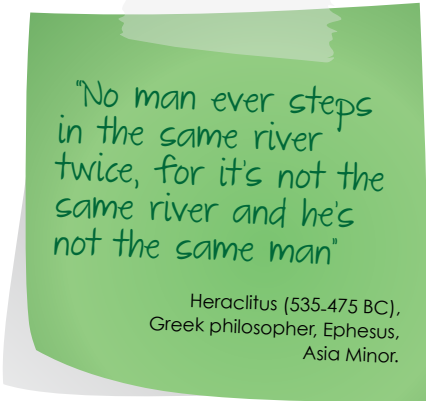
In this corner you work on being aware of these aspects so that you can stay on track during the planning and come across as authentic, engaging and present in mind – and hence credible – in your role as a facilitator.

Questions for planning

- *Why do I want to work with dialogue?*
- *What are my visions or dreams for this workshop?*
- *How does this make sense to me?*
- *How does this make sense to the participants?*

The workshop's three dimensions: content, form and process

How come that the same workshop plan – with exactly the same exercises, timeframe and workshop facilitators – results in completely different processes? Yes, even with the same participants?



"No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man"

Heraclitus (535-475 BC),
Greek philosopher, Ephesus,
Asia Minor.

On the face of it, it is a bit of a mystery.

But it stems from the three dimensions – content, form and process – all contributing to generating meaning. It is the case of all types of communication that meaning is created at a multiplicity of levels at the same time.

What happens at a workshop follows a plan, or a script. But the plan per se is not the workshop. The workshop is born in the meeting between people present in the here and now. You and the participants unleash certain dynamics when you communicate, which then becomes the workshop.

When planning a dialogue workshop, it is important to be able to home in on the various dimensions and how they interact. Because the more they play in concert, they better the experiences and gains for the participants. And the more likely you are to achieve what you want.

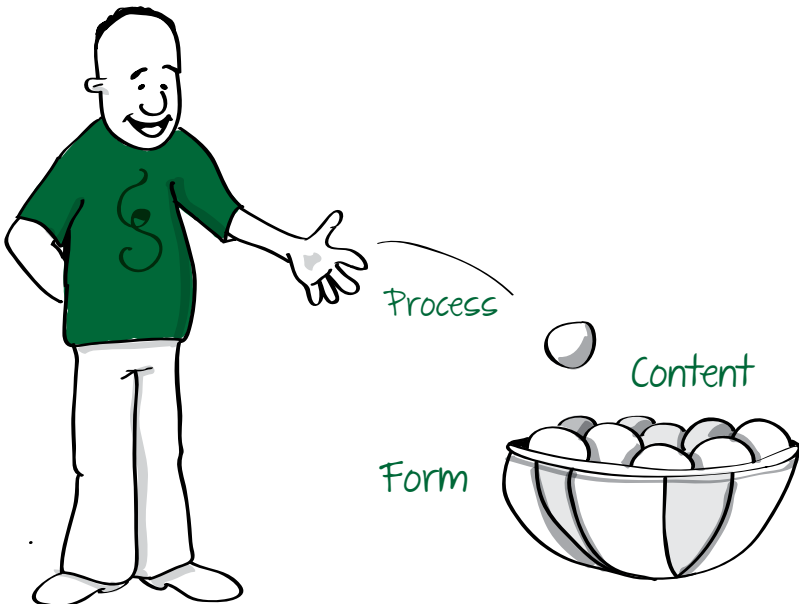
Workshop dimensions

Content = what is inside => **WHAT?**

What are we going to do? Where are we heading? What is it about? And what will happen?

Form = what is outside => **HOW?**

How do we communicate? What do we look like? How do we act? And how should it happen?



Process = a movement or change => **HOW** do we move together?

How does it feel while it goes on? How do we react to and interpret what happens? What dynamics are present?

When we communicate we tend to focus first and foremost on the content, because it is perceived initially as the most obvious and tangible dimension. *What is the issue? And what are we going to do?*

The *form* is the wrapping, or the way in which things are done. The form should underpin and fit the content. If it fails to do so, it distorts the message. And this is when we truly notice it, for example, if a workshop leader talks about openness, but is herself closed in her communication.

The *process* is the trajectory towards the destination. It is the sum of communication constantly going on between the participants while they carry out activities. It is their interpretations and reactions, as well as the dynamics arising within the group. Everything contributes to the process. It also encompasses the movement taking place in terms of learning and development among participants (and the workshop leader) through their dialogue with one another.

The process is implicit and mostly invisible. Until we relate to it. A good process in a workshop is like a gentle hand that guides us through the planned content and imbues us with a sense of positive energy and flow. Conversely, a bad process will be picked up as a poor atmosphere, irritation or lack of satisfaction with the communication.

We can shed light on the process and make it noticeable by starting to talk about it, say, by asking: *What does it feel like? How do you feel about the fact that...? How did you perceive what happened here when...?*

In a workshop about dialogue, everything concerns dialogue, because dialogue is a process in itself. You talk about dialogue, conduct a dialogue, and learn through dialogue. Content, form and process

merge into one another. This is why a dialogue workshop is a great occasion to highlight the process, that is, what takes place in the room between the participants along the way.

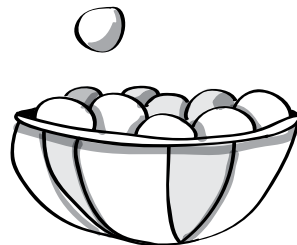
“In three different workshops I talked about dialogue as a concept. It went better and better each time, and I know exactly why. Because each time I involved the participants more and more, and I let them come up with their own examples. I let them have more time and space, and I referred back to something they’d said before. The participants learned more, because they saw that we were moving and learning together.”

Zainab from Denmark, dialogue ambassador, 2011

Choice of focus

Most people will find it more demanding, at first, to lead a workshop making conscious use of the process. If you are less experienced, you probably have enough on your plate just planning and implementing the content: What are we going to do together and how do we get to where we want? It is possible to focus mainly on the content and still carry out brilliant dialogue workshops. However, if you are no longer a novice (or want to challenge yourself more), you can choose to work more profoundly on the process with the participants. They will gain greater understanding and deeper insight into what dialogue is in practice, as they relate actively to what goes on between them in the here and now.

You can read more about how to handle content and process while leading a workshop in the next chapter.



Good planning advice

1. The participants are the stars of your workshop. Use them as your starting point and tailor your workshop to them
2. Make conscious choices throughout your planning
3. Think about the room, and arrange it so it fits your workshop
4. Prepare yourself mentally
5. Keep a Plan B in reserve, and be ready to abort all plans if this proves to be necessary once you stand face to face with participants



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LEADING A WORKSHOP

A workshop leader has a lot to keep track of. The workshop is about dialogue. But is it indeed dialogue that is taking place? You may follow the script to the letter, but do the participants become wiser about dialogue along the way?

A carefully drawn-up plan helps you arrive at the finishing line. But it is also your job to guide everything that goes on between the participants so as to make the process underpin reaching the goal.

This chapter equips you to take on the role of the facilitator: the challenge of standing in the middle of the floor in a room full of participants with high expectations, poised to enter into a dialogue on burning issues.

What is a facilitator?

The word facilitator is derived from Latin *facilis*, which means ‘easy’. What the facilitator must ease is the group’s path to the agreed destination.

As described in Chapter 3, the workshop is made up of three dimensions: content, form and process. If participants are not merely to hear about dialogue, but are also to learn *through* dialogue by experiencing it in practice, you – as responsible for the workshop – must be on top of all three, both in the planning and while standing on the floor as the workshop is underway.

The participants’ immediate focus is mostly on the content and goal. As a facilitator, you set your sights on content, form *as well as* process, but assume particular responsibility for the process. Because in your role as a workshop organiser and leader, you have an entirely different perspective on what goes on in the room and where you are going.

Difference between a leader and a facilitator

Both leaders and facilitators are tasked with taking a group to a planned destination.

A leader focuses mostly on the goal, content and actual task at hand. And on leading and coordinating the group's work in order to achieve a particular result. In a workshop, this form of leadership is akin to a traditional teacher's role.

A facilitator focuses on both the content and the process. However, she is particularly preoccupied with the process, that is, what participants feel about the task and each other, what takes place between them, and how this affects the content/task. Her job is to guide the process so that it optimally underpins the content and meets the goal. Thus, she is taking on conscious responsibility for the process and the dynamics constantly being played out within the group.

A facilitator must, so to speak, smooth the path to the goal. It is reminiscent of the sport curling, in which a team has to make a large flat granite stone slide over a sheet of ice to reach a target at the opposite end. One person 'delivers' the stone, and the others sweep in front of it to influence its trajectory. In a workshop, the participants are the curling stone. The facilitator is the sweeper who works hard to bring the stone to the target area. He can brake, accelerate and steer the direction of the stone. If he forgets to sweep because his gaze is fixed on the target area, the curling stone is brought to a standstill. The same applies to the workshop participants' 'movement' (process) towards greater understanding of dialogue.

“You cannot reflect on participants’ behalf, you have to do it together with them. It’s both them and us who create the scope for reflection. So in contrast to a teacher, who tries to teach reflection, we have to accompany them. In this way, the dialogical approach serves to identify what really stirs within the participants, so the whole session becomes more engaging and enriching, both for them and for us.”

Karin from Denmark, dialogue ambassador, 2011

Leader, facilitator or both?

Dialogue is more about how to arrive at a destination than about reaching any particular destination. *That is, dialogue is in itself a process.* Accordingly, in a workshop about dialogue, it is not just the content, but also the form and the process that are about dialogue. The goal is to create understanding and insight *about* dialogue or a particular issue. The way this is done is through dialogue.

For this reason, it makes perfect sense for the leader of a dialogue workshop to pay constant attention to the process. And to the fact that what goes on between participants can help underpin the content. In this way, the leader of a dialogue workshop is **always** a facilitator.

However, even for an experienced workshop leader, it is a challenge to focus both on content and process. You have to keep track of participants, timetable, introductory talks and various exercises (content). And you need to be dialogical in your communication (form). You also have to handle everything that goes on between participants, and if there are several of you leading the workshop, you must make sure the cooperation is working (process).

Accordingly, how much you can and want to focus on the process depends on your degree of experience, the issue at hand and what has been agreed with participants. Even if you do it only to a lesser extent, you can still carry out meaningful and successful dialogue workshops.



The more experience you get, the clearer it becomes that it is easier to reach your goals when the facilitator's sights are also set on the process. And when she uses what takes place between participants to generate learning.

In the following, the job of leading a dialogue workshop is described as facilitation, since this is always the most natural role to assume in a dialogue workshop.

“My golden moment was when I realised what a great effect it has when we stay within our roles as facilitators, guiding the process without trying to influence participants, and without telling them what is right and what is wrong. Because when it comes to dialogue, there is a vast difference between presenting your own views and letting participants discover both their own views and the scope for changing them.”

Haifaa from Denmark, dialogue ambassador, 2011



What is a good facilitator?

A good facilitator is first and foremost herself: authentic and with a 100% engaging presence. She is dialogical in her form, curious and exploring, open, connection-seeking and good at listening to participants. She uses dialogical tools, such as posing exploratory questions, listening and mirroring, plus other qualities set out in greater detail below.

Adherence to the four principles of dialogue – trust, openness, honesty and equality – is a fundamental skill of a dialogue facilitator, along with flexibility and the ability to reflect and self-reflect. These principles make up the foundation on which she stands. They shape the frame of mind with which she meets the participants, and the hands-on tools which she uses in the communication with participants.

The fact that she abides by the principles she is engaged in passing on makes her more credible and boosts the impact of her role as a facilitator. Her own manner of living up to the principles in practice by communicating with trust, openness, honesty and equality-



mindedness will rub off on participants, who are thus encouraged to communicate likewise. It also signals important dialogical skills. By watching the facilitator in action, participants see the dialogue unfold in practice.

The facilitator's fundamental skills

Trust

A credible facilitator must inspire trust among participants in her ability to guide the process safely, even if their views will be challenged. She expresses trust in participants through open and honest communication, for example, about what is going to happen and why, and by involving them along the way, say, in setting the framework of the workshop. In this manner, she signals: *I trust that you can help take responsibility for what is going to happen here today.* If you are several facilitators, trustful relations between you are a good starting point for working together on the floor in a dialogical process with others. You show trust by having faith in the agreements made beforehand about division of roles, and by raising any internal disagreements in the course of the preparations and along the way.

Openness

A facilitator fosters openness by being open, for instance, by presenting her own examples, or by sharing out her own experiences of dilemmas and challenges regarding dialogue. She might tell a personal story from her own life, thus coming across as a regular human being with whom others can identify. The same applies between the participants when they openly share their personal experiences with each other. Openness enables us to discover the person behind the standpoints. The facilitator is open towards whatever the participants come up with, even when their outlook and philosophy of life differ from hers. She listens actively to them, and acknowledges their viewpoints.

(See note 1; Annex 4: Notes, references and suggestions for further reading).

Honesty

Honesty is expressed when you invest yourself in the conversation in a genuine fashion, say, by means of a personal story or your own example. Honesty is also about standing by who you are, for better or worse. For instance, if the facilitator realises that she does not have a ready-made answer, she reflects openly in an honest search with the participants. She acknowledges her own possible insecurity and uses it in the process.

Equality

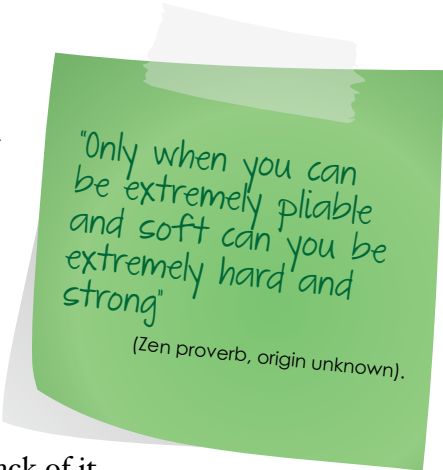
In a dialogue everyone has something to say. Regardless of status, gender, ethnicity, age or whether they belong to the group in power. The parties in a dialogue take part on an equal footing, and respect is an important value in this regard. As a facilitator, you strive to enshrine equality as part of the group dynamics by contributing your own views and experiences, or by taking part in an exercise so as to join in the dialogue on equal terms.

You must be careful to notice that it can be a tall order both to take part and be responsible for the process. It is often more appropriate to remain in the role as the one leading the process. Instead you can uphold the principles of equality through your attitude and a respectful, appreciative form of communication, stressing that we are all different and must continue to be so. You can shine a positive light on the differences existing among participants, talk about them as an advantage, and point out the opportunities that they offer.

If there are several of you as facilitators, the power of the example serves to show that cooperation and friendship despite differences are not just lofty ideals. You can underscore how working together is possible and highly fruitful despite contrasting views as well as different cultural, political or religious backgrounds.

Flexibility

As a facilitator, you might have a well-prepared script, but must nevertheless always be prepared to deviate from it. Because once you stand there and have to start the workshop, when it comes to the reaction of participants, anything can happen, ranging from frustration, curiosity, through extreme views and resistance to enthusiasm or the lack of it.



"Only when you can be extremely pliable and soft can you be extremely hard and strong"

(Zen proverb, origin unknown).

This is when you need to stand firm and say to yourself, firstly: *It is what it is*. And secondly, you assume the position of the curious explorer or investigating detective. Put on the pith helmet or the Sherlock Holmes cap, and examine what goes on in the room and among the participants. Ask them! What is going on among the participants behind what presents itself to you? What is behind what they say and do, their body language and statements? You make your own interpretations based on your own preconception, but it might mean something completely different from what you think.

Flexibility also means that, despite being ready to do something else, you continue to focus on the destination, with the certainty that there are many different ways to get there, and that the journey is just as important as the destination.

How do you become a good facilitator?

The facilitator's skills might seem overwhelming when listed, as here, as demands of the role. Keep in mind that this is the ideal picture of the good dialogue facilitator. It is what you can train for and strive to develop in the role, knowing full well that it takes many years. Nobody can do everything from the outset, but everybody can make headway by trial and error.

The first step is to begin to pursue attainment of the various skills. Practice makes perfect. What matters is to try it out for yourself by taking the plunge and refining your sense of reflection and self-reflection.

"It's so important to reflect with the group in the course of the workshop, asking what they see and think... Because what you believe they think is not always what they really think!"

Zainab from Denmark, dialogue ambassador, 2011

Reflection and self-reflection

Entering into a dialogue with others means that your own assumptions are challenged and tested. This also happens in the facilitator role. Being able to reflect with the participants is decisive for their learning process. Being able to reflect on and with yourself develops your awareness of what the facilitator role implies and makes you better at coping with it.

Self-reflection is like a constant introspective dialogue. While planning, you reflect on how you will go about your role as a facilitator. While performing the role, you reflect on whether you are on the right path in the process, what the next step is, and if the timetable will hold. You also consider if your own bias and fundamental assumptions might not be getting the better of you. Reflection helps clarify the choices along the way so that you make them in a conscious manner.

If there are two or more of you working together, it is important to be in close touch with one another and to have a mutual sense of where the others are in the process. Therefore, you continuously reflect with one another.

It is a positive side-effect of working as a facilitator that you develop this ability to constantly reflect on yourself and your communication.

It sharpens your awareness of the fact that views and values can be in flux within the individual. Accordingly, you also become more aware of your own views and values, thus cultivating the nature of dialogue within yourself.

In order to substantiate this personal development process, it is useful to have a helper in terms of a more trained facilitator with whom to share experiences and reflect in concert. This is particularly necessary if you have limited experience.

The evaluation after each workshop is another tool to develop in the facilitator role. The risk when asking participants directly what they think is to get a disapproving answer. Not everybody can give constructive criticism, and harsh words can be hard to take. Nevertheless, in the situation you should try to listen without putting up defences. Yet another part of the art of dialogue is to receive an evaluation. And there is almost always something that is useful in there. Search for the message hidden below the – quite possibly – cutting statements. Take in what you can, and leave the rest. If something clings to you like a hurt or unpleasant feeling, then reflect on it with a colleague, supervisor or mentor. You are in a learning process, and remember that your own learning also arises from disruptions!

See Chapter 3 about disruptions that foster development and learning.

Take care of yourself

In the role as a facilitator, you must be careful how and how much you put yourself on the line. When you do, it has to be a conscious choice. With the right timing, personal and honest inputs can benefit the process. However, recounting something personal can also suddenly feel more vulnerable than what you had in mind. And this is not necessarily beneficial for the process or for yourself.

It is a fine line between being personal and being private. Where to draw it is down to your own intuition, both as regards yourself and the group of participants at hand. Being personal is to start from your own



experience to illustrate a point. Being private is to surrender yourself in a manner that draws attention to yourself as a person.

One guiding principle is that it must make sense for the participants when the facilitator talks about herself, for example, because the contact becomes more engaging or because a personal example makes it easier to explain something difficult.

The most important thing is that the facilitator never tries to hog the limelight, but to substantiate a process in which the participants' various views are brought into play so as to create new common ground among them.

How do you facilitate?

Facilitation is like standing at an observation post, seeing everything from the outside and continuously dialoguing with yourself about what is going on in the room. You need to look out both for how to achieve the goal with the planned activities and for what goes on between the participants. You home in on the process by remaining curious as to what happens in the room. And by questioning your own assumptions and interpretations of what takes place. This is called a *meta-position* (meta = after, beyond). When you communicate from this position, you meta-communicate, meaning you 'communicate about communication'.

In the professional jargon it is referred to as 'going meta'. This is an important tool for a facilitator.

The facilitator takes up the meta-position by keeping two overall questions at the back of her mind:

1. *How do I get through my programme in the best manner possible to reach the goal in terms of participants' gains?*
2. *How do I, as a facilitator, optimally underpin what arises between the participants and ensure that the dialogue unfolds?*

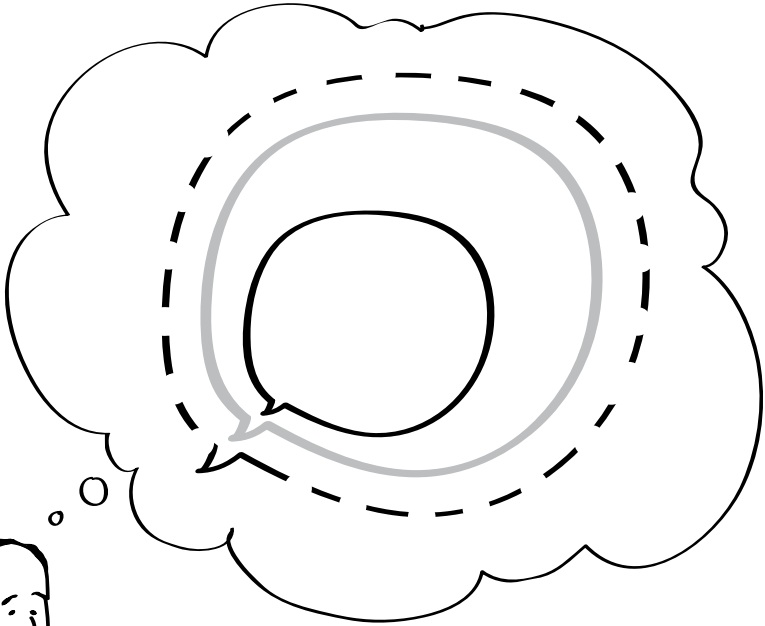


This gives rise to many sub-questions which guide the facilitator when she has to meta-communicate (and reflect consciously upon) what goes on, for example:

- *What is going on in here right now?*
- *How is the atmosphere, and what is it like to be in this room?*
- *Are we getting from the participants what we want (for instance, that they enter into a dialogue and reflect on their own prejudices)?*
- *Where are we heading in the process?*
- *Are we abiding by the rules and the agreed contract?*
- *How come some contribute more than others?*

The answers will allow her to form an impression of where the participants and workshop are heading, thus pointing the direction from there. You can meta-communicate with yourself through an inner dialogue. Or you can talk with your colleagues, either during a break or openly in front of the participants. If you do the latter, you invite participants to discover the process, since they get to see what goes on from the same meta-position as the facilitator. It also encourages them to take a look at the process by means of their own reflections.

Another option is to involve participants directly by asking them some of the above questions. This also calls on them to take their share of responsibility for the direction that the process is going to take. At the same time, it highlights an important point of dialogue, namely that it is not just about the content, but also about the process.



Meta - - - - -
Process _____
Content _____

It is often appropriate to clearly manifest that you are 'going meta', that you want to see what goes on in the room from another position and talk about it in a different manner.

This can be done, for instance, by taking a timeout. Just as in the world of sports, a timeout is used for participants – and facilitator – to get in touch with one another and clear up whether they are heading in the right direction, if everyone is okay with what is happening in the room, or if the rules of the game need to be adjusted.



Example of timeout

You are consolidating a session by drawing the difference between dialogue and discussion on the flipchart. You try to do this through inputs from participants, but they are not really forthcoming. Some talk to one another, others are text messaging. The atmosphere is unfocused. Instead of trying to move forward with your drawing, you say: *“hang on, let’s stop for a moment.”*

You now assume the meta-position and reflect on what is going on. If you do not want to involve participants in the reflection, you could say to them: *“we’re just taking five minutes’ break.”* You spend the time finding out how to get back on track. Should you share your observations with them and inquire into why they lack concentration? Or should you just carry out an energising exercise because you think they are tired? If there are several of you as facilitators, you reflect together on what to do.

In an open reflection with participants, in which you meta-communicate with them, you could say, for example: *“I see that you’re text messaging and talking to one another. It seems like you find it hard to focus. I’m curious. Why’s that so?”*

Depending on their answer (*we need a break, there’s something we don’t get, we prefer to talk about something else, etc.*), you decide on your next move. What matters is that you have kept up the contact and dialogue with the participants, and with yourself about what is going on in the moment. You may have asked exploratory question and involved them in the process. Thus, your dialogue remains in full swing.

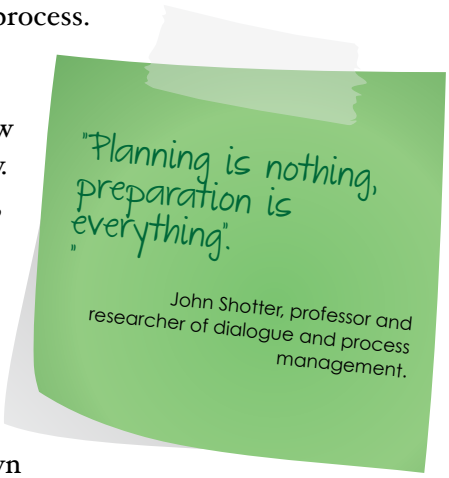
When there are several of you facilitating together, you form a team, both during planning and when standing on the floor. You must constantly watch out for one another and not be afraid to call for a timeout as soon as the need arises, and it always does if the workshop is running off the track. During the timeout, you go through your thoughts and feelings to clear up doubts. Talk in an exploratory and open-ended tone about how to move on. Think about the group of participants when you reason about the choices to be made: *what will they gain the most from? And how do we do it while remaining faithful to the agreed purpose of the workshop?*

Depending on the feedback, you decide whether to stay the course or adjust the direction. Sometimes you need to check with participants if it is all right to continue along a new path. Sometimes you must rely on your experience and trust your own judgment to chart the course that you consider best for the group.

It can take courage for the facilitator to call a timeout, since it can be perceived as a failure to be in control. In fact, the opposite is the case. A timeout means that you are taking on the facilitator role. And you make it clear who is responsible for the process.

The facilitator's preparation

Of course, a facilitator must both draw up her programme and prepare mentally. However, regardless of how well you plan, you never know what will happen. This makes it more important to be mentally prepared than to have every detail hammered out in your script. Preparation concerns how you get mentally ready to guide others through a dialogical process and to enter into the unknown without losing your foothold, so that you remain in touch with yourself and the participants in a dialogical manner.



"Planning is nothing,
preparation is
everything."

John Shoter, professor and
researcher of dialogue and process
management.

The first step is to acknowledge that you can only prepare to a certain point. A part of the outcome and effect of the dialogical process hinges on the context, the participants and many other factors that can be hard to predict, namely everything that arises in the here and now, which ultimately the facilitator cannot be in complete command of. There is always a degree of unpredictability for a facilitator when she embarks on a workshop. And that is how it must be.

The second step is to have thought through as many scenarios as possible, so that you can pack your dialogical toolbox to contain precisely what you need in your facilitator role.

You can prepare by asking the following questions, ideally with a colleague, supervisor or mentor:

What is the best and what is the worst that can happen on the way?

Which methods and tools can be useful in which situations?

The answers may serve as bearings to orientate yourself when you are right in the middle of it, regardless of whether it is plain sailing in sunshine or a rough passage in stormy seas.

The facilitator's toolbox

The facilitator works first and foremost with the tools of dialogical communication: engaging contact, active listening, mirroring and exploratory questioning (see Chapter 2). In addition, the facilitator role calls for tools such as summing up, challenging and embracing.

A facilitator:

Listens actively

With her body language, voice and attitude, she shows that she is interested. She asks exploratory questions, which respectfully examine and challenge the views at play in the room. She phrases her questions with interrogatives (*who, what, where, how*) and in an open-ended fashion: *Try to say more about.... Can you elaborate on that?*

Sums up

She communicates clearly how far the group has come in the process in view of what was agreed. She makes sure that everyone is okay with what is going on and that the plan is being followed, but remains open to other ways of meeting the goal. The summing up starts from what participants have said. She is keener on condensing and perhaps thematising than on interpreting or concluding. She continuously involves the participants to make sure that what she sums up has been correctly understood. And she is particularly considerate to those who hold back from speaking, for instance, by asking directly what they think.

Challenges and embraces

In some groups with many quiet people or an overwhelming majority of ‘politically correct’ participants, it can be necessary – in order to get the dialogue going – to challenge them to bring stronger viewpoints into play. The facilitator does this by polarising opinions and augmenting disagreement and divergence, for example, by rephrasing a cautious statement into a more daring one. Cautious statement: *“In a way I think it’s, like, sometimes it can be a little hard to...”* is augmented into: *“So you find it really hard to...?”*

In other groups, the opposite is needed. When strong opinions are already in play, the facilitator sets out to embrace the views by pointing out where the various parties have something in common. This could be by highlighting a value for both of them: *“So you have different religions, but you both have strong faiths and believe it’s an important value to be allowed to practise your religion in peace, right?”*

When the dialogue is truly unfolding, when cooperation with the other facilitators is running smoothly, and when fascinating insights arise in the here and now, it is bliss to be facilitator. However, sometimes you find yourself on thin ice.

The facilitator's challenges - resistance

Resistance refers to situations that grab you by the scruff of your neck, where you feel inhibited, hurt by something too close to the bone, or afraid, say, where you suddenly find yourself trying to convince a participant that you are right and he is wrong. Or where you let out a sarcastic or disapproving remark, that is, where you communicate totally *undialogically*.

What is resistance?

Resistance is a natural response when our views and values are challenged. Since dialogue tends to bring up precisely such situations, resistance in dialogue is par for the course. Hence it always looms more or less large in a dialogue workshop.

Resistance can take many shapes and comes in many degrees. It can be a participant who text messages repeatedly throughout the workshop, somebody who says: *"Do you even know what you're talking about?"* or another who blurts out: *"I've had it with this!"*

It can also be the sheer distress of meeting people with views and values that are so fundamentally opposed to your own.

The higher the intensity of resistance and emotions, the more difficult it appears to handle it. Therefore, it is understandable if you want to avoid such situations, and perhaps try to overlook or put a stop to such unpleasant 'disruptions'. You might enter into a discussion in which the concern becomes to convince and win the argument. In other words, you stray from the path of dialogue.

There is nothing wrong with feeling discomfited as a facilitator. Everyone who has facilitated a workshop has tried to feel on shaky ground. It is all right to show that you have doubts, that you have views and strong values. The challenge is to strike the right balance between a professional facilitator role and daring to be who you are. As a facilitator, you are the guide of everything that happens in the

room. The participants expect you to remain within that role. This is why it is better not to take what happens personally, but to see it as part of the process and a chance to get deeper into the dialogue.

“One participant continued to be very negative about our entire workshop. We openly appreciated his honesty and also referred to the dialogical principle of honesty. We listened to his viewpoints and openly shared our own opinions on the controversial issue on the agenda. It was difficult, because I strongly disagreed with him. After the session, I received a friendship request from him on Facebook, and he wrote: Thanks for listening to our ideas, now I know what dialogue means. We have to listen to one another.”

Linad from Jordan, dialogue ambassador, 2011

The awkward cousin

The resistance can be compared to that ‘awkward cousin’ that nobody wants to sit next to at the family get-together. He asks annoying questions and breaks the rules of good behaviour. You feel more like avoiding him or snapping at him. An awkward cousin is often provocative, and appears to want to ruin everything you have planned.

Instead, you can choose to see the awkward cousin as a welcome disruption. That makes it easier to cope with him. The cousin in a workshop can be an important contributor to the process, who might even help participants penetrate deeper into the potential of dialogue. By entering into the resistance to examine what lies *behind* it, you can bring forward the process *through* the resistance.

The resistance may contain valuable insight and wisdom capable of enhancing mutual understanding, which is the whole point of dialogue. Whether you take advantage of this depends largely on the space given to that resistance in the process. And on how it is handled by the facilitator.

“I once had a participant who completely changed his way of communicating in the course of the three hours that the workshop lasted. In the beginning, he constantly interrupted us and really wanted to hear his own voice. But after he had tried the dialogue with the talking stick, he changed completely. It was my golden moment to see such a change in such a short time.”

Patricia from Egypt, dialogue ambassador 2011

The first step in grappling with the resistance to prevent it from derailing the process is to acknowledge that it exists. The next is to work with your own attitude to the resistance, becoming more aware of where it is that you are being challenged.

You can start by reflecting on these assertions:

- Resistance is natural for us when our worldview and identity are challenged.
- Resistance intensifies when others try to persuade us.
- Resistance is an emotion and cannot be argued away.
- Resistance lessens when we feel heard, seen and understood.
- You can meet the resistance halfway by examining what lies behind it, while still maintaining your own position.
- Resistance begets resistance.

The subsequent step is to look into the dynamics of resistance and the typical pattern of reaction when we run into it.

Three ways of facing resistance

Simply put, there are three ways of facing resistance:

- You pay back, for instance by arguing in order to persuade, criticise or be sarcastic.
- You withdraw, for instance by using irony or humour, or by ignoring what is said.



These two reactions tend to be somewhat instinctive, but neither of them advance the dialogue or dissipate the resistance. Rather the reverse is the case.

There is a third way, in which you examine what is going on both within yourself through self-reflection and within the other (who is resisting). You use the dialogical tools, such as creating or keeping up the engaging contact, listening and asking exploratory questions. You concentrate on staying in your dialogical position. It sounds simple, but it is much more challenging when you are facing the resistance.

(See note 2; Annex 4: Notes, references and suggestions for further reading).

Tools to face resistance

The high road towards facing resistance is to turn the attention to the underlying values and needs hidden beneath the hard-edged standpoints and views. You work actively with the opinions represented by the awkward cousin, and you ask curious questions about what lies behind. You allow room for the feelings at stake, for example by mirroring what is said. *“You say the nature of dialogue is a load of hippie claptrap. (Sounds like this is very important to you.) it makes me curious to know more. Can you say some more about...?”*

In this manner, you recognise the cousin’s right to his hard-edged viewpoints. You create engaging contact by giving the cousin additional attention, for instance by talking to him during a break about something completely different. Once you have got through to the awkward cousin and established contact, you can continue the dialogue along the planned route, often with fresh insight, as well as greater understanding and quality in the process, that is, in the contact with participants and not least with that awkward cousin!

Your own sore spots

In some situations, the resistance is targeted at you as a facilitator, and it is easy to take it personally. Or there might be an issue on the agenda, of which you have profound knowledge and to which you are highly committed, or where you have a personal experience that is evoked by the subject matter. This can make it truly challenging to remain in the facilitator role, keeping up the exploratory and curious attitude, including towards yourself and your own views.

Awareness of the kind of situations in which you are inclined to ‘pay back’ or to ‘withdraw’ is one of the deepest insights about yourself as a facilitator. This makes it a good idea to carry out some prior introspection to locate where your own sore spots or hotspots are.

To this effect, you can use self-reflection by asking yourself: *Why does this hit a nerve? What is this really about?*

If you are aware of what makes you react in a certain way in particular situations, it can point you in the direction of your own position, that is, the views and values that you carry as your baggage. Such insight makes you better at considering and finding – possibly through reflection and training with others – alternative and more exploratory ways of facing the resistance.

You can choose to take advantage of the fact that you felt wounded to move the process forward. You do this by expressing it openly and sharing your observations about what happened. You keep the focus on being honest about having been wounded, at the same time as you remain in the role of the person responsible for the participants’ process. You pass the ball back to the participants and turn what happened into something universal to get the dialogue back on track: *“I realise I was a bit provoked by what you talked about/you said/the discussion that was started. It touches some profound values in me. How about you? What was your reaction? Which values are at stake?”*

It is a tough balancing act to stay in the role when you have just been hit. Nevertheless, it is a great opportunity for learning about yourself, and for participants to learn about the nature of dialogue.

To enter into the resistance and reflect on it with yourself and the participants is the responsible way of assuming your role as a facilitator. It generates highly useful knowledge about yourself for the next time you find yourself in a similar situation. And you will be better at recognising and understanding it when you meet such reactions from others. Or from yourself. We have probably all tried to play the part of the ‘awkward cousin’!

A mental stretching exercise

Just like a tree that has been bent by the wind to grow in a certain direction, we have ourselves been shaped by our upbringing and experiences. While we grew up, we stretched to a particular side from the views, values and worldviews that were passed on to us. Resistance feels like a wind from a new direction. It takes a conscious effort to ‘stretch the other way’ than the one to which we are accustomed.

(See note 3; Annex 4: Notes, references and suggestions for further reading).



Good facilitating advice

1. **You are a role model!** Create engaging contact by smiling and assuming a warm, appreciative and tolerant attitude. **Listen**, listen, listen, **speak** and listen! And **use the tools of dialogical communication**.
2. **Trust yourself, your plan and process.** Your script is a guide, not the law. Be ready to change course on the way, and keep a Plan B in reserve. Use what happens in the room between you and your colleagues as well as between you and the participants. And trust your own gut feeling.
3. Even though you might stand centre-stage, you are not the star. It is **the participants' thoughts and views** that need the lime-light.
4. **Be yourself.** And be the best version of yourself. Nobody can do everything at once, but everybody can do something when they do their best. Concentrate on your strengths and work on developing the sides of yourself where you are challenged.
5. **Be self-reflecting.** And take your time to consolidate your experience after the workshop with a colleague, supervisor or mentor. The principle of learning by reflecting on your own actions and the areas in which you feel challenged applies even to the facilitator.

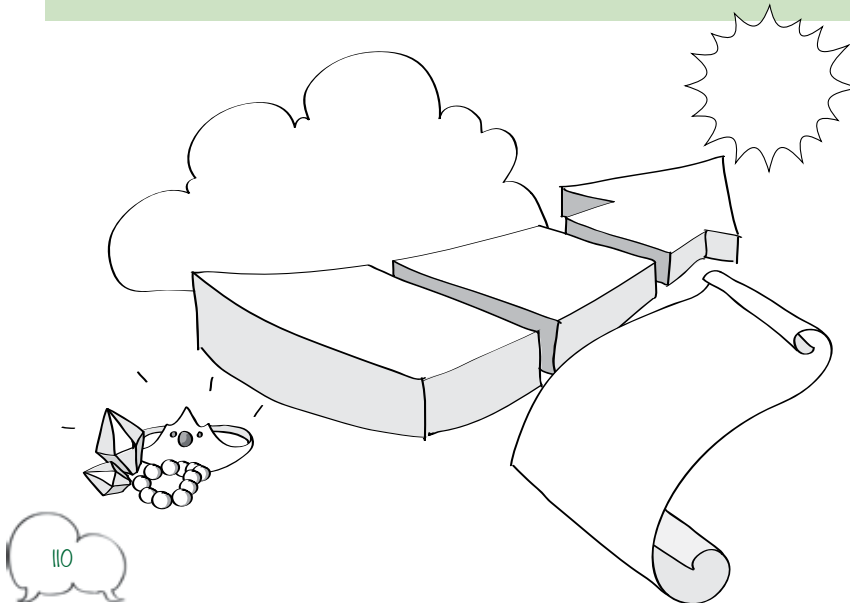
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DIALOGUE IN ACTION

This part offers inspiration and specific ideas for what to do at the workshop in terms of eighteen different exercises, activities and games. Depending on your experience, interest, participants and purpose, you can pick and choose from among them. They are divided into three categories:

- 1. Framework for dialogue:** Five exercises to lay down the overall framework of the workshop, including opening, rules of the game, summing up, rounding off, and evaluation.
- 2. Warm-up to dialogue:** Four exercises to bring into play the four principles of dialogue: openness, trust, honesty and equality. The first exercise consists of four small icebreakers. The next three are slightly extended versions of icebreakers. And the last may serve to define the nature of dialogue.
- 3. Challenge through dialogue:** Eight exercises aimed at training dialogue in practice and fostering understanding of dialogue as a concept. Several of them also serve as the basis for conducting a dialogue on various subjects.



How to choose activities

Whether you choose to be brief or thorough in your planning, remember the basic recipe for a successful workshop. When choosing activities and drawing up a plan or script for the workshop, the three most important ingredients are:

- 1. Always start from your group of participants and your overall purpose with the workshop:** Where do I want to go? And what do the participants need?
- 2. Activity, reflection, learning:** After each activity, invite reflection, then draw lessons.
- 3. Variation makes for dynamism:** Alternate between varying types of activity to turn the workshop into a harmonious piece of music, in which you are the conductor. Mix brief presentations, where you are at the centre of attention, with immersion through reflection among the participants, both in pairs and in plenary sessions. Blend exercises that activate participants, even physically, with more quiet and reflective exercises.

You can read about the basic recipe for the successful workshop and how to draw up a script in Chapter 3.

To be kept in mind

If you are new to the role as facilitator, it is recommended that you follow the instructions for each exercise to the letter, until you have tried it out a few times. Also take account of the situation and group of participants at hand. If an exercise is about, say, bodily contact, and this is patently uncomfortable for the participants, then keep an alternative in reserve. If an activity suggests joint consolidation in a plenary session, and the group turns out to be very quiet, let them reflect in pairs first. Then they can report back to the whole group.

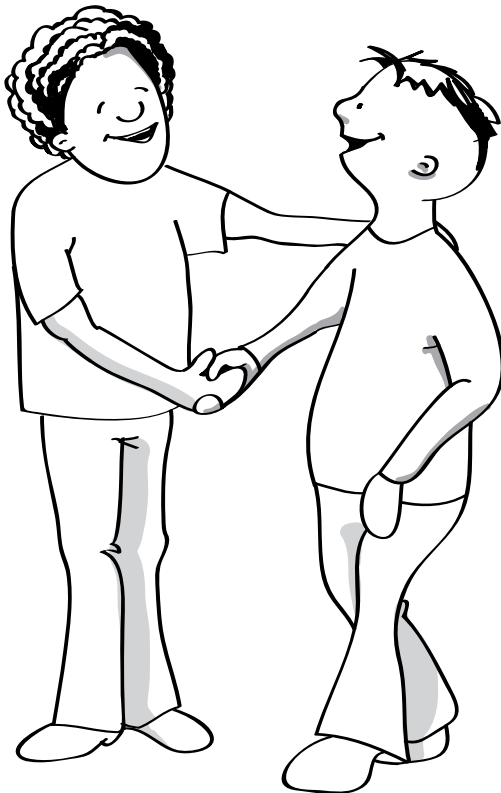


You can also let them talk one by one in a full circle. Flexibility is the key word.

Regardless of how experienced you feel that you are, always be clear when instructing each exercise. For the participants, the exercise is always new. It could be advisable to check once more if everyone has really got it.

You can delve deeper into the art of planning in Chapter 3, and read more about how to go about the facilitator role in Chapter 4. Annex 3 presents examples of scripts

Enjoy the workshop!

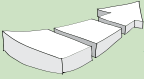


Template

Each exercise is introduced below with a short description to give you an idea of whether it fits your purpose. Exercises are explained according to the following five-point template:



1. Objective: What is the activity *suitable* for? What potential does it contain for fostering *understanding* of dialogue as a concept? What opportunities does the activity offer as a method to hold a *dialogue about an issue in practice*?



2. Step by step: A precise description of how to carry out the exercise.



3. Reflection: Ideas for *relevant points* which are natural to highlight in relation to the exercise. *Examples of questions for reflection*, which you can ask as you consolidate the learning after each exercise. Remember that other questions may be more fitting for your particular group.



4. Practical matters: Guiding *information* on the suitable number of participants, timeframe, materials, room and space requirements, and the like.



5. Chest of ideas: Options for *variations* over the same exercise. There might also be a *tip, an aba! experience or something special to be learned* from a story told by one of the dialogue ambassadors. Finally, it can present something to pay attention to in terms of special challenges for the facilitator.



Exercise category 1: Framework for dialogue

The opening of the workshop should kick-start good group dynamics and make participants feel at ease, so that the dialogue can unfold optimally. To that end, a check-in can be used, as described in Exercise 1.1. The opening also sets the framework for the workshop, for instance by agreeing on clear rules of the game. How to do this is described in Exercise 1.2.

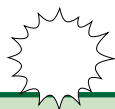
For the sake of learning and continued dialogue work, it is important to carry out proper summing up and rounding off. This applies to the end of the workshop as a whole, but it is also useful to consolidate and round off after each activity. See more on this under Exercise 1.3.

The facilitator needs feedback on what the participants have gained from the workshop. And for the participants, it is valuable to wrap up the process they have been through in an appropriate and respectful manner. This is done by gathering up the loose ends of each issue and by reflecting with participants both on what they have learned and what it has been like to take part. Exercise 1.4 and 1.5 provide examples of how to carry out useful evaluations.

1.1: Check-in

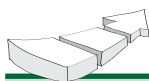
This exercise is used to create a reassuring setting so that everyone gains the confidence to take part. It starts off by envisaging the workshop as a journey. When you set out to travel, the last thing you do before embarking is the check-in. You show your boarding card (who you are). This is an obligatory act which gives access to join in the voyage. In a workshop, it happens in a symbolic sense by everyone saying their name or otherwise manifesting their presence in the group by expressing: Now I'm here en route along with you. Having spoken once, people put their mind to it and fill the room in a different manner.





Objective

To create a reassuring setting for dialogue by enabling all participants to say something, e.g. by introducing themselves. They can say something personal about their expectations and how they feel about having set out 'on the journey' (of entering into a dialogue). The exercise also builds relations, since everyone hears a little about each other.



Step by step

The facilitator starts by comparing the dialogue workshop to a journey. She explains that dialogue is not so much about reaching any particular destination. What matters more is the actual travelling towards the destination and everything that happens along the way. In this process, it is important that everyone is present in body and mind. This makes it a good idea to 'check in', so everybody feels party to the event.

You set the stage for check-in by means of questions, such as:

What is your name and profession?

What is your motivation for being here?

What is it like to be here?

What is your hidden talent?

Who or what brought you here today?

What do you hope or dream of knowing about dialogue once you leave here?

What do you hope or dream of being able to do with dialogue once you leave here?

When are you in your element?

Choose the amount and types of questions depending on the group, workshop subject, and time available.

Participants take turns to answer the questions selected.



Reflection

After check-in, you ask participants to reflect on how the group atmosphere is compared to earlier. This draws their attention to the process (relations and dynamics between participants) being important for dialogical communication, and to our manner of communication affecting relations between us.



Practical matters

Number of participants

In principle, the exercise can be carried out with an unlimited number of participants, but in groups above 20-25 persons, the check-in should be very short. In a large group, sign language can take the place of speaking in turn, e.g.: “using your fingers, show on a scale from 1-5 how ready you are to get started” or “how motivated you are”. Subsequently, you reflect with participants on how important it is to know how people are doing when you communicate with them.

Time

Max. 1 minute per participant

Materials

Ingen



Chest of ideas

Participants can answer the questions by means of 'popcorn'. Popcorn means *'pop when you're hot'*, that is, you speak up whenever you are ready instead of waiting for your turn. This is a more dynamic form, especially in large groups.

Variation 1: Check-out. When the workshop is over, a check-out serves to wrap up the process. Participants are asked in random order to say a few words about how 'the journey' has been.

What have they seen and heard? Or you ask if they want to make a summary remark, for instance about:

How do I go away from here?

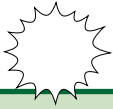
Is there something else I want to say to the participants or facilitator?

The exercise can be made more playful by standing in a (tight) circle. When each participant has said her checkout line, she moves one step back. A ball can also be thrown to the next person about to speak.

The exercise is inspired by the principles of Deep Democracy, see the list of resources.

1.2: Set of rules

This exercise helps set the essential framework for the workshop by laying a good foundation for dialogue. It consists of formulating a set of rules, which gives the facilitator and the participants some common ground to stand on. The participants get a chance to join in early on in the process, contributing their own values and personality.

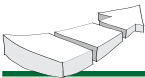


Objective

To create a reassuring setting for dialogue by agreeing on a clear set of rules or norms for sharing.

To pass on ownership of the workshop to participants by involving them in formulating the rules of the game.

To aid the facilitator in keeping the process constructive and respectful with room for confidence to be oneself and to learn.



Step By Step

The principles and rationale behind a set of rules is introduced.

The facilitator asks participants which rules or norms they believe should be in force for the workshop.

For example: *What will it take for us to conduct a good dialogue here today?*

The facilitator writes down the suggestions, checking with participants if this is what they meant. She makes sure she has taken note of everything. Some formulations may have to be adjusted.

If the participants have no suggestions, three or more rules are proposed by the facilitator. Participants talk about them in small →



groups or in pairs. The facilitator checks if the participants have any questions, comments or adjustments. She makes sure that the participants all affirm clearly that these are the rules that have now been arrived at and which will be in force. See also variations here below.

Among the rules might be:

Listen carefully to one another and hear each other out.

We are different, and we are open to each other's differences.

Ask if there is something you do not understand.

Take part, though it is okay to pass.

Wrap it up with some phrases that highlight your own positive expectations. This will shift focus away from the somewhat serious associations that some people have with rules.



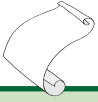
Reflection

Other names: It can be called rules for being together, rules for growing, norms for sharing or the like instead. In some contexts, expressions like 'set of rules' or 'rules of the game' can be perceived as condescending.

Use their wording. The facilitator can help formulate the sentences, but be careful it does not result in your own (preconceived) rules being imposed.

Work with the suggestions to make them constructive. If suggestions concern something that is not wanted, try to avoid this together by finding a phrase to describe how it ought to be. For instance, 'do not interrupt' can be changed into 'hear the other out'.

Take all suggestions seriously and be positive. This initial part of the workshop helps set the tone for the subsequent dialogue. The exercise presents an obvious opportunity to already show the dialogical approach in practice.



Practical matters

Number of participants

The number of possible participants is unlimited, but if there are over 20-25 persons, people should be divided into smaller groups to discuss the suggestions. Using the floor variation (see below), a few members of each group are interviewed about their viewpoints to explain how they have interpreted the rule. Others are encouraged to comment and complement.

Time

Max. 30 minutes.

Materials

Cardboard or flipchart + markers and adhesive to put the rules on the wall for everyone to see.



Chest of ideas

Variation 1: **On the floor**

The facilitator brings a number of rules, which are written down one on each A4 or A3 sheet. These papers are placed on the floor with plenty of space between them, and are very briefly explained. Participants are now asked to stand near the rule that they find the most important. They tell each other how they perceive the rule and why it matters to them. After about 5 minutes, the facilitator interviews each group thus formed. The point is to highlight how the meaning of a rule or norm can differ. This gives rise to misunderstandings, since we often take for granted that others interpret a sentence in the same manner as we do. Another point is that precisely this group's interpretation of the rule will be in effect during the workshop. Thus, the dialogue has already begun.



Variation 2: Disruption focusing on how to handle different norms. (This variation requires a trained facilitator).

After the first round (as above), three new rules are placed on the floor. They contradict the first ones, and reflect completely different norms, such as:

You must interrupt to have your say
The teacher must be addressed with title and surname
It is not okay to pass

The same process as in Variation 1. When summing up, you reflect on the dilemma when a group includes some social norms that are completely at odds with what we 'take for granted' (or have just decided upon). In this manner, the participants already begin to hold a dialogue about different norms and values.

Questions for reflection:

How can you handle discrepancies? (such as these about rules) in a forum (such as this dialogue workshop), where the fundamental value is to make room for all?

How far can dialogue take us as a tool?

Does dialogue have its limitations? Where, when?

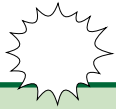
Is discussion and negotiation sometimes in order?

Variation 3: For short processes

The facilitator brings along three to five of her own suggestions. She briefly sets out the rationale for rules of the game. Then she asks the participants if they can accept the suggested rules and/or if there are any comments or proposals for amendment. The rules, which might now have been changed/adjusted, are written on the flipchart and the papers are hung on the wall.

1.3: Summing up with evaluation

This exercise serves to end the workshop by summing up the key points arising throughout the process. It includes reflection with participants about what they have learned, and how it has been (evaluation). The exercise is well suited to large groups, where an oral evaluation would be too time-consuming to involve participants actively in wrapping up the workshop and to ensure that all voices are heard.



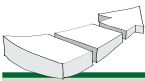
Objective

To look into the extent to which the overall goal agreed in the beginning has been attained.

To uncover the difference that the workshop has made to the participants and facilitator.

To enable the facilitator to improve the workshop by means of concrete feedback on both the content and the process.

To let participants together with the facilitator reflect on what they have learned.



Step By Step

Hand out small slips of paper in different colours (e.g. Post-its), 2-3 of each colour to each participant.

Each colour represents one of a total of four dimensions of what participants have gained:

For example:

Red: *Today's most valuable lesson*

Blue: *The exercise that worked the best*



Green: *What I take home with me*

Yellow: *What it has been like to take part*

The facilitators provide an example by writing a statement on each colour of paper. Participants spend some 3-4 minutes on writing on their slips of paper.

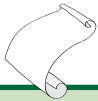
Then participants are asked to place them on four different large sheets of paper, one for each colour.

Finally, some of the slips of paper are read out by the facilitators. Then participants have the opportunity to elaborate and/or reflect on the statements.



Reflection

If views of the workshop vary widely, use this to reflect on how we perceive the world differently. Appreciate the diversity of opinions and perhaps inquire into what lies behind.



Practical matters

Number of participants

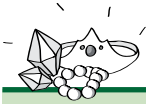
Almost unlimited number of participants.

Time

About 15 minutes. .

Materials

Small slips of paper in selected colours and some adhesive, if you do not use Post-its. Posters or flip-chart paper for the chosen categories. Pens for everyone. Markers.



Chest of ideas

Do not put words into the mouth of participants, but pose questions to them that are open-ended and positive within the four dimensions of feedback. It is more constructive to ask: *“What should there be more of?”* or *“how could the experience of be improved?”* than *“what was bad?”*

Use the exercise as a springboard to put dialogue into perspective, for instance by means of the following questions:

What is the use of dialogue in today's world?

What values are contained within the principles of dialogue?

Variation 1:

Wrap up the exercise by asking participants to update their status on their Facebook page, Twitter account or the like.

Variation 2:

Use 5-10 minutes on an ‘exhibition’, where participants walk around reading the slips of paper. End it with a brief shared reflection, e.g. on the question: *What are your reflections on what you have read? How do you leave from here?*

Tip: You may get the feeling that there is not enough time for evaluation at a short workshop. Even so, give priority to it! There is a lot of learning unleashed in a proper conclusion, both for participants and facilitator.

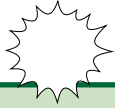
The story of a dialogue ambassador:

About summing up

A student at a workshop in Alexandria stood up after a workshop and said: I will use these tools to run similar sessions with my colleagues. Someone else said she would use them to create a better world. A blind participant in Denmark said that, after our workshop, he had gained the confidence to try to work as a facilitator himself.

1.4: The evaluation quadrangle

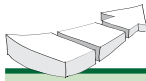
This exercise is used to produce feedback from the participants to the facilitator about what they have learned and what they think about the process. At the same time, it rounds off the process in an energetic and dynamic manner.



Objective

To give the facilitator clear feedback on what the participants learned and how they liked to take part.

To give participants an opportunity to express criticism in a constructive manner and to say thank you.



Step By Step

Put four chairs in a row in front of participants, or with their backs facing each other inside a circle formed by participants sitting down. On each chair (or on the floor in front of it), four different A4 sheets are placed with the following texts:

AHA!

SPOT ON!

MORE OF!

THANKS!

The facilitator explains what each of the four different points is about.

Aha! A moment when something dawned on the participant, a realisation or important point of learning. →

Spot on! An example of an exercise, a proposal or the like which the participant gained a lot from.

More of! Something felt to be missing, or an expectation that was not met.

Thanks! Something the participant wants to thank for, or somebody the participant wants to thank, and why.

The participants are encouraged to sit on the various chairs, spontaneously and taking turns. They now recount, depending on what chair they sit on, what their aha! moment was, what was spot on, what they would have liked more of, and what they want to say thank you for.

You are allowed to use the whole row of chairs in one go, or to finish only one chair at a time. It is all right to sit down several times. Not everyone must sit down and say something, but they should be encouraged to do so.

The facilitator's role is to listen, not to comment, not even if a lot of criticism is dished out. If you feel like you have taken a beating, it is better to raise it with a colleague afterwards.

Finally, the facilitator sits on the chairs where she has something to say. She can appreciate the participants' involvement or exciting points, tell what her own learning points were, and so forth. It is not appropriate here for the facilitator to criticise or to address unresolved conflict or tension.

The exercise is wrapped up when everyone goes back to sit in a large circle, and you say thanks for today, have a safe trip home, or a similar final remark.



Reflection

If views of the workshop vary widely, use this to reflect on how we perceive the world differently. Appreciate the diversity of opinions and perhaps inquire into what lies behind.



Practical matters

Number of participants

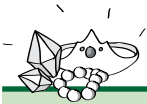
The number of participants is almost unlimited.

Time

About 15 minutes (depending on the number of participants)

Materials

Chairs, paper sheets + markers



Chest of ideas

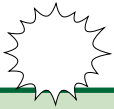
Variation

If there are many participants, they can be divided into smaller groups, each of which fills in a sheet of paper with four boxes equivalent to the four points above. Then each group is listened to, or one person from each group sits on the chairs and thus provides feedback on the group's behalf.

Tip: You may get the feeling that there is not enough time for evaluation at a short workshop. Even so, give priority to it! There is a lot of learning unleashed in a proper conclusion, both for participants and facilitator.

1.5: The toolbox

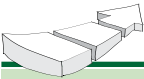
This is an evaluation exercise in which participants get an opportunity to take on board what they have learned. On the basis of what they have gained from the workshop, they must draw up a specific action plan for how to go on to use dialogue in their organisation and/or their own life. The exercise revises the methods, techniques and tools to which participants have been introduced, as well as the realisations they have made along the way.



Objective

To let participants put what they have learned into words, so that they assimilate it and keep it on board going forward.

To let participants discover how the learning can be applied to their own everyday lives in the future.



Step By Step

The objective of the exercise is explained to the participants. They are divided into groups of three persons and start out with a brainstorming session based on the question:

What hands-on methods and tools do I take with me from this workshop?

Participants are encouraged to speak in turn so that everyone joins in.

They list the most important tools acquired on a flipchart.

Then they reflect individually on the following questions:

Which one of these will I be able to use in practice going forward?

For what, in which situations?

What effect do I envisage this will have?



For this reflection you use a table with three columns, which is handed out to each participant by the facilitator.

Tool	Application	Effect/change
Example: Active listening	When we hold our board meetings	Better atmosphere in the group, involvement of those who speak more rarely
Example: Dialogue with talking stick	In the project group when we disagree	Better decision-making on the basis of dialogue

(See Exercise 3.8: Dialogue with talking stick)..

The participants write one after another, inspired by the preceding group dialogue.

The exercise is consolidated by encouraging participants to share examples of what they have written for the inspiration of others. Time can be set aside for further exchange of ideas among all participants or in smaller groups, see the variation below.



Reflection

The exercise is a reflection in itself. See the variations below for how to put it into perspective.



Practical matters

Number of participants

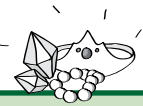
The number of participants is almost unlimited. Suitable for large groups, where it will take a long time to carry out an oral evaluation.

Time

From 30-45 minutes to several hours (following the variations below).

Materials

Flipchart paper and markers for the groups. A4 sheets with pre-printed columns or blank papers for participants to draw the columns themselves. For Variation 2, postcards with stamps.



Chest of ideas

Variation 1:

You can ask participants to draw up a specific action plan in writing, where they describe what it will actually take to carry through the change. For example: *For us to begin to use active listening at the Board meeting, we all need to be trained in this. Funds must be allocated to a course to be held in the spring. We will discuss this at the meeting on January 3. Anna is responsible for this. Henceforth we need to lengthen the meetings by half an hour for us to take a more in-depth approach.*

Variation 2:

You can ask participants to first write one specific wish for change, where they see scope for using dialogue in their organisation or the like. Then they write what exactly must take place (actions) for them to reach their goal. A deadline is also laid down. Participants write this in note form on a postcard with their own address on. After four weeks, the facilitator sends the postcards to the participants.



Variation 3

The exercise can also be used as a springboard to go deeper into how dialogue can be used more actively and/or be implemented, e.g. in the participants' organisations. Thus participants are encouraged to draw up action plans for larger projects on dialogue. The same template as above can be used.

This exercise is inspired by 'the Tool Curve' developed by consultant Jan Rosenmeier. The original exercise is described in the book 'Anerkendende Procesøvelser' [Appreciative Process Exercises] (Bjerring & Lindén, 2008)

Exercise category 2: Warm-up to dialogue

Energisers and icebreakers are playful types of exercise. They can be used at the beginning of a workshop to create a good atmosphere and group spirit. They help build the essential trust and confidence, which lays a good foundation for dialogue. The exercises can be used to enhance group dynamics, say, by means of a good laugh. Or they can serve as a springboard for reflection that makes participants change their perspective. They are also useful to raise the energy level in the course of a workshop. This can be necessary in prolonged processes. Exercise 2.1 provides an example of four quick exercises. This kind is good to keep 'up your sleeve' if the need spontaneously arises to change tack.

Sometimes they can also be used to highlight points regarding the principles for dialogue, and to reflect together with the participants on the process embarked upon. You can ask, for examples:

How was it doing this exercise?

How did it affect you?

How did it affect the atmosphere here in this room?

How would you like to relate that to dialogue?

What did you learn from the exercise about dialogue?



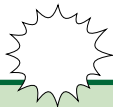
On other occasions, it is quite enough for the exercise merely to produce some energy.

Exercises 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 are suitable both as icebreakers and to put what the participants' have gained from the exercises into perspective as regards dialogue.

The last exercise, that is, Exercise 2.5, provides an example of how to put across dialogue as a more theoretical concept in a manner that engages the participants.

2.1: Four quick exercises

Playing games works wonders when it comes to breaking the ice, instilling a sense of reassurance and confidence, boosting the group dynamic and getting participants to relax and to know each other better. Such exercises are also good at overcoming an atmosphere lacking in energy or concentration. Here are four quick ones, which also serve as stepping stones for reflection on the group spirit and on communication. One or two exercises are suitable for opening the workshop.

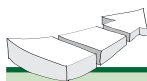


Objective

The objective of all four exercises is:

To break the ice by means of laughter and movement. When participants share a fun experience, it strengthens togetherness, reassurance, confidence and energy within the group.

To involve participants actively in the workshop so as to create a good dynamic.



Step By Step

1. This is a what? *A fun exercise that requires concentration.*

Ask participants to find something small (a pen, phone, battery, toy car, or the like).

Place participants in a circle with the chosen items in their hands.

Now all participants turn to the person standing to their right, while singing:

- *This is a pen!* (if that's what the participant concerned holds in her own hand).

Then everyone turns left and sings:

- *A what?* Then they turn right and answer:
- *A pen!* (if that's what the participant concerned holds in her own hand).
- *A what?* (singing to the left)
- *A pen!* (singing it to the right at the same time as they pass on their own small item to the person to their right).
- *Abbbb...! A toy car!* (if that's what the person to the left hands the participant at that very moment).

In principle, this game can continue forever, or until the items of the participants have made a full circle and come back to the same persons. The pace of the game and singing can be accelerated along the way.

2. 1 - 2 - 3: *A physical exercise full of energy!*

Participants form pairs. The two persons face one another and take turns to count to three. Person A says: '1'. Person B says: '2'. Person A says '3'. Person B carries on by saying: '1' and so forth. They continue to count until everyone has settled into a rhythm. Then they replace '1' with a clap, while '2' and '3' remain the same.



This is repeated a couple of times. Then '2' is replaced with stamping a foot. Finally three is replaced with a jump. The exercise carries on for a few rounds until the energy has built.

3. Laughing game: *A fun exercise with a challenge*

This exercise may seem awkward in a shy group, but it is hilarious if participants get stuck into the game.

Participants sit or stand in pairs facing one another, ideally in one long row. The game is that one of the two should get the other to laugh. You set aside 2-5 minutes (no more, or it can become too awkward). Those who fail to get their partner to laugh can seek help from others. As the facilitator provides instructions, she must have the courage to pull funny faces and clown about to show that this is safe to do. If there are several of you as facilitators, it is a good idea to have just one facilitator who stands aside, managing the process and keeping time, while the others join in the game.

Tip: In some groups, this game works better some time into the workshop, when participants feel at ease with one another.

4. Finger game: *A quick and effective energy booster*

This exercise sharpens attention and concentration. All participants stand in a circle. Raising their right-hand index finger, they all point into the air. Their left hand, flat with fingers stretched out, is placed an inch or so above the left-hand neighbour's lifted and pointing index finger. The facilitator counts down 3, 2, 1 now! On 'now', everyone tries to catch their neighbour's finger with the left hand, at the same time as they try to avoid their own right-hand index finger getting caught. You can increase the level of difficulty by counting down at different paces. Participants can also take turns to count.



Reflection

The reflection after an energiser serves to begin to address the subject: *the nature of dialogue* and to link to the principles: *trust, openness, honesty and equality*.

Ask participants to reflect on what it is like to be in the room right now compared to before doing the exercise.

Describe what it means to you to create a good and more personal contact with participants in order to work with dialogue.

Examples of further questions:

What is communication?

How do we build relations?

How do we see and perceive one another?

How do the group dynamics (and relations) affect the scope for dialogue?

These exercises also work well as pure energisers without reflection.



Practical matters

Number of participants

Variable

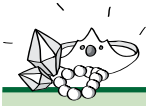
Time

5-10 minutes per game (Finger game: 3-5 minutes).

Materials

Exercise 1: Small items to hold in the hand; bring a small selection yourself.

Exercises 2, 3 and 4: none.



Chest of ideas

Tip: These games require the facilitator herself to find that they make sense in the context. She must also have an energetic approach to introducing and possibly taking part in them. If she has a feeling that it is 'silly', this is likely to rub off on the participants. The facilitator may choose to join in the games in order to become more part of the group and to create a sense of equality.

Respect that people have their personal boundaries. This should be openly recognised, though if you have decided to carry out the exercise, do it even if some participants sit out. You can use this to consolidate and reflect afterwards, where you emphasise the positive aspect of people having different boundaries and personalities. At the same time, you ask if this has boosted the group spirit, what it means to have fun together, etc. Let those who clearly enjoyed themselves come forward with their feedback.

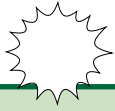
Variation:

There are many such exercises on the internet. Search for energiser/energizer and icebreaker.

2.2: Fruit salad

This exercise serves both as icebreaker and energiser, that is, to create a reassuring atmosphere at the start and to boost energy levels along the way. Using the variation, it can also serve to begin to address the issue of communication and dialogue. The exercise is easy to manage, and it works well for the vast majority of groups.

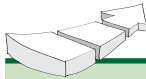




Objective

To break the ice, to create a spirit of togetherness, confidence and reassurance among the participants, and to energise the group.

To serve as a springboard for initiating talk about and definition of dialogue.



Step By Step

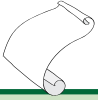
Participants are divided into at least three teams, which represent one fruit each, say, banana, lemon, apple, etc.

Put a number of chairs equivalent to the number of participants minus one in a circle. One participant stands in the middle of the circle, while the others sit on the chairs. The game is about getting seated rather than standing in the middle. The person in the middle says (aloud) either the name of one of the fruits or the word 'fruit salad'. If, for instance, the person says 'lemon', everyone belonging to that team must stand up to swap places with one another. The person standing in the middle must also try to find a seat to sit on before they are all taken. On the shout of 'fruit salad', all participants must stand up and try to find a new seat. Whoever fails to sit down (since there is one chair less than the number of participants) must now stand in the middle. He either says the name of a fruit or says 'fruit salad'. The participants should always try to find a seat to avoid standing in the middle.



Reflection

See exercise 2.1.



Practical matters

Number of participants

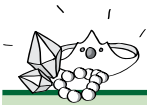
The number of participants is almost unlimited, but to be able to keep a degree of control, a maximum of 30 participants is advisable.

Time

About 15 minutes.

Materials

Chairs.



Chest of ideas

Variation:

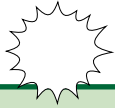
Once participants master the exercise using fruit names, the focus is shifted to communication. The person in the middle uses an example of communication (instead of a fruit) which he either likes or dislikes. The facilitator shows an example: *I dislike when people text message while I'm talking to them.* Everyone who agrees, stand up and try to swap places. Whoever lacks a seat and ends up in the middle comes up with a new statement. If participants need help for ideas, the facilitator comes up with an example. It is important to maintain the somewhat high and dynamic pace. After the exercise, you consolidate by talking about how different types of communication work, and so forth. The opportunity can also be taken to begin to define dialogue.

Tip: If participants are later to be divided into groups, these can be the same as those with the fruit names.

The facilitator should join in the game herself to create contact, and hence trust, confidence and reassurance within the group.

2.3: Whispering game

This exercise illustrates in a simple and fun way why communication can be difficult and how misunderstandings occur. It focuses on the ability to listen, which is an essential key to dialogical communication.

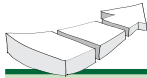


Objective

To give participants an aha! experience by means of shared and concentrated communication in a simple manner.

To highlight listening as a relevant skill in communication, and particularly in dialogue, showing how difficult it can be.

To build trust within the group.



Step By Step

The facilitator does not reveal the purpose of the game, since this might ruin the whole point.

Participants sit or stand in a circle. The facilitator (or a participant) whispers a sentence *in a clear voice* to the person next to her. This message is passed on by whispering to the next person in the circle, and so on, until everyone has heard the sentence. You are only allowed to say the sentence once. The whisper must not be so loud that anyone other than the intended listener can hear it.

The sentence should not be too long and complex, nor can it be too short and simple. Ideally, there is some factual information that participants need to bear in mind. For example: *“There’s a discount on cream cakes, three for two pounds, at the bakery on King Edward’s Square after 4pm on Sunday.”*



The last person to be whispered to says the sentence for everyone to hear. This is compared to the original sentence. The words will have changed drastically.
forandret.



Reflection

The exercise is a good starting point for reflection on dialogue and communication, for example, by posing these questions:

How do we actually communicate?

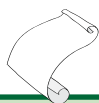
Do we hear what is being said, or what we think is being said?

Who is responsible for accurate communication?

How can what happened in the exercise be linked to other situations where misunderstandings occur?

How can what you saw here be linked to conflict arising between different (cultural) groups (who do not, for example, share the same mother tongue)?

How does what we saw here relate to dialogue and dialogical tools, such as listening carefully and rendering (mirroring) information accurately?



Practical matters

Number of participants

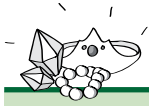
Maximum 25 persons. If there are many participants, they can be divided into groups of 15. They could be given different sentences to whisper.

Time

10-15 minutes.

Materials

None

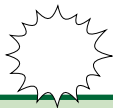


Chest of ideas

The exercise may serve to put into perspective how the media sometimes distort stories. And how misunderstandings in communication affect the dialogue. It can be linked to how dialogical tools can help clear up misunderstandings.

2.4: Greeting exercise

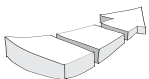
This exercise may serve to stimulate reflection on what communication really is. It shows how we interpret other people's way of communicating based on our own cultural background, and why we sometimes get it wrong. It also shows how dialogical communication serves to examine what underlies various actions and reactions



Objective

To become aware of one's own patterns of responding to something unexpected in an encounter, given that we act and react differently.

To foster reflection on how our own reactions in communicative situations can get the better of us, so that we forget to be curious as to what lies behind a given action.



Step By Step

Ask participants to stand up and form a full or half circle together with the facilitator.

Introduce the exercise by explaining that that the most fundamental and often the first step, when people meet, is to greet and make contact.



Perhaps describe how our standard greeting has become so automatic we hardly even register it, just like so much else in our behaviour. A few examples of this might be provided by shaking hands with a few people nearby, or the facilitator can relate a brief anecdote about her own experience of greeting in a new way, say, during travel abroad.

Explain that participants will now receive instructions on how to greet in a new fashion written on a card, which you will hand out.

On a sign (clapping of hands) from the facilitator, participants greet as many people as possible from the group. They must pay attention to their own and to the other people's reactions. Afterwards they reflect on it in pairs.

Examples of greetings:

1. A low bow with folded hands, very slowly
2. Massive movement of the arm, patting the other on the shoulder and uttering a loud 'hi'
3. Kissing on cheeks four times
4. Putting the hand on the heart and bowing softly
5. Standing almost still, lifting one hand while pronouncing a quiet 'hi'
6. Rubbing noses together
7. Approaching the other quickly and giving a firm handshake
8. Putting the hand on the other person's head
9. Waving the head quickly sideways some two metres away
10. Clapping right hands together at the height of your heads ('high-fiving' one another).

You give each participant a card which sets out one greeting. There should be some five-six different greetings, so some participants receive a card with the same instruction. Participants are



not allowed to show their cards to each other. After reading it and understanding what to do, the card is returned to the facilitator. On the facilitator's sign, they step forward and greet as many people as possible.

When everyone (or most, if the group is large) has greeted one another, the facilitator claps again. Ask them to reflect in pairs for some 5 minutes on what they went through. If the pairs' reflection goes well, it may last more than 5 minutes.

After that, everybody consolidates the learning together and reflects on the exercise.



Reflection

The reflection is crucial for the participants to gain something from the exercise, both in pairs and in a plenary session. It is enlightening to become aware of one's own and other people's emotional and bodily reaction to the encounter with something unfamiliar.

Ask participants:

What did you observe?

What was it like to do the exercise?

What did you talk about when you reflected on it together?

Show appreciation for the variety of reactions, and then inquire into what is behind the statements in a more open and exploratory manner. This will help you delve deeper into the reflection with the participants on what lies behind statements such as "it was fun" or "it was embarrassing".



Stress that it is understandable and normal to react to other people's 'deviant' conduct.

After that, you can put the exercise into a wider perspective.

Examples of questions:

Which norms or unwritten rules did you find that were broken?

What does it do to us (emotional/bodily reactions) when this happens?

How did you experience the differences?

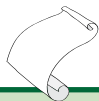
Which strategies did you follow? Did you withdraw or did you step forward to persuade others to go along? (See Chapter 4 on resistance).

How do we stay on the track of dialogue and an exploratory approach when we are provoked and react emotionally?

How do we start a dialogue on differences and similarities in such a situation?

How do you make and maintain contact despite different norms and rules for being together and communicating?

An iceberg (see Chapter 2) serves to illustrate that what we see and interpret from an encounter with others is in the visible field. While our motivations to react and do as we do tend to be unconscious and hidden, not just to the other person but often to ourselves as well. In the encounter with the unfamiliar, we may realise our own norms and values and become aware of them. The norms with which we are brought up will, on the face of it, appear to be the right ones, whereas those of the others will come across as wrong. This is the challenge to be faced by means of dialogue.



Practical matters

Number of participants

From 10 to almost unlimited amount. The exercise has been carried out with 100 people, but that requires helpers to hand out the cards and collect them afterwards (to avoid spending too much time).

Time

About 30 minutes depending on how deep you want to get into the reflection.

Materials

Cards or small slips of paper with descriptions of greetings, one for each participant. Flipchart paper and markers to take note when consolidating after the exercise, and possibly to draw the iceberg and write down participants' reflections.

The greetings should be tailor-made to the group, so that they are disrupted without getting too far out of their comfort zone. (See more in Chapter 3 about 'disruption'). Choose five or six greetings depending on the size of the group. See examples above.



Chest of ideas

When everyone has greeted and reflection begins, make sure everybody finds someone to reflect with, so nobody is left alone. Perhaps reflection can take place in groups of three, but ideally no more than that, since it is important that everybody gets the opportunity to speak.



It is important that the facilitator upholds the serious aspect of creating scope for reflection, while also leaving room for laughter and slight embarrassment about the situation. It is part of the exercise and learning that participants must feel the awkwardness of facing something new and hard to understand. This also leads on to the subsequent reflection and shared consolidation.

Variation: **Your own reflection in writing**

In a very shy group, the facilitator can ask participants to write down their reflections right after the exercise. For this the first three questions listed under 'step by step' can be asked. After that, you proceed to a plenary session of consolidating and reflecting on the exercise.

Story of a dialogue ambassador

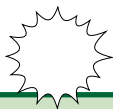
“We did the exercise in a group where several people wanted no physical contact with the opposite sex. The greetings had been adapted so the only physical contact was a handshake. Even so, a group of people refused to take part. We tried to handle this by stressing that there was no obligation to do it. We reflected alongside participants on how one might instead cope with such a situation dialogically. That what you think is all right varies a lot. And how difficult it can be to handle physical contact when this is seen as contrary to your religious belief.”

The exercise was developed by Mette Lindgren Helde..

2.5: Defining dialogue

This exercise is suitable at the beginning of a workshop to reach a deeper common understanding within the group of dialogue as a concept. They start to reflect more profoundly on the meaning of dialogue and are actively involved in the process, which underpins their sense of participation.

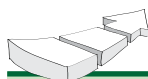




Objective

To define and delimit dialogue as a concept, and to show its multi-faceted and complex nature.

To enable participants to feel part of the process of defining and refining the concept of dialogue.



Step By Step

Introduce the exercise with a brainstorming session, in which the facilitator asks participants to say the first word that springs to mind when she says: dialogue! (the word is written on the flipchart or blackboard).

All words spoken by participants are written down on the flipchart or the blackboard under the headline 'Dialogue'.

Depending on the words spoken, you reflect on the meaning together with participants. For example, the words can be divided into categories that refer to the nature of dialogue (basic values, frame of mind and practice), principles of dialogue and difference between dialogue and discussion. It depends on what feels relevant in the situation. After that, you write down a definition on the flipchart, for example, the one presented in this book:

Dialogue is a special form of communication, in which participants seek to actively create greater mutual understanding and deeper insight.

You elaborate on the definition, word by word, e.g. along the lines of the explanations in Chapter 1. Use examples that match the group and remember to refer to the suggestions and words chosen throughout the process. You might use a table to compare dialogue to constructive and destructive discussion (see Annex 1).



Reflection

Questions for reflection:

What did you gain from seeing/defining dialogue in this manner?

What are the advantages of dialogue?

What are the challenges of dialogue?

When is discussion more suitable than dialogue, and vice versa?

Can we use dialogue more than we do?

When, how, etc.?



Practical matters

Number of participants

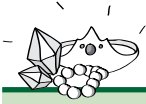
Unlimited, but make sure the feedback will not take up too much time in the case of numerous participants. If they are divided into many groups, feedback on flipchart paper can be presented at an exhibition instead (see the variation).

Time

About 30 minutes (+ 15 minutes if the group work variation is used).

Materials

Flipchart paper and markers for each group, and adhesive to put up the posters (Variation 1).



Chest of ideas

Variation 1

Participants are divided into smaller group of 5-6 persons each. Half the groups are tasked with defining dialogue, the others with defining discussion. They get about 10 minutes to complete the job. Then they present their definition written on flipchart paper. The exercise is summed up through shared reflection regarding the two forms of communication: dialogue and discussion. You may want to use the table from Chapter 1 and/or Annex 1.

Variation 1a

Participants are asked to write on a slip of paper (Post-its or the like) what they think turns a discussion into a dialogue. The results are used for summing up and reflecting as described above.

Variation 2

Two facilitators (if there are several of you) stand up and perform a destructive discussion on a relatively innocuous subject, say, whether they prefer tea or coffee. Afterwards, participants are asked to offer their observations as to what characterises this type of communication.

Subsequently, the two facilitators conduct a dialogue on the issue, perhaps by using the talking stick (see Exercise 3.8). Participants are asked to characterise this type of communication in their own words. After consolidating the exercise, the facilitators write down their own definition of dialogue. This can be complemented by an abridged version of the table describing the difference between dialogue and the two types of discussion (Annex 1).

This exercise may serve as a springboard to talk more about the nature of dialogue: its basic values, frame of mind, practice and principles.



Variation 2a

Two participants are asked to stand up or sit down in front of everyone else and play the role of discussing an innocuous subject. After discussing for 1-2 minutes, they are instructed in how to use the talking stick (see Exercise 3.8) to conduct a dialogue. Make sure the participants' observations of the two role players do not amount to an assessment of whether or not they are good at conducting a dialogue. It is learning by example that is at the centre of attention, not the parties' performance. Help them get started, acknowledge their efforts, and use whatever happens between them to say something about what dialogue is. Remember to thank them for taking part.

Tip: **Brainstorming** is a useful method in many other contexts to kick-start reflections in an engaging manner. At the same time, the facilitator examines what participants already know about the subject. You can start by asking: *What is...?* and then follow the method as described above. The field of inquiry can be, for example, the workshop issue (gender roles, stereotypes, democracy, etc.), or subjects such as culture and communication.

If participants are rather quiet, you can initially brainstorm in pairs or groups of three. Or you can ask participants to go for a brief walk in pairs and talk about: *What is...?* (walk and talk). Afterwards, the exercise is consolidated as above.

Exercise category 3: Challenge through dialogue

These eight exercises are used to create understanding of dialogue as a concept and a method, as well as to conduct dialogue on particular subjects. When participants try out specific tools of dialogical communication, they become better at appreciating what dialogue is and what it is good for. When they hold a dialogue on a particular issue, say, in a project group, they become wiser as to how to approach an issue in a dialogical manner, and they start to realise the potential of dialogue. As a facilitator, you think through what your main focus should be in order to plan the workshop better, and also to be able to choose the most appropriate exercises and ways of facilitating them.

Questions to reflect on the choice of exercises:

What is the exercise for, and why?

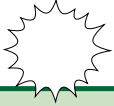
Is it a workshop about dialogue with focus on expanding knowledge of dialogue as a concept and a method?

Or is it a workshop with dialogue, where the dialogue (and exercises) are used as a framework to address a current topic or issue which engages the participants?

What specific subject matter you choose for a workshop with dialogue is up to you as a facilitator, and depends on what makes the participants tick. This is why we have refrained from suggesting any particular topics here. You can read about relevant workshop issues in Chapter 1. The planning and choice of workshop focus is addressed in Chapter 3.

3.1: Prejudice game

This exercise is well-suited to conducting a dialogue on prejudice. Through their own experiences, participants get a taste of how prejudice works in practice. The facilitators put themselves on the line, thus applying the dialogical principles of trust, openness, honesty and equality. It works well with a diverse group of participants and in preparation for intercultural dialogue. The exercise is only appropriate if there are several facilitators working together.



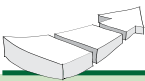
Objective

To show how assumptions, prejudices and stereotypes filter communication.

To challenge prejudice by making facilitators the targets of the participants' assumptions. They see with their own eyes how their assumptions do not hold true.

To create reflection on how prejudice affects the meeting between people and how to handle it dialogically.

To show how the principles of dialogue can overcome prejudice



Step By Step

The facilitators introduce themselves by name and nationality. It is not revealed that the exercise is about prejudice, so call it 'labelling game' or the like.

Participants are divided into three groups, depending on the number of participants. Each group should consist of 6-7 persons. Each group is given slips of paper or labels in different colours (e.g. Post-its) with the same statements about facilitators. These might be, for instance:

- Speaks fluent German
- Cannot cook
- Plays the violin
- Went to Catholic school
- Is not a Muslim
- Smokes
- Has a boyfriend/girlfriend
- Does not speak Arabic
- Used to sing in a church choir
- Likes Christmas food
- Has never been to Europe

The statements are phrased so as to make it doubtful or surprising for participants whom they fit, for example, that one facilitator, who is an Egyptian Muslim, went to Catholic school. Some statements could also be rather controversial and not hold true for anybody.

Be aware that there is a certain vulnerability associated with subjecting oneself to other people's prejudice, even when you are a facilitator. Think about what you are ready to put up with, so that it creates learning for participants, but does not leave you feeling dejected. Speak openly with the other facilitators about this during your planning.

Now the groups have to guess, based on their immediate assumptions, which facilitators fit the various statements. The groups read each statement aloud for everyone present, after which they stick one label at a time on each of the facilitators who fit the statements, according to what they have decided

Afterwards, the facilitators reveal who really matches each statement.



Reflection

When consolidating the exercise, participants are encouraged to reflect on what happens when we 'stick labels on people'. For example, a facilitator explains that some prejudices are unavoidable, that everybody has them, and that there is nothing wrong with this. However, it is important to be aware of one's own prejudices and be ready to challenge and overcome them.

The exercise is consolidated in small groups or in a plenary session. You may also ask about some of the participants' particular choices, e.g. Why didn't you think he was a Muslim?

Questions for reflection:

What was it like to stick labels on the facilitators?

What was it like to realise the labels were right or wrong?

How does prejudice work in your lives?

Have you ever been subjected to prejudice?

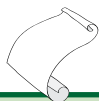
How does it affect the communication (dialogue) between people that we have prejudice? Ask for specific examples.

What can be done about prejudice?

How can dialogue be used to overcome prejudice?

In which situations are assumptions an advantage? For example, in order to be respectful or polite when you are on away ground.

The reflection can be expanded to include the media's influence and how they contribute to creating and maintaining prejudice.



Practical matters

Number of participants

Between about 10 and 40 participants.

Time

45-60 minutes.

Materials

Post-its or papers with adhesive in different colours and with statements written on them, alternatively blank ones, if the variation below is used.



Chest of ideas

Variation 1

Participants receive a bunch of Post-its, on which they write whatever ideas they have of each facilitator, for example, religion, age, political leanings, education, family status, etc. They then stick the various labels on each of the facilitators who might fit the statements, as they see it. The various statements are then examined by the facilitators to find out if the participants are right in their assumptions.

Variation 2

Participants are divided into the same number of groups as there are facilitators, one of whom is assigned to each group. The groups are then asked to write down 'facts' (assumptions) about the person, e.g. religion, hobbies, family status, etc. The various Post-its are then examined by the facilitators to find out if the participants are right in their assumptions.



Variation 3

One facilitator makes a series of statements that fit one of the other facilitators. It is now up to participants to guess who that facilitator is. They can show their choice either by standing next to the facilitator that they believe is the right one, or by sticking a Post-it label on the person.

Tip: Colourful Post-its can be recommended, since it looks funny with so many slips of paper on the facilitators. This serves to lighten the mood.

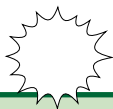
Golden moment

“One participant asked if the facilitator was really speaking the truth. He was so surprised his assumption didn’t hold true. This really dealt a blow to certain prejudices.”

Dialogue ambassador, 2011

3.2: Corner game

This exercise highlights how we have different views, and how values and emotions underlie our opinions. It serves to explain what a dialogue is and to conduct one in practice around a subject that is close to participants’ hearts. This may concern, say, an issue in their organisation, school or workplace. The exercise highlights the challenge of staying within the dialogue and avoiding straying into discussion, as well as the differences between dialogue and discussion. It is well-suited to bring the principles of dialogue regarding openness and honesty into play among the participants. It can be combined with other exercises.



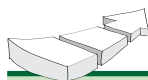
Objective

To illustrate the difference between dialogue and discussion.

To enable a talk about an important subject using dialogue as a method.

To become clear about one's own views and values regarding an issue.

To create fundamental understanding of the nature of dialogue: that we all have our perception of what is true, that respect is important, and that all viewpoints deserve to be heard.



Step By Step

Participants are asked to stand up. The facilitator asks a question concerning an issue in which the participants are involved, and which has many potential answers.

The facilitator has already written down four possible answers to the question on large Post-its or pieces of paper. These are stuck on the wall (or held by other facilitators) in the four corners of the room.

Participants are now asked to position themselves in the corner with the answer that is closest to being in keeping with their own view. Everybody must choose a corner.

Example of a burning question and four answers: *How would you like to care for your parents when they are old?*

1. They will come and live with me
2. They can come and live with me if they want
3. They can live with me, but only for some time
4. They will live in a care home

The answers must be phrased so as to make the differences between them clear, or it becomes hard to choose a corner.

Participants are given 5-10 minutes to talk to others who have gone to the same corner about the reasons for their choice. Then at least a couple of members of each group provide feedback at a plenary session on what they have talked about. The participants learn more about what lies behind the standpoints. And they discover that a variety of views/values may substantiate the same answer. Now there is an opportunity to ask clarifying questions between the groups. The facilitator asks in a more exploratory manner, if no questions are forthcoming from the other participants.

The various corners are welcome to exchange views about their choices. Then the facilitator asks if, on the basis of the various presentations, anybody wants to change their corner. If so, they change their corner.

The facilitator inquires into the cause: What made you change your mind? She also continues to reflect with participants on this, which is linked to the concept of dialogue.



Reflection

To kick-start reflection in a relatively quiet group, the facilitator can join in. She can polarise (exacerbate differences between) opinions or ask questions that indicate similarities between different views, depending on what she thinks will invigorate the exercise. This can take place by means of questions that speculate about the underlying prejudices and interpretations, for example:

Do you think it reflects a lack of love if you do not want your parents to live with you?



Might there be causes other than selfishness for not wanting your parents to live with you? (if selfishness has been mentioned as a cause).

In this manner, the facilitator supports the group in examining the values behind the various views.

If a discussion arises between participants in the various corners, the facilitator lets it carry on for a while. Then it is stopped, and the facilitator talks with participants about what happened to their communication right now (meta-communication). See Chapter 4 about meta-communication.

Questions for reflection:

What just happened to your communication?

Why was it difficult to continue to conduct a dialogue?

What was it like for you when it turned into a discussion?

How can you stay on the dialogical track?

When might it be relevant to leave the dialogue and take up discussion instead?



Practical matters

Number of participants

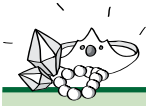
From more than 10 to a maximum of 35 persons to let as many as possible express their views.

Time

45-60 minutes depending on the number of questions. Up to several hours if the exercise is used to address a particular issue (see the tip above).

Materials

Markers and A3 sheets to write down the various answers to put up in the corners. Possibly tape for the floor, if you choose variation 3.



Chest of ideas

Involvement: A few participants will often be a lot more talkative than others. Try to elicit answers from the more quiet participants by asking them directly about their view.

Polarisation: Some participants might speak rather harshly, say, by referring to someone else's view as 'racist'. The facilitator asks exploratory questions and seeks to find out what lies behind such a strong viewpoint: *Do you think the person perceives his own view as racist?*

Be impartial and curious. This activity is good at fostering an open and more personal dialogue. This makes it important for the facilitator not to let on if she has scant regard for certain participants' answers or views. This may prevent them from opening up and perhaps from modifying their position.

Variation 1: Being in someone else's shoes. Combine with Exercise 3.3: Brain swap game.

When the participants have chosen their corner and given their reasons, the facilitator asks everybody to move to the corner to the right of them. Instead of arguing their own views, they now have to put themselves in another group's shoes and try to make their case. This gives rise to an even higher degree of reflection on other people's views. The facilitator pays attention to ensure that the arguments presented are not those of the persons saying them, but an attempt to put themselves in someone else's place.

Questions for reflection:

What was it like to make the case of the other corner?

Did it make you change your perspective or alter some emphasis in your own view?



Variation 2: Combine with Exercise 3.8. Dialogue with talking stick

If two participants from different groups have dominated proceedings and discussed with one another, you can ask them continue to talk in a more dialogical manner by using a talking stick (for example a pen). Ask the other participants to reflect on what happens to communication when they use the stick. Make sure the feedback consists of observations as to whether there is a dialogue or a discussion going on, not of assessments of whether the two persons with the stick are good or bad at dialoguing. Afterwards remember to thank the two who took part in this.

Variation 3: positioning line

If there are less than 10 participants, you may operate with only two answers to the burning question, e.g. would you always, no matter what, let your parents live with you when they are old? YES or NO. Draw a line on the floor, e.g. using coloured tape, and ask participants to place themselves along the line depending on their view. One end of the line means 'absolutely YES', the other 'absolutely NO'. They can also choose to position themselves in between the two extremes, if their view of the issue is less than clear-cut.

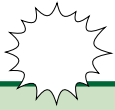
The facilitator interviews the participants about the reasons for their choices. You must ask in an exploratory manner what lies behind those immediate standpoints.

Tip: The exercise can serve to set the framework for a whole workshop with dialogue, in which the objective is to address a particular issue, say, within an organisation.



3.3: Brain swap game

This exercise puts participants in someone else's shoes. By being open-minded about other people's outlook, you gain greater insight into their viewpoints. It fosters understanding of why others have an opinion different from your own, and of how this can be accepted, even if you do not necessarily agree. It works well for intercultural dialogue and to highlight the difference between dialogue and discussion.

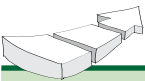


Objective

To learn to see things from a different perspective and perhaps discover the possibility of changing one's position.

To gain greater understanding of motivations, needs and values behind different views.

To conduct a dialogue in practice on a subject that engages participants (hotspot).



Step By Step

The room is divided into two, for example using coloured tape on the floor.

The chairs are moved to one side, and participants stand on the floor in random order.

The facilitator does not explain the purpose of the exercise, only what is to take place. The aha! experience for the participants consists of realising what it is like to change their mind in practice.



Participants are asked a question with only two possible answers representing two contrasting viewpoints. Depending on their answers, participants move to one side or another of the room.

For examples: *If two people of different religions want to marry, it is: 1) all right or 2) unacceptable.*

Within the two groups, people converse about what underlies these views and why they have chosen the side concerned.

The facilitator briefly interviews a couple of members of each group about their choice.

Now you ask participants to 'swap brains' by swapping sides.

Participants are given 5 minutes – depending on how many they are – to talk within the group about how they are going to explain their new viewpoint.

Each group gets 5 minutes to present their new arguments to the other group.

The facilitator asks participants to swap back. The groups return to their original viewpoint. However, those of them who have changed their mind are encouraged to remain where they are. The facilitator inquires in an exploratory manner into what made them do so.

After this, the exercise is jointly consolidated and reflected upon.





Reflection

Questions for reflection:

What was it like to do this exercise?

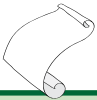
Which values did you perceive underlying the different views?

Do the same values underlie different views?

Or do different values underlie the same view?

What happened when you 'swapped brains' (stepped into the other people's shoes) and had to argue a view that you did not actually share?

What did you learn from this exercise?



Practical matters

Number of participants

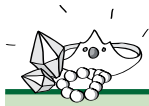
From more than 10 to a maximum of 35 persons to let as many as possible express their views.

Time

45-60 minutes depending on the number of questions. Up to several hours if the exercise is used to address a particular issue (see the tip above).

Materials

Markers and A3 sheets to write down the various answers to put up in the corners. Possibly tape for the floor, if you choose Variation 3.



Chest of ideas

Those participants who have changed their mind have experienced in practice how to do so. Make sure you elaborate on that. It is highly valuable to have this insight shared with the whole group.

Choice of question/issue

Choose the question on which participants must make up their mind, depending on how much the group can take being challenged. If the issue is too tame, so will be the outcome. If it is too inflammable, it becomes more challenging for the facilitator to uphold the method of dialogue, and participants will be more inclined to discussion instead.

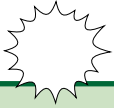
In workshops primarily focused on conducting a dialogue about a current topic (see above), you choose the issue and phrase questions together with the participants.

This exercise can usefully be combined with Exercise 3.8: Dialogue with talking stick.

You can turn the exercise into a competition between the two groups about enlisting supporters for their viewpoint. This can boost the dynamism in an otherwise somewhat unresponsive group.

3.4: Inside or outside?

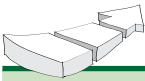
This exercise is well suited to highlight how we human beings form groups and pigeonhole one another, as well as how discrimination and exclusion take place. You can put it into perspective by talking about the relation between minority and majority. The exercise is practically oriented, and it involves participants directly without use of verbal language. Accordingly, it is vital to consolidate and reflect on the exercise. It is useful for intercultural dialogue.



Objective

To give participants understanding of:

- how groupings take place, and how these are not always self-selected;
- what and how much it means for people to belong to a group, and how vulnerable it feels to be on the outside;
- the dilemma that a sense of community can translate into acts directed against those who are not a part of the group.



Step By Step

The facilitator briefly explains what the exercise is about and what the rules are. She does not say that one person will get a slip of paper that does not pertain to any group, or what will happen (see below).

The participants are asked to form a circle with their backs towards the centre. The facilitator stands in the middle of the circle, and puts a Post-it on the back of each participant. One participant gets a colour that nobody else has (say, green), while the rest are given one of three colours (say, red, yellow and blue) distributed in equal numbers between participants.

The participants are now encouraged to band together in groups with the same colour.

The rule is that participants are **not** allowed to talk to one another, nor may they see their own colour. However, they can help each other by looking at each other's slips of paper and connecting people of the same colour. The last part is only mentioned if anybody asks.

The person with the colour that nobody else has ends up standing alone after having been pushed from one group to another.

It is important to present the instructions very clearly, and to make sure the participants are clear about what they have to do before the exercise begins.

Take the time to consolidate this exercise, which may provoke strong and unpleasant emotions. Start by asking the participant who ends up being the odd one out: *How was it to stand alone? How did you react?*

Take the time and space to appreciate and mirror the feelings being expressed. The participant must feel heard and seen in the vulnerability which might have afflicted him. Check if he is all right, before you move on to consolidating and reflecting on the exercise.

Questions for consolidation:

What happened in this exercise?

How did you form groups?

How did you perceive the grouping?

What was it like when somebody else tried to become a part of your group?

What did you do? And why?

What was it like to push others away?

What was it like to be pushed away?



Reflection

In the general reflection, the experience of being inside or outside a group can be generalised as something we all know about. By putting it into perspective, this is linked to how dialogue and its nature are relevant to this phenomenon.

Questions for reflection and putting the exercise into perspective:

Has anyone else gone through something similar in another context?

What do you think about the mechanisms that enable others to decide if you are in or out?



Did any one of you consider questioning the norm established by us as facilitators as regards grouping people according to the colour on their back?

Why do you think we did this exercise?



Practical matters

Number of participants

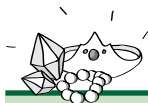
From 10 to about 30 persons. Be aware that the higher the number of participants, the more vulnerable is it to be the one who does not belong.

Time

15 minutes + 20 minutes to consolidate and reflect.

Materials

Post-its in different colours, one for each participant.



Chest of ideas

The person to get his own colour is chosen by the facilitator. Clearly it is a good idea to choose a person who comes across as 'resilient' and self-confident. This is why the exercise works better some time into the workshop, when the facilitator has got a sense of the participants. It is important that the people are at ease with one another. Beware of your own prejudice and assumptions as to who appears to be 'resilient'.

Variation

You choose two persons who get their own unique colour (still different from those of the groups). They get to share the experience of 'being outside' and can reflect with one another on what it was like.



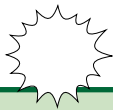
Aha! experience

“One participant refused to abide by our rule of shutting one person out. He didn’t care one bit what colour he belonged to. His concern was that everyone got into a group. He later gave the reason that shutting somebody out was against his conscience! I learned that some people have values that are so strong they follow them no matter what rules are established.”

Dialogue ambassador, 2011

3.5: Setting priorities

This exercise can be used to conduct a dialogue in practice about values existing in different societies. It shows how we are different, and what we have in common. It highlights how values are prioritised differently from one society to another, but also that priorities can vary within the same society. Accordingly, it is suitable for groups with participants of varied cultural backgrounds, as well as to conduct an intercultural dialogue.



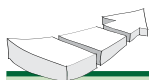
Objective

To give participants greater insights into the values existing in the different societies in which we live, as well as an understanding that values differ between societies as well as within the same societies.

To reflect on our assumptions about others.

To put ourselves in other people’s shoes and achieve understanding.

To train dialogical tools, such as active listening and asking exploratory question.



Step By Step

Participants are divided into groups of 5-7 persons. Each group is composed of people from the same society, say, a Jordanian and a Danish group.

If the diversity is very high among participants, for example, because they come from eight different countries, this is taken into account so as to make the groups as homogenous as possible. For example, they can be divided into one group of people from Southern European and another from Northern European countries.

The facilitator starts out by explaining the various steps in the exercise.

Each group gets two identical decks of (at least) 20 cards. Each card sets out a value, norm or phenomenon existing in various societies, such as democracy, freedom of expression, family, religion, education, tradition, etc. The values are determined by the facilitators beforehand and are tailor-made to the participants concerned. They must be relevant to the societies for which the groups are to set priorities.

The groups' task is to prepare a top-five list of the values which, in their view, rank as the highest priorities in the two different societies. These societies must be some of those from which participants hail, say, Denmark and Jordan, or Sierra Leone and Greece.

Now each group presents their list to the other groups and answers clarifying questions.

Set aside ample time for consolidating and reflecting on the exercise, since this is where a great part of the learning takes place.



Reflection

Questions for reflection.

To each group:

What did you agree on?

How did you agree?

Did you conduct a dialogue or a discussion?

What was it like to determine the priorities of a society other than your own?

What was it like to determine the priorities of your own society?

To everyone in a joint consolidation session:

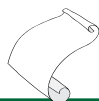
What was the hardest to agree on: your own or another society's values?

How come this was so?

How can the two forms of communication reinforce one another?

Discussion/argumentation in order to convince, negotiate or reach agreement? Dialogue in order to understand? Or both?

Why do you think we did this exercise?



Practical matters

Number of participants

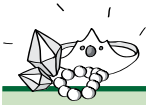
From 10 to 30 persons. If there are many participants, it can be challenging to keep up the focus and concentration during the joint consolidation session, which should therefore be shortened.

Time

45 minutes -1 hour.

Materials

Two identical decks of card for each group with 20 different values. Paper (A3 sheets or flipchart paper) and markers for each group.

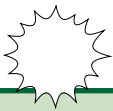


Chest of ideas

Tip: Prepare the cards for each group in different colours. This makes it easier when you have to sort them afterwards in order to reuse them later.

3.6: Questions and answers

This exercise is well-suited for workshops with dialogue on a particular subject that interests participants. The facilitator must be ready to offer up some private aspects of herself in the dialogue. The participants ask the facilitator questions, and the ensuing conversation shows dialogue in practice and breaks down whatever prejudice there might be. The exercise is particularly appropriate for workshops in which the facilitator has a cultural background different from that of the participants. Thus it also serves to conduct an intercultural dialogue. It works best with several facilitators.



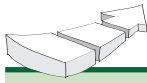
Objective

To break down prejudice and stereotypes, and to challenge fundamental assumptions that we make about each other.

To illustrate the diversity among people in practice, and to foster understanding of differences.

To focus on curiosity as an important part of a dialogical frame of mind and as a dialogical tool.

To enable a dialogue on an equal footing between participants and facilitators.



Step By Step

Ask participants to phrase one or several questions for the facilitator, which aim to uncover the values which the facilitator stands for. You might want to stress the principles of dialogue: *trust, openness, honesty and equality.*

Participants put the questions to the facilitator(s), who subsequently answer them.

If a participant embarks on a lengthy monologue about his own views, which may take up too much time for the others to speak, help the person move on, say, by asking: *So what is your question?*

Be open and friendly. If a question offends you, ask the person why it is asked. Remain curious and exploratory, thus practising dialogical communication.

If the question is very general or concerns a matter that you do not know much about, then ask the participant to clarify the question.

Only answer on your own behalf, never on behalf of your country, your culture or your group.



Reflection

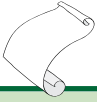
Questions for reflection:

Why do you think we did this exercise?

What did you gain from this exercise?

What did you notice as regards the communication that took place within the group?





Practical matters

Number of participants

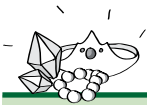
From 10 to an unlimited number of persons. However, if there are more than 35, there will not be time for everyone to ask a question. Instead they can reflect in smaller groups on what it was like to do the exercise.

Time

15-45 minutes depending on the number of participants (leave ample time to consolidate and reflect on the exercise).

Materials

Possibly pens and paper.



Chest of ideas

Variation 1

The participants write down the questions and hand them to the facilitator. This may produce questions that would otherwise not have been asked, because they may seem too private. The disadvantage is that it leads to a somewhat less open dialogue. This can be used for reflection with participants on how openness affects communication.

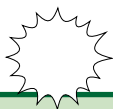
Story

“In Egypt there was one participant who asked me if I supported letting women work outside the home. I am a lawyer and I work for women’s rights, so I replied at length to the participant, who was member of a party that did not support that right. After the workshop I got a friendship request on Facebook from the participant with a message saying: - Thank you for expressing understanding of our views. You were really good at putting your own viewpoints across to us!”

Dialogue ambassador, 2011

3.7: Value game

This exercise addresses our cultural and personal views. What are they? And how can we change our perception of which values are the most important? Firstly it requires dialogical listening, and secondly negotiations for the group to reach agreement on ten shared values. It shows the difference between dialogue and discussion, but also how these two forms of communication can go hand in hand. It is suitable for team-building and for intercultural dialogue. It requires some time, both for the actual exercise and for the consolidation.



Objective

To train different forms of communication:

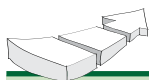
- To listen dialogically, argue and negotiate to reach agreement.
- To let constructive discussion and dialogue go hand in hand.

To see values from several perspectives and (perhaps) discover how to change your viewpoint.

To gain greater understanding of motivations, needs and values underlying various views.

To discover how much we have in common despite differences on the surface.

To discover how different we can be, even when we belong to the same group or cultural community.



Step By Step

The exercise comprises several stages and must be introduced in detail, so participants know exactly what to do. It is important that the rules are respected at each stage.

Perhaps it is a good idea to introduce and carry out the first stage before introducing and carrying out the second.

The exercise comprises three parts: solo work, group work and shared reflection.

Participants are divided into groups of 4-8 persons.

Each participant receives a deck of cards with 40 different values, one on each card.

The decks are identical, except that each deck has its own unique colour.

Ask participants to form groups, so that everyone in each group has his and her own colour of cards. For example, in a group of seven people, participants have a blue, red, white, green, yellow, orange and turquoise decks, but with the same values written on them. (See below about materials.)

Introducing part 1: solo work

“You (each participant) must separate the cards in two piles. One contains the cards which you think represent the most important values to you; another those values that are less important to you.

After that, choose ten cards from the first pile with the values that you find most important of all.



Rank the 10 chosen cards in order of priority on the table, starting with the most important.

You are not allowed to speak to one another throughout this part!"

Introducing part 2: group work

Each group conducts rounds in which participants take turns to put a card on the table and explain their choice. Start with the cards with values given the highest priority.

The others listen actively, that is, **no discussion or comments**, only clarifying questions.

After that the group agrees on the 10 cards that best represent the group's values.

The values are written up on a large sheet of paper in order of priority.

Presentation and consolidation

The groups briefly explain their choices and the process to make them. The facilitator may ask for elaboration with questions such as these:

How was the process at the beginning, during the dialogue, when you listened to one another? How was the process when you had to try to reach agreement and produce a result (choose shared values and prioritise)?

How did negotiations take place?

When was it possible to make concessions as regards your own values?

How did you use the tools of dialogue?

What types of discussion were used?

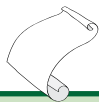


Reflection

As a facilitator, you may highlight the following points in the reflection:

- Contrived situation: Values relate to – and change according to – different subjects and situations. Hence values are not fixed. They are structured in a kind of hierarchy. In some contexts and situations, a value like *freedom* may get priority, whereas in other the most important might be *family*.
- The significance of values always hinges on who asserts them and how (the form). For example, if you use dialogical communication or constructive discussion, in which you listen, you will be inclined to see your own values in a different light. And perhaps be willing to re-order priorities.
- The significance of the principles of dialogue in the process: trust, openness, honesty and equality.
- The significance of recognition: when we feel recognised, heard, seen and understood, we become readier to open up and change viewpoints.
- Abstract and general values (e.g. ‘freedom’) are easier to negotiate than specific ones (e.g. ‘expressing thoughts and feelings directly’).
- The significance of identity: we all have many important identities, but their importance diminishes or grows depending on the context at hand and the issue being raised.

Remember to ask: *what did you learn from this exercise?*



Practical matters

Number of participants

12- 40 persons, 25-30 is most appropriate.

Time

1½ - 3 hours: the more participants, the more time is required. (If the exercise is used for team-building, it takes at least 2½ hours).

15-20 minutes for introduction, group formation and solo work.

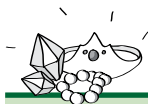
45-60 minutes for group work.

30-45 minutes for consolidation.

Materials

Cards with about 40 different values, some deep and universal, others more specific to particular cultures. There should be one full deck for each participant. If there are 40 participants, that amounts to 1,600 cards. Accordingly, make each deck of cards in a separate colour, so that each person has one colour, and so that colours vary within each group. Otherwise, it becomes a daunting task to collect the cards and sort them for reuse (see Annex 4 for suggestions for values).

Flipchart paper and markers, one deck of cards for each group, adhesive to attach each group's 10 values to the wall.



Chest of ideas

The group size is adapted to the kind of participants. With a homogenous group (in terms of age, education and culture), it may be better to have many participants to create greater scope for disagreement on the importance and priority of the values. With a group of participants who share few similarities, groups of four or five may be more appropriate. →

You may impose a rule that participants are not allowed to vote to reach agreement on the ten shared values. This can be a good point in a workshop with, say, democracy as its issue. Here the exercise may serve as a springboard for reflection on different ways of practising democracy.

The exercise can confound expectations by showing relative convergence in the choice of values, even in groups where participants have highly diverse backgrounds, where more internal dissension might have been expected. It often creates a great spirit of mutual connection between participants.

The exercise also shows that those with whom one might assume to have a lot in common may well have very different views of which values rank as the most important. Or of how to understand a value.

Talking to reach a shared prioritisation fosters understanding of the multifaceted nature of dialogue, as it interacts with discussion, and of how dialogical tools work in practice.

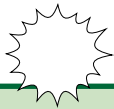
Consolidation and reflection on the participants' process is an essential part of the exercise.

Variation

The exercise serves to reconcile expectations and to carry out team-building, say, within a project group assigned to a particular task. Ask participants to talk about which values matter the most to them given the project at hand. Through this game, participants become more aware what is important to them in the project, thus improving the foundation for a fruitful – and dialogical – cooperation.

3.8: Dialogue with talking stick

This exercise practises the essence of the nature of dialogue. It is inspired by the practice of certain tribes who hold an object in their hands while they address an assembly. When calling upon somebody else to speak, the object is passed on to them. The exercise is concrete, and at the same time gives participants deeper insight into dialogue and understanding of the differences between dialogue and discussion. It also illustrates what it means for the degree of contact in communication when you listen carefully to one another. It is highly appropriate for workshops with dialogue, that is, where participants have gathered to conduct a dialogue in practice about an issue of topical interest to their group.

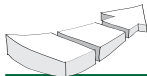


Objective

To show how dialogue works in practice.

To show the difference between dialogue and discussion.

To train in the tools of dialogue, such as engaging contact, active listening and exploratory questioning.



Step By Step

Introduce the exercise by defining dialogue as a concept and method. See, for instance, Exercise 1.5, followed by brainstorming and consolidation.

Participants are asked to converse in pairs about an issue or dilemma written on the blackboard and briefly explained by the facilitator. This can be phrased as a question:

Can euthanasia be justified?

Is it a duty to always take part in the organisation's events?

Can a school decide how students must dress?



The exercise works better when the subject matter chosen engages the participants. It can be a topical dilemma, for example, one that is currently discussed in the media. This can be decided upon together with the participants. However, the facilitator should always have an issue up his sleeve.

If the exercise is intended to help participants conduct a dialogue about a specific matter, say, within their organisation, they should also be involved in choosing the exercise issue.

Now participants talk about the issue using the following method of holding a talking stick (for example a pen or any other object) to mark the shift between who gets to address the meeting

1. Person A briefly sets out his view of the issue, while holding the object.
2. Person B takes hold of the object and repeats back exactly (mirrors) what A said, while A continues to hold on to the object as well. B might start by saying, for instance, "*What you say is that...*" (and then reproduces what was said).
3. B is not allowed to speak his own mind until A confirms that this is 100% correctly represented. Meanwhile, both of them hang on to the object.
4. Only when A has confirmed that B has correctly rendered what she said does she let go of the object.
5. Now it is B's turn to utter his views about the issue.
6. Then A takes hold of the object and repeats back exactly (mirrors) what B just said, while **both** hold on to the object.
7. They always take turns to hold and let go along the same lines as set out above.

After about 5 minutes, the pairs are given time to wrap up by reflecting on how the exercise worked for them.

Finally, the exercise is consolidated in a plenary session



Reflection

Focus on the differences between dialogue and discussion during the consolidation.

Questions for consolidation (choose depending on whether the workshop focus is on an issue subject to dialogue or on dialogical tools in general):

How did you perceive your communication in this exercise?

What was your view of the issue – before, during and after the exercise?

Did your shift your position at all? If so, why do you think you did so?

How did you experience your mutual contact?

Where do you all stand now as regards the issue?

Have you shifted your position as a group at all?

If there has first been discussion and then dialogue, you may ask participants to reflect on changes in body language, such as gesticulation, eye contact and the feeling of contact and attentiveness in communication.

What did you observe regarding body language while the discussion went on?

You can also provide examples of your own observations:

What I saw and heard was that...

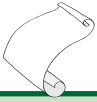
After that, you may consolidate in greater depth, say, by showing a poster setting out the various forms of communication: dialogue, constructive and destructive discussion (see Chapter 1 and Annex 1).

Questions for reflection:

When is it wise to discuss/persuade/negotiate (constructive discussion)?

When is it more useful to conduct a dialogue?

When and how can the two forms go hand in hand?



Practical matters

Number of participants

From 10 to unlimited number of persons. If there are more than 35 participants, it can be challenging to keep up the focus and concentration during the joint consolidating session, which should therefore be shortened.

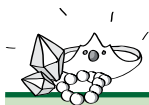
If the exercise is used to conduct a dialogue on a specific subject, say, in a project group, a maximum of 20 participants is adequate.

Time

From about 1 hour to 1 hour 15 minutes. About 15 minutes for introduction and selection of the issue. 25 minutes in the circle + 5 minutes to consolidate in small groups or in pairs. 30 minutes for the consolidating session, more time is necessary if there are many participants.

Materials

A talking stick for each pair. This can be a pen, marker or any other type of object large enough for both to hold on to.



Chest of ideas

Be precise in your instructions, ideally by showing how it is done in practice by demonstrating it before the exercise is carried out.

Variation 1: **Dialogue circle**

Participants are divided into groups of three to four participants who use the talking stick in a circle according to the model set out below. The person(s) not holding the stick help the others to stay on the dialogical track.



1. Person A starts off by briefly setting out her view of the subject while holding the talking stick.
2. Person B grabs the talking stick and repeats back exactly what A said, while A continues to hold on too. B initiates his sentences by saying, for example: "*what you say is that...*" (and then reproduces what was said).
3. B is not allowed to speak his own mind until A confirms that this is 100% correctly represented. Meanwhile, both of them hang on to the object.
4. When A has accepted that B has correctly repeated what she said, she lets go of the talking stick. Now only B is holding it and expresses his views about the issue.
5. He does this according to this formula: "*What I agree on is...*" (then he mentions what he agrees with A on) followed by "*what I disagree with A on is*" (he mentions what he disagrees with A on). Thus it is clearly set out what the areas of agreement and disagreement are.
6. B now turns to C, who does the same to B as B has just done to A.
7. C responds **only** to what B (and not A) has said when he takes the word.
8. The round moves on to the next person (if there are four in the group), then back to A, B and so forth.



9. After about 10 minutes, the group reflects for about 5 minutes on what it was like to do the exercise.

Variation 2:

The exercise is carried out in two steps. Participants are first asked to talk freely about the issue in pairs or groups without previous instruction. Then the dialogue is introduced. Most people will instinctively take up discussion at first (if the issue is sufficiently controversial). This serves to highlight the differences between dialogue and discussion. This can be stressed and elaborated upon during the consolidation.

Variation 1a

You let two persons show the method to the rest of the group in order to illustrate first a discussion, then a dialogue. This requires a group of people who are fully at ease with one another. Make sure you guide the participants in their observations so that it does not turn into an assessment of whether or not the two persons performing are good at holding a dialogue. This is a shared opportunity to observe and learn in practice.

Variation 2: The exercise is also useful for teambuilding and for gatherings of groups who want to improve their dialogical skills. This could stem from a longstanding failure to agree on a particular decision about a (thorny) issue, or from failure to carry out a decision taken because not everyone really agrees. The exercise then helps sharpen the 'hearing' of everybody. The dialogue clarifies to the parties what each other really thinks.

Tip: To be able to focus on dialogue in the exercise, you must be sure that the participants are in relative disagreement to begin with. In other words, it might be necessary to first agree together on what to disagree on!

ANNEX I: OVERVIEW OF DIALOGUE VERSUS DESTRUCTIVE DISCUSSION

Communication form	Dialogue	Destructive discussion
Objective	To share information, views and opinions. To explore the subject matter and different standpoints in order to achieve greater understanding and deeper insight.	To win and gain power by manipulating and polarising differences.
Image	A circle or a spiral in which people together penetrate deeper into the various layers of meaning.	A boxing ring. A fight that pitches opposing persons or groups in confrontation.
Communication genres	Non-violent communication, solution-oriented communication, assertive communication.	Disingenuous argumentation, polemics, debate, manipulation, quarrel.
Basic values	Respect for disagreements and differences. These are seen as part of life. They are unavoidable, and the crux of the matter is to handle them constructively. A desire for diversity.	Disagreements and differences between people are in the way. There is no acceptance of or respect for them. A desire for conformity. Continues...

Communication form	Dialogue	Destructive discussion
Basic values	<p>We focus on what we have in common and can learn from each other's differences.</p> <p>People are equal in worth regardless of gender, race, religion, social status, etc.</p> <p>My truth need not hold true for other people.</p> <p>Power exists, but should not be abused.</p> <p>Shared synergy is good.</p>	<p>We focus on differences and magnify them by means of polarisation.</p> <p>Some people are worth more than others due to, for instance, gender, race or religion.</p> <p>My truth is the one and only truth.</p> <p>Using power is all right, overtly or covertly.</p> <p>Either-or is good.</p>
Frame of mind	<p>It is about thinking and creating together in order to identify new ways and solutions.</p> <p>Being open, inquiring and curious.</p>	<p>It is about winning. It does not matter if the other loses.</p> <p>Being closed, judgmental and critical.</p>
Rules of the game	<p>Rules have been agreed beforehand. They ensure equality and that everyone is heard. People listen without interrupting.</p>	<p>None or few rules agreed beforehand. Breaking the rules is all right. Anything goes.</p>

Communication form	Dialogue	Destructive discussion
Focus of conversation	Exchanging viewpoints, opinions and values. Exploring dilemmas and what makes sense to you, me and us. Learning and understanding.	Winning the argument and being able to impose one's will. There is one correct solution (mine).
Form	Active listening to understand and become wiser. Open and exploratory questions. Staying in one's own half.	Selective listening as springboard for responding and for finding fault with the other's logic. Leading questions, lies and traps. Criticising, persuading and disparaging the other. Playing defence and attack.
Result	<p>A process that gives rise to a deeper understanding and new shared insights, new knowledge and a wider, more complex view of the issue.</p> <p>No losers, as both win by being enriched and becoming wiser.</p> <p>A third way, a better (more trustful) relation. Synergy.</p> <p>$I + I = 3$</p>	<p>Polarisation of standpoints, stronger contrasts, a more hostile relation, more prejudices and stereotypes, demonisation.</p> <p>One wins, the other loses.</p> <p>Only one way at the expense of the relation.</p> <p>$0-I$ or $I-0$</p>

ANNEX 2: BONUS TIPS

There are two areas where it may well pay off to invest additional effort both when planning and implementing a workshop, and especially if you are less experienced. These are the **introduction** and the **practicalities**.

A good introduction motivates participants and gets the workshop off to a smooth start, creating a space conducive to learning where the dialogue can flourish. The practicalities concern all the things that are easily overlooked, but – if they fail to work properly – can shake the confidence of both the participants and yourself, conveying an impression of irresponsibility. This can be taken into account during the planning and be kept in mind during implementation.

Bonus tips - introduction

An introduction typically contains:

- *Entrance* – before the start, preparing the room and yourself
- *Welcome* and presentation of workshop leader and participants
- *Presentation* of the workshop programme, issue and contract
- *Practical* information
- *Rules of the game*
- *Icebreakers*

The entrance concerns what goes on before participants arrive, and how you, as responsible for the workshop, arrive through the door. By then, the room should be ready with the tables and chairs in their positions, and the necessary materials in place, such as flipchart paper, markers and other materials needed for activities. The optimal furniture arrangement for a dialogue workshop is no tables and the chairs placed in a circle. The workshop leader sits in the circle just like the participants to convey equality.

As a facilitator, you must be mentally ready for the task that you are about to undertake. You arrive well before the starting time, make sure you are well prepared and in touch with yourself. Notice that there are nearly always some who arrive too early. Greet them properly before you carry on, for example, readying the room.

The welcome is the first actual item on the agenda. It aims to say hello in a proper manner so as to make everyone feel welcome. First impressions count, both of you and internally among participants. The workshop leader tends to set the tone, so the calmer, clearer and more focused you are, the better. Good contact with participants is the perfect starting point for a dialogue.

The presentation of you as a leader must also be tailor-made for each workshop. It may benefit from highlighting the common denominators between you and participants to make it more engaging and relevant. The participants also introduce themselves. Name badges are always a good idea (a simple solution is to have some stickers on which to write names before they are stuck on participants' clothes). Brief presentations of you as well as participants are appropriate for 2-3-hour workshops (to spend as little time as possible on this), when there are several of you as facilitators, or when participants know each other well beforehand. If, on the other hand, you are going to spend considerable time together and/or the participants do not know each other, presentations should be more thorough. In such cases, it is important to generate closer relations.

The presentation of the programme should be clear and concise. It should set out the background to the workshop, its overall objective and the contract. The latter is the agreement with participants about what is to take place. It should always be based on what has been agreed with those who commissioned the workshop. Nevertheless, it is helpful to make the contract clear *together* with participants. It serves to calm and reassure everyone if all are clear on what is about to happen. In addition, the contract can be adjusted with participants if necessary.

The programme should be noted in headings on the flipchart without going into detail. The clever move is to leave scope for adjusting the programme along the way, and perhaps to abort a minor exercise, if you fall behind schedule.

Briefly explain what will take place, without anticipating the points. For example: “*We are going to work with dialogue, and the issue is prejudice and stereotypes.*” This is not the time to reveal *how* you are going to work, *which* exercises you will use, or what points you hope the participants will infer from it.

Provide the relevant *practical information*. Participants appreciate knowing when there is a break, and where, for example to find the toilet, canteen and emergency exits. In this manner, they expend less energy on thinking about it, thus concentrating on what is going to happen at the workshop.

A shared set of rules of the game helps create a good and respectful process with a reassuring space for participants to be and learn in. The rules can be established by involving participants. You can also encourage them to take responsibility for sticking to the rules along the way. This gives them greater ownership and enhances their motivation to contribute actively. And then the dialogue is already underway. You may also remind people of the rules, if you feel the process is veering off-track, say, if a head-on discussion breaks out between some participants.

Expressions such as ‘set of rules’ or ‘rules of the game’ can be perceived by some people as condescending, as if the workshop leader is expecting participants to infringe whatever the rules suggest, such as ‘listen without interrupting’. Consequently, different words can be used, such as ‘norms for sharing’, ‘how to grow together’ or whatever fits the group at hand.

Examples of rules are:

- Listen, listen and listen – even to what is left unspoken
- Take up the space that you need – and leave space for others
- Take part, but it is all right to pass
- Be curious and explorative
- We are different, and this is for the better

(See Exercise 1.2. about rules).

You might also use a check-in (see Exercise 1.1) to further sharpen participants' sense of being party to the workshop.

Icebreakers. Various activities or games are used to lighten the mood, both among participants and yourself. When everyone gets to stand on the floor, move around and have fun together, closer contacts are forged. Each person feels at ease and gathers more courage to be herself. Remember that icebreakers must always be carried out with due respect for different personal boundaries. Otherwise, they can have the opposite effect of making people feel insecure.

Bonus tips – practicalities

Addressing practical aspects of planning requires thinking ahead from A to Z. *What do I need to carry out the workshop without being tripped up by oversights in practicalities? What should I prepare beforehand? And what do I need to look into and take into account at the venue?*

You should address:

- Timetable
- Premises and room
- Technology
- Resources

Timetable. First and foremost, the timetable should be adhered to. It is a good idea to write this into the script. Always start and end at the agreed time. It irritates most people to start or end later than scheduled. Various norms regarding meeting times, numbers and lengths of

breaks, say, those that are customary within a particular organisation, may conspire to throw your timetable off course. Establish this from the beginning and before meeting those commissioning the workshop, and again when you meet the participants. And make sure you keep an eye on the time.

Premises and room. A good and large room is optimal for a dialogue workshop, since many of the activities take up considerable space. However, in some cases you have to adapt your workshop to the conditions at hand. The more you know beforehand about the room size, chairs and tables available, lighting etc. in the room, the better you will be prepared for possibly having to be flexible. A clear agreement on who is to prepare the room – you or the people ordering the workshop – is helpful. If you are doing a short workshop, it is a shame to spend the first 10 minutes clearing the floor, because you forgot to say the chairs must form a circle, or to discover that the tables and chairs cannot be moved around. It may also be wise to check up once more how you get to and from the venue, where the workshop is to be held, and at what time the room is available.

Technology. Check that everything with an electric cable works before the event. Try to foresee anything that can go wrong, and how to solve it! For instance, if you need an internet connection, then make sure it also works with a guest computer (yours!), or agree on a different solution. Set aside time for one last check.

As part of setting store by the process and close contact between participants, you should generally be wary of extensive PowerPoint presentations and advanced technology. You risk focusing too much on whether the gadgets work and whether the process is heading towards where you want it to. This can distract your attention from what goes on in the room and between the participants. A flipchart with lots of paper and markers is the best tool to document what goes on along the way.

Keep a pack of poster putty (Blu-Tack or the like) handy, so that you can stick your sheets of paper up on the walls to illustrate what you have been working on. Check with the organiser if such materials are available. Otherwise you will have to take care of it. Also check once more that you have remembered all relevant materials, such as the rules, cards, Post-its – and this book – which are to be used for the exercises that you have selected.

Resources. It must be agreed beforehand with those who commissioned the workshop who is responsible for what, and who pays for what, including, for example, fees, transport, room hire, and whether notepads and pens are available. If food and drink are expected (coffee, tea, water, fruit or the like), it must be agreed who is responsible for this. And if you need technological aids, say, to play music or photocopy handouts, this must also be in place.

The rule of thumb is: Better to check everything one more time than to be caught out in the situation.



ANNEX 3: EXAMPLES OF SCRIPTS

Below are three examples of how to structure a workshop and of what a 'script' might look like. All three have been planned based on several facilitators jointly running the workshop, but the programmes can easily be adjusted to be carried out by a single facilitator.

Remember that a workshop must always be tailor-made to its participants. These examples are for inspiration only. All exercises and chapters referred to are from this book.

1. Egypt: Workshop about dialogue

Heading:	The potential of dialogue
Target group:	University students who do not know each other, aged 20-30 years.
Number of participants:	About 15
Number of facilitators:	Two, indicated in the text as A and B
Duration:	4 hours

Time:	What are we doing?	How do we do it? Who has the main responsibility?
02 00 pm	<p><i>Welcome</i> and introduction to the project Ambassadors for Dialogue (the organisation you come from).</p> <p><i>Presentation</i> of us and participants.</p> <p>What are we going to do today? Programme and contract.</p> <p><i>Reconciling expectations</i>: Why are you here today? What would you like to gain from this?</p> <p>Rules (Exercise 1.2)</p> <p>Brief reflection on what it was like to take part in setting the rules (norms) for a group. How did we communicate about it?</p>	<p>We take turns to explain briefly about the project</p> <p>Round of people saying their names + name badges (A)</p> <p>Round (A)</p> <p>Involvement of participants (B) B</p>
02 30 pm	<p><i>Icebreaker</i>: Fruit salad (Exercise 2.2)</p>	A leads
02 40 pm	<p><i>Brainstorming</i>: What is dialogue to you? (Exercise 2.5).</p> <p><i>Consolidation</i> around definition of dialogue (see Chapter 1 and Exercise 2.5)</p>	<p>B leads</p> <p>B leads the consolidation session, A supports</p>
03 10 pm	Break	A takes care of water and fruit, B tidies up

Time:	What are we doing?	How do we do it? Who has the main responsibility?
03 25 pm	<p>What is the difference between dialogue and debate? (Exercise 2.5; variation 1)</p> <p>Consolidation</p>	<p>A leads</p> <p>Divide into groups Hand out flipchart paper and markers</p>
03 45 pm	<p><i>Energiser:</i> Whispering game (Exercise 2.3)</p> <p>Consolidation</p>	B leads
04 10 pm	<p>Corner game (Exercise 3.2) with the variation:</p> <p>Dialogue with talking stick (Exercise 2.8)</p> <p>Perhaps a few short breaks</p> <p>Consolidation (on the blackboard)</p>	A leads, B makes sure markers or pens are ready for use as talking sticks
05 30 pm	<p>Summing up (of the entire workshop) with reflection and evaluation (Exercise 1.3).</p> <p>Putting it into perspective:</p> <p>How can I use this in my life/work?</p>	B leads, A complements
06 00 pm	Thank you and goodbye	A leads, B complements Both

2. Denmark: Workshop with dialogue on an issue

Heading:	Dialogue as a tool in international project work
Target group:	Young people involved in voluntary international project cooperation, who do not know each other, aged 18-22 years.
Number of participants:	About 20
Number of facilitators:	3
Duration:	3 hours

Time:	What are we doing?	Who?
15 min.	<p><i>Welcome</i> and brief introduction to the project Ambassadors for Dialogue (or the organisation that you represent)</p> <p>Why are we here today? (the contract, see Chapter 3)</p> <p>What are we doing today?</p> <p>What are your expectations?</p> <p>Set of rules (Exercise 1.2)</p> <p>Final version of rules are displayed on the wall, checking with participants if they are all right</p>	Everyone

Time:	What are we doing?	Who?
15 min.	Icebreaker: <i>Fruit salad</i> (Exercise 2.2) + variation about good versus bad communication	A leads
30 min	<i>Prejudice game</i> (Exercise 3.1) <i>Consolidation and reflection:</i> How do we perceive and attach labels to people we do not know and who come across to us as 'different'? What might be the implications of this for international project work?	B leads, A and C complement
10 min.	Break	
45-60 min.	Corner game (Exercise 3.2) Question for the corner game: <i>In an international project about gender equality, are there any special considerations that need to be taken into account if norms and values regarding gender equality differ?</i> 1) There must be a clear gender equality requirement applying to project groups, for example, equal numbers of female and male participants. 2) It must be up to each organisation/group. Continues...	C leads

Time:	What are we doing?	Who?
40-60 min.	<p>3) When supporting equality, it makes no difference if the project group participants are men or women.</p> <p>4) This must be resolved by means of cooperation between the parties.</p> <p>Recapping the exercise and the views it revealed.</p> <p><i>Consolidation:</i> Based on what we have talked about, how could dialogue be used as a method in international cooperation, when values and views differ regarding the project contents and modes of cooperation?</p> <p>How might this specific exercise be used?</p>	C leads
10 min	Break	A leads
5-10 min.	Energizer: 1-2-3 and finger game (Exercise 2.1)	A leads
20-30 min.	<p>Dialogue and discussion (negotiation, Chapter 1)</p> <p>Tools of dialogical communication (Chapter 2)</p> <p>Continues...</p>	

Time:	What are we doing?	Who?
20-30 min.	<p>Introductory talk involving participants' experiences of international project work</p> <p>Talking it through in pairs, then consolidating together in a plenary session</p>	A leads
15 min	<p>Summing up:</p> <p>What do you take with you from the workshop of benefit for your future work on international projects?</p> <p>If this were to be phrased like a status update on Facebook, how would you put it?</p> <p>Evaluation: A few words for us as feedback on the workshop</p> <p>Thank you and goodbye</p>	<p>B leads</p> <p>C leads</p> <p>All three</p>

3. Jordan. Workshop about and with dialogue

Heading: How can dialogue be used to break down prejudice and stereotypes?

Target group: Upper-secondary school class, aged about 18 years with a variety of religious and cultural backgrounds, who know each other beforehand.

Number of participants: About 30 persons

Number of facilitators: 2

Duration: 2 hours

Time:	Item	Objective
10 min	Welcome Briefly: why are we here? (the contract) Round of people saying their names, sticky tape to write names on and attach to clothes, title of workshop, today's programme on flipchart A quote is written on the blackboard beforehand, for example: <i>"He who never leaves his country is full of prejudice"</i> (Carlo Goldoni)	We and the participants get to know each other

Time:	Item	Objective
5 min.	<p>Check-in: “To find out how you’re doing, we’re checking in. So describe what you’re feeling right now in a single word.”</p> <p>(Perhaps “one word from you about what you would like to get out of the workshop”)</p>	Opening, creating contact
25 min.	<p><i>Exercise:</i> Inside or outside? (Exercise 3.4).</p> <p>Remember: Post-its in three different colours + markers</p> <p><i>Consolidation:</i></p> <p>What is it like to have to find a group?</p> <p>What is it like not to be in a group?</p> <p>Expressing in words what it means to belong and not belong</p>	<p>Placing the issue of prejudice and stereotypes on the agenda</p> <p>Raising awareness of the sense of community and mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion</p>
10 min.	Break	
20 min.	<p><i>Introductory talk: ‘the theory’:</i> Definition of dialogue with brainstorming session (Exercise 2.5).</p> <p>Comparison with destructive/constructive discussion</p> <p>Continues...</p>	Building shared language and understanding of dialogue and what it can be used for

Time:	Item	Objective
20 min.	<p>Negotiation and other forms of dialogical communication are mentioned</p> <p>What is dialogue/discussion good for?</p> <p>Shared reflection</p>	<p>The iceberg as a metaphor for how we interpret during communication (see Chapter 2)</p> <p>The principles of dialogue (see Chapter 1).</p>
25 min.	<p>Exercise: <i>Greeting exercise</i> (Exercise 2.4)</p> <p>Shared reflection</p> <p><i>How can dialogue be used to break down prejudice?</i></p> <p>Perhaps return to the iceberg metaphor (see Chapter 2).</p>	<p>Focus on intercultural dialogue</p> <p>The potential of dialogue</p>
15 min.	<p><i>Check out:</i></p> <p>What have you gained from the workshop?</p> <p>What has it been like to participate?</p> <p>How do you feel as you check out right now?</p> <p>THANK YOU FOR TODAY</p>	<p><i>Rounding off:</i> ensuring that participants leave the workshop in a good manner</p> <p><i>Evaluation:</i> for us to get feedback on our work</p>

ANNEX 4: NOTES, REFERENCES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

This list is in no manner exhaustive for the vast professional field encompassed by the subjects of dialogue, cross-cultural encounters, workshops and facilitation, which have been addressed in this book. The list merely reflects the works and websites used during the writing of this book, which we recommend for a more profound understanding of the topics covered.

We have listed the subjects in the same order as the corresponding chapters appear in the book, so as to make it easy to find references of relevance to the subjects in the chapter just read.

Introduction

About the project Ambassadors for Dialogue

- <http://duf.dk/dialog> (in Danish)
- <http://www.facebook.com/ambassadorsfordialogue> (in English)
- Online dialogue forum <http://ambassadorsfordialogue.ning.com> (in English)
- *Evalueringssrapport: Interkulturel dialog i praksis* “[Evaluation Report: intercultural dialogue in practice], prepared by the Danish Institute for International Studies (Wegter, M. and Pultz, K). <http://www.diis.dk>. Can be downloaded at: http://www.diis.dk/graphics/_Staff/mkw/dialogambassadorer.pdf (in Danish)

Organisations

- Danish Youth Council (DUF). <http://duf.dk/> (in Danish, English, Arabic, Spanish and French)
- The Egyptian Youth Federation, Egypt: www.eyfed.org (in Arabic and English)
- East & West Centre for Human Resources Development (WE Center), Jordan <http://www.wecenter.org/> (in Arabic and English)
- Danish Centre for Conflict Resolution. www.konfliktloesning.dk (Danish and English).

Materials about peaceful conflict resolution can be downloaded in Danish, English, Arabic and Spanish.

Chapter 1: What is dialogue?

Note 1; *On the potential for good and bad*, p. 24

Recent brain research indicates that people's urge to create is stronger than their urge to destroy, see, for instance: *The Emphatic Civilisation; Rifkin, J.* (2010) The Penguin Group.

Note 2; p. 26; *The table*

The table about the difference between dialogue and discussion on is inspired by the book *Konflikt og Kontakt* [Conflict and contact], Hammerich, E, & Frydensberg, K, (2009/2012), Hovedland (in Danish).

Recommended literature:

Bohm, D.: *On Dialogue*: <http://sprott.physics.wisc.edu/chaos-complexity...../dialogue.pdf> 2011-09-08

Svare, H.: *Den gode samtalen – kunsten å skape dialog* [The good conversation, the art of creating dialogue]. (2008) Pax Forlag (in Norwegian)

A classic in Danish about the link between dialogue and democracy is Koch, H (1991): *Hvad er demokrati?* [What is democracy?] Gyldendal.

A thorough handbook about dialogue developed from the perspective of democracy development:

<http://www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org> (in Arabic, French, English and Spanish)

Chapter 2: Dialogue in practice

Note 1; ps. 36: Quotes

The quote about hotspots is from *Den Store Danske Encyklopædi* [The Big Danish Encyclopaedia], downloaded on 10 March 2012:

http://www.denstoredanske.dk/It,_teknik_og_naturvidenskab/Geologi_og_kartografi/Tektonik/hot_spot

The definition of morality and ethics is also from “Den Store Danske Encyklopædi”, downloaded on 10 March 2012: http://www.denstoredanske.dk/Samfund,_jura_og_politik/Filosofi/Menneskets_grundvilk%C3%A5r/moral?highlight=moral%20og%20etik and http://www.denstoredanske.dk/Samfund%2c_jura_og_politik/Religion_og_mystik/Almen_etik/etik

Note 2; p. 37: *On culture as a dynamic concept*

The theoretical literature about culture presents at least 300 definitions of culture. The concept of culture has, over the past 100 years, been subject to constant discussion of how to understand the term, and of what culture means for human beings and how. It is beyond the scope of this book to delve further into the concept of culture. This also refers to the subject of intercultural encounters and communications. There is abundant literature on these subjects, here are a few suggestions:

A classic recommended to everyone who wants to immerse themselves in the dynamic concept of culture is Geertz, C. (1993): *The interpretation of cultures*. Fontana Press.

And if you want to become better at managing cooperation in intercultural contexts:

Plum, E. (2007): *Kulturel Intelligens* [Cultural intelligence]. Børsens Forlag (in Danish).

Plum, E. (2010) *Cultural Intelligence*. Middlesex University Press.
An easy-to-read book about the understanding of culture in practice is:

Jensen, I. (2000): *Kulturforståelse* [Understanding culture]. Roskilde University Press (in Danish).

Jensen, I. (2007): *Intercultural Understanding*. Roskilde University Press.

Note 3; p. 41: On the mental image

The idea that we understand the world by forming a mental image of it (our own world map) dates all the way back to the American sociologist Walter Lippman. He also describes stereotyping as one of the ways in which we categorise the impressions that we continuously receive in the encounter with reality. Lippman, W: *The Public Opinion*, 1922.

Note 4; p. 46: About engaging contact

There are countless books about how to develop one's ability to enter into engaging contact. One of them is: Nhat Hanh, T. (1987): *Mindfulness*. Beacon Press.

Chapter 3: Planning a workshop

Note 1; p. 54: The understanding of a workshop as a process is based on fundamental principles regarding oral communications. The elementary structure in three parts is widely disseminated, since it springs from Aristotle's narrative model. The entire chapter about planning is inspired by Jacobsen, J.K (1997): *25 spørgsmål*. [25 Questions] Roskilde University Press (in Danish) and an article by Hammerich, E. (2001):

Didaktik [Didactics] (unpublished) (in Danish). The article can be read in English in "*Meeting Conflicts Mindfully*" (2001), published by Tibetan Center for Conflict Resolution, Tibet and The Danish Centre for Conflict Resolution, Denmark.

Note 2; ps. 57: The basic recipe for a successful workshop

The model of activity, reflection and learning has been inspired by Else Hammerich and Bjarne Vestergaard, Danish Centre for Conflict Resolution.

Chapter 4: Leading a workshop

Note 1; p.89: About being personal:

Experiences from the project Ambassadors for Dialogue showed that the ambassadors themselves and their personal stories were one of their most important tools to foster dialogue in the workshops. There were examples of their using their personal stories to reveal their own vulnerability, which made a great impression on the participants and helped foster understanding and a more nuanced view of controversial issues.

Note 2; p. 104: About facing resistance

The three ways of facing resistance have been inspired by the professional field of conflict understanding and peaceful conflict resolution.

See the book *Konflikt og Kontakt* [Conflict and Contact]. (Hammerich, E., & Frydensberg, K., 2009), Hovedland (in Danish) or:

The Danish Centre for Conflict Resolution: www.konflikloesning.dk (in Danish and English). Materials about peaceful conflict resolution can be downloaded from www.konfliktloesning.dk in Danish, English, Arabic and Spanish.

Note 3; p. 106: The image of the tree on p. 104 has been inspired by Kirsten Seidenfaden and Piet Draiby. <http://kirstenseidenfaden.dk> (in Danish)

The internet is a source of abundant resources in terms of educational videos, materials for downloading and much else regarding workshop leadership and facilitation. Use your usual search facility or check out, for instance, Youtube.

The literature in this field is vast, though one recommendation is: Hunter, D.: *The art of facilitation* (1995), Fisher Books.

Chapter 5: Dialogue in action

There are plenty of websites in all major languages with materials that can be freely downloaded, presenting games, icebreakers and exercises for facilitation and workshop. Use your usual search facility or check out, for instance, Youtube.

References

Exercise 1.1: The check-in has been inspired by Deep Democracy, a method developed in South Africa to facilitate groups in an inclusive manner. <http://deep-democracy.net> (in English)

Exercise 1.5: The toolbox is inspired by ‘Redskabskurven’ [the tool curve] from the book *Anerkendende procesøvelser* [appreciative process exercises]. Bjerring, P. Halkier & Lindén, A. (2011), Dansk Psykologisk Forlag A/S.

Exercise 1.4: The evaluation triangle is assumed to have been developed by ‘The Kaospilots’ from Denmark. <http://www.kaospilot.dk> (Danish and English).

Annex 3:

The sample scripts have been provided by the project Ambassadors for Dialogue. The content has been modified and complemented so as to be able to refer directly to exercises and chapters in this book.

AFTERWORD

Concerning any errors and omissions

This book has been written with the contributions and help of many people, both regarding ideas for the subject matters, suggestions for individual exercises and improvement of the text, all of which has combined to raise the quality of the book.

Any errors and omissions are the exclusive responsibility of the author.

Who came up with the ideas?

Only in a few cases has it been possible to find references or authors of the exercises included in the book. We hope this can be forgiven. Whenever we know the correct reference, it has been mentioned below each exercise.

If anyone feels overlooked, we ask them to contact us in order to credit them in a future version, or to take comfort from the exercise benefiting many more people through this book, keeping in mind that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. In any case, we are very thankful!

Who said it?

Nearly all short quotes in this book are available on the internet and have been verified by at least two different sources.

THE DIALOGUE HANDBOOK

- the art of conducting a dialogue and facilitating dialogue workshops

Dialogue is necessary in a modern world characterised by contrast and change. Dialogue can help overcome prejudice and foster understanding of other people's perspectives. And it can expand our horizon. It sounds simple, but it can prove difficult in practice.

This book helps you a few steps along the way. It sets out what dialogue is, and how to plan and carry out workshops with a focus on dialogue. It offers hands-on tools for how to conduct a dialogue in practice, insight into the role of the workshop leader (facilitator), and it presents 18 concrete activities suitable for dialogue workshops.

The book springs from the project Ambassadors for Dialogue, in which young volunteers from Jordan, Egypt and Denmark have worked, since 2009, on fostering understanding between youth in Denmark and the Middle East. The 'dialogue ambassadors' have been involved in the writing of this book. They have shared their experiences of conducting dialogue workshops, and they have contributed with descriptions of the dialogue activities which were developed during the project.

We hope that the book will inspire you to become better at dialogue – and to use dialogue wherever it is needed.

We wish you a pleasant trip into the wondrous universe of dialogue.

