A **VIA Brachy** initiative in partnership with

VOYAGES, INTERCULTUREL, SOLIDARITÉ & AUTOFORMATION

 European Village

 Nexes

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Within the framework of the European Program Erasmus+

FROM SINGULAR TO PLURAL

A 5 DAYS EUROPEAN SEMINAR ON GROUP WORK AND COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE

Domaine de Matens 81 600 Gaillac (FRANCE)
From April, the 11th to April, the 16th 2015

SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

More and more people are aware of the importance of a **good group dynamic** in leading a **collective project** (especially in a context of social and cultural diversity) but positive momentum is often difficult to build.

The seminar "From Singular to Plural" arose from the joint determination of 3 European youth organisations involved in popular and non-formal education (Nexes [Barcelona, Spain], Via Brachy [Toulouse, France] and European Village [Athens, Greece]) to share their experience in **group facilitation** and **implementation of joint projects** to identify **good practices** that meet their needs and those of many other actors of social innovation in Europe.

The seminar took place in Gaillac (South-West France) from April, the 11th to April, the 16th of 2015. It brought together **28** persons involved in collective projects of social interest in France, Greece and Spain (Catalonia).

For 5 days, the participants shared their knowledge and expertise in group facilitation. They identified **key factors of success** and **pitfalls** to avoid while leading a collective project. They questioned notions such as **participation**, **leadership** or **non-violent communication** and put various approaches, methods and tools into practice.

The seminar was designed within the tradition of **popular and non-formal education**. It allowed the participants to develop their skills and to build (their own) knowledge.

By the end of the meeting, participants had identified and highlighted methods and tools that contribute to the success of collective projects and that allow groups to express their potential. This document is an attempt to share the result of their work. We hope it will provide fertile ground for you.

Wish you an interesting reading
Via Brachy's team
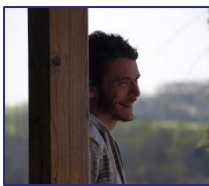
PARTNERS

EUROPEAN COUNTERPARTS

Via Brachy is a French non-profit association established in Toulouse. It advocates **social change** by fostering **cultural dialogue, experience sharing** and **cooperation** between people and organisations from different backgrounds looking for **inclusive and eco-friendly solutions** to overcome the challenges we face.

It mainly organises **mobility projects** and **non-formal educational activities** to empower people and help them find (or build) their way in our society. We give participants the opportunity to experience **community living**, to acquire **practical skills** that fit **their needs on the ground** and to build **strong relationships** which may lead to new cooperation.

More on: www.viabrachy.org

European Village is a Greek NGO established in Athens in 2006. It aims to spread ideas and support actions concerning **social** and **collaborative economy** and **sustainable development**.

The association empowers people through **non-formal educational** activities (**learning by doing**), **sensitization campaigns/events** and vocational trainings. It runs a cooperative café in Athens which strongly contributes to the **local community life** and often organises free **Do-It-Yourself** workshops for inhabitants. It builds (or supports) **networks** which implement projects in the fields of **social solidarity**, **community building**, **energy self-sufficiency**, fair trade and ethical consumption, etc., and takes an active part in some of them.

More on: http://european-village.org/

Nexes is a Catalan non-profit youth organisation created in Barcelona in 1999. It works at local and international level to foster **intercultural learning**, boost **active participation**, promote **democracy**, **human rights** and international **cooperation** and fight social exclusion.

It provides **mobility projects** and **non-formal educational activities** in order to lay the foundations for **sustainable social transformation** based on **cultural diversity** and **integration**.

More on: http://www.nexescat.org/

TRAINERS

Since 1998, the **Local Pacts** (which became the **European Pacts / P'actes Européens** in 2012) carry out a project to reorganize the economic and social spheres on the basis of **local realities and resources**, rather than expect institutions to take care of everything.

The association offers **tools** and **methods**, successfully tested by its members, to better **meet the essential problems that arise in everyday life**: shared management of common resources, activities and employment, living conditions and services, with a view to foster mind opening and joint solidarity between territories.

More on: http://www.pactes-locaux.org/

La Volte is a French collective of **community education**. It arose from the common determination of 3 youth and social workers to join forces to enhance **people's commitment** in the society by spreading useful knowledge and skills in the fields of **participation**, **community work, social inclusion**, **decision making process**… Its members advocate a more inclusive, democratic and innovative society. They organise public events; participate in European seminars and trainings and support social entrepreneurs and non-profit organisations in the development of their initiatives.

More on: *Website under construction… but coming soon!*

Le **Centre de Ressources sur la Non-Violence** (*Resource Center on Non-Violence*) is a French non-governmental, non-religious, non-political and non-profit organisation promoting **non-violence** as a **philosophy** (to think) and a **tool** (to act). It provides material for reflection, animation methods and training on non-violence and **conflict management** (to welcome and solve them in a positive way). It tries to foster a culture of non-violence in our society by addressing various actors: individuals, associations, enterprises and institutions.

More on: www.non-violence-mp.org/

THE HOST VENUE

Le **Domaine de Matens** is a small-scale organic vineyard in Gaillac. It includes organic wine and cereal production, sheep breeding and cheese making and group accommodation.

Its members advocate **sustainable development**, **alternative organisational models**, **intergenerational dialogue** and **social inclusion**.

Cultural and social events are often organised in the Domaine, gathering local inhabitants, farmers, craftsmen, artists and non-profit organisations.

More on: http://matens.free.fr/

PROGRAM OF THE SEMINAR

Friday 10.04.14: Welcoming of the participants in Toulouse. Convivial evening in Via Brachy's office

Saturday 11.04.14

AM: Arrival in Matens. Welcoming of the participants.
PM: **Opening session**:
Presentation of the objectives, spirit and program of the seminar. Definition of common living rules.
Presentation of the participants and partners. Activities to get to know each other (G*ames to interact / "Small and big story" workshop [What, in your personal or professional life, brings you to this seminar?]*).

Sunday 12.04.2014

AM: Animations to get into working conditions. Experience sharing among participants (*in small groups*):
1) "**Why did you join the project you're involved in?**"
2) "**What create links?**"
3) "**Which crises did you encounter? How did you get over it/them ?**"
Lunchtime: Discovering of Greek traditional dishes for Easter
PM: results sharing from the morning workshops. Experience sharing and open discussion about **group work** and **group dynamics** *with the support of Martine Théveniaut, co-founder of the European Pactes.*
Circle of expression. **Range of propositions to improve the community life** during the seminar.

Monday 13.04.2014

AM: Participants gather in 3 groups (French, Greek and Spanish) to perform:
1) How the organisation they're involved in works (***Image theater***)
2) a typical meeting from France, Greece, Spain (***Theater***)
Observations and analysis: **Which roles and attitudes do you notice**? **What is going wrong in our meetings**?
PM: Open discussion among participants: **What would be a successful meeting**? **How to overcome the difficulties we encounter**? Presentation of **a range of methods and tools to enhance participation** and **to lead an effective meeting** by *M. Lucas & J. De Daran from La Volte.*

Tuesday 14.04.2014

AM: Animations to get into working conditions.
Presentation of **non-violence** (historical markers, main concepts) and **non-violent communication** (process, main characteristics) *by R. Darnet, from the Resource Center for Non-Violence.*
PM: **Practical training**. Sharing the results of the tests, methods and tools. Circle of expression.
Evening: Discovering of Catalan traditional dishes, songs and dances.

Wednesday 15.04.2014

AM: Games to get into working conditions.
Practical training in small groups on 3 concrete issues with 3 different decision making methods *with the support of M. Lucas & J. De Daran from La Volte* to **take difference into consideration when taking a decision**.
PM: Sharing results of the morning workshops.
Moving debate about leadership: **What is a leader / leadership**? **How to better share powers and responsibilities within a group**?
Evening: **Closing event**: Public presentation of the seminar's outputs.
Pulcinella **Puppet show** *performed by P. Ferrafiat.* French, Greek and Catalan dances and songs.

Thursday 16.04.2014

AM: Evaluation of the seminar by the participants (*through questionnaires and anonymous messages*).
Exchange of contacts. Perspectives.
PM: Departure to Toulouse. Convivial evening in Via Brachy's office with the remaining participants.

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE PROJECT YOU ARE INVOLVED IN?

COMMON VALUES

-To find people with the same values, same views
- Political ideas
- Collective identity, collective intelligence
- Social change

FULFILL A NEED

- To help
- To feel useful
- To feel alive
- To get into action
- Personal commitment/ development/ inspiration
- A goal to reach
- To meet people, to experiment collective life
- Entertainment, to have fun
- To travel, to study, to practice, to learn

GIVING AND RECEIVING

- Improving and developing new skills
- I learn from people, from their experiences,
- I learn from myself: how I behave with other people
- I learn how to communicate
- Good relationships: solidarity, confidence

STRONGER TOGETHER

- An opportunity to create a common project from individual initiatives
- Be part of a dynamic, create something I cannot do alone
- Together we are richer, more creative, stronger
- Co-working is more efficient
- A lot of people is more legitimate, big things can happen

WHAT CREATES LINKS?
WHAT IS THE CEMENT OF THE GROUP?

- Facing similar problems: we gather to find a solution to common issues.
- Common values, goals/purposes, interests, objectives, rules, projects, language and understanding.
- Willingness to make things change, to take action.
- Feeding the need to belong to a community, to join a group with shared objectives.
- Feeling useful: you bring something to the group.
- Reciprocity: you give and you receive. Your needs are fed by the others (sharing of knowledge, ideas, points of view, skills…). You do things you like doing. Work is organised according to one's skills, will / wishes and availability.
- Feeling comfortable: the group respects your opinion, your way of living, your limits…You can express yourself honestly, it will not put in danger your place / membership in the group.
- Confidence in the people. Emotional security. No cheating.
- Open minds, efforts to listen to the others, to take each other's point of view into consideration.
- Freedom of speech, smooth and open communication between members
- Real commitments: people are responsible for what they say and promise.
- Solidarity between members. Acceptance. Respect. Empathy. Kindness. Patience.
- Positive attitudes. Efforts to get the best out of a crisis. The group creates opportunities for members to express themselves, to say what they may not have said otherwise, even though it's important to them. Critics are welcome, considered as opportunities to improve. People put their ego aside for the collective's good.
- Thanks and celebration. The group acknowledges one's skills and achievements and takes time to end things and to thank for what has been done.
- Good relationships between members. Time is taken to create connexions, to do side activities, to create links, to feed friendship, to share.
- Enjoy!

COMMON BASIS
VALUES | POLITICAL VIEWS | GOALS… | …

FREEDOM

ACCEPT THE DIFFERENCE

EXPRESSION OF OUR FEELINGS

TRUST

Respect

ACHIEVEMENTS

CRISIS ⇨ EVALUATION

CELEBRATE

ENJOYING

TAKING TIME ∞

OVERCOME CRISIS

WHICH CRISES DO YOU ENCOUNTER

- Lack of time. Lack of money.
- Competition on resources (money, fame, space, skills…).
- Personal conflicts. "Ego crisis". Suspicion.
- Lack of communication. Silence.
- Unsolved problems that are not addressed. Members deny problems until they become a crisis.
- Collective projects gradually becoming personal projects, because we don't manage to find a balance between personal expectations and attitudes and the collective goals and needs.
- Disrespect of the collective rules, of the timetable.
- Discrimination / sexism.
- Unexpected modification in people's involvement.
- Inequality in members' involvement: some people rely on the others and never take responsibilities or initiatives.

- Monopolisation of speech and power by some people. There is no room for everyone to express themselves.
- Confusion in the objectives / in the method used to reach them.
- Work overload (coming from a lack of experience): what has to be done exceeds the group capacities.
- Decreasing motivation because the expected impacts are too long to achieve.

HOW TO GET OVER

- Pay attention to the way information is spread and shared.
- Set up basic rules from the beginning (ex: decision by consensus), knowing that they might change after a while according to the upcoming needs.
- Take time for meetings, plan them well.
- Accept dealing with problems as soon as they appear. Inform everyone there is a problem.
- Express feelings (before it is too late!) in a non-violent way.
- Discuss first the positive things the members did, on a regular basis, to give confidence.
- Encourage members' participation in the project. Support people in their initiatives. Set a specific period for role-exchanging (when someone wants to stop taking on a specific role, the position remains vacant so the members will realise the team cannot work without role-rotation).
- Share responsibilities in success as in failure, at any time of the project, as a team.
- Know each other's expectations, roles, availability and responsibilities.
- Organise assessments, provide constructive critics. Don't speak about "faults" but about "things that need improvement".
- Think positive (there is always a solution)!
- Welcome people, take care of each member of the group / of the atmosphere.
- Communicate with each other and try to understand divergences to solve them.
- Accept the idea that someone may leave the project.
- Redefine regularly the group's goals: ("What are our objectives?" "How do we want to reach them?)
- Start small, act step by step.
- Anticipate: whatever you do, no matter how good you are, you will encounter problems. Just accept it and deal with it.

WHAT MAKES A PACT?
an analytical tool by P'actes Européens

COMPONENTS OF THE LOCAL PACT

This tool was drawn up collectively by practitioners in 2001.

- **The pact is rooted in shared values**: solidarity, coexistence, social ties.

- **It places great importance on concrete action**. The term "conclusive experiments" is used.

- **It is based on consultation**. Anyone can decide to initiate a local pact, but it only exists after consultation and once contract-based commitment is in place. The contract can cover several forms and contain several elements: objectives, implementation and assessment methods. For example, one method used is described as "shared and constantly reassessed diagnosis".

- **The type of topics tackled**: it seeks to increase social cohesion, solidarity, democratic participation and exchanges between the economic, social, cultural, political and environmental spheres.

- **It is rooted in a territory:** The territory can be defined by the capacity to undertake actions together using available resources. The local pact draws on its values to meet the territory's needs and ambitions with the aim of creating coherence between stakeholders, actions and territorial levels.

- **Throughout its existence, the local pact draws on the presence of the capacity to**: seize opportunities; communicate; create synergies between different skills; switch from individual awareness to collective awareness; meet the challenge of launching a new process; bind together, and take the initiative.

- **A participative approach**: that focuses on solutions drawing as far as possible on cooperative actions; that accepts conflict and highlights the positive dimension of diverging positions so that they serve the common good; that creates a link with local policies; that creates a link between the internal and external; that ensures that all participants have an equal chance to express themselves and that they listen to each other equally, and that produces mutual respect.

The method is the functional aspect that links the stakeholders together.

- **The local pact looks at the situation from every angle**: paying special attention to the quality of interpersonal relationships; adopting an approach based on action research; undertaking a diagnosis of existing elements and available energies, and using clearly identified levels of involvement.

- **The local pact builds an open-ended strategy that guarantees a long-lasting process.** The approach seeks to bring together, as a minimum, the people involved, along with other categories of territorial stakeholders: elected representatives, the economic sector (particularly SMEs and SMIs), not-for-profit organisations and resource people with complementary skills. Ideally, the greatest possible number of people are involved.

- **The local pact makes a priority of permanent self-assessment.**

- **Implementation produces:** the capacity to help participants develop; the questioning, via meaningful actions, of systems governing relationships, how institutions function, shared meanings (local culture, etc.) and consensus; development of each person's resources, and the desire to capitalise on and transmit experiences, learning and culture.

The effects exceed the primary goals.

NON-VIOLENCE & NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION: another way to interact by

the Resource Center for Non-Violence of Midi-Pyrénées

HOW TO DEFINE VIOLENCE, CONFLICT & NON VIOLENCE?

Participants split into two groups to provide their own definition of each concept before pooling them.

> Violence

- When someone uses strength to enter a limit
- Communication / action with no respect for the feelings / the needs of the other
- Transfering a personal problem on a person / group
- Misunderstanding of our own feelings
- Bullying
- Ignoring people
- Judging
- Prejudices
- Discrimination / racism / sexism
- Domination / submission / using power against others
- Silence (unspoken)
- Aggressiveness
- Aggression (verbal, physical, domestic, sexual, symbolic…)
- A vicious circle
- The last option
- Something that we cannot avoid, sometimes…

> Conflict

- Different beliefs / opinions that compete
- Confrontation / Competition
- Disagreement with tensions
- A process with steps (from private to public)
- A problem of ego, when one sticks doggedly to one's position
- War for land / ideologies / power…
- Something that has consequences
- A waste of energy
- Something unpleasant, that we often try to avoid
Nevertheless, we recognize that there are also good / healthy / constructive conflicts!

> Non-Violence

- Assertive attitude
- Empathy
- Patience
- Tolerance
- Self control
- Peace
- Respect
- Equality
- Harmony
- Using "I" instead of "You"
- Freedom of speech (while staying polite)
- Expressing our feelings and welcoming the other's feelings
- Active listening / Taking others into account
- Sticking to facts and not interpretations
- Non-judgement (stating facts not judging the value of a person)
- Being constructive in criticism and being ready to receive (constructive) criticism from others

NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION: DEFINITION & MAIN PRINCIPLES

> Definition

Nonviolent Communication (also called Compassionate Communication or Collaborative Communication) is a communication process developed by Marshall Rosenberg in the 1960's. It focuses on 3 aspects of communication:

- **Self-empathy**, defined as a deep and compassionate awareness of one's own inner experience;
- **Empathy**, defined as listening to another with deep compassion;
- **Honest self-expression**, defined as expressing oneself authentically in a way that is likely to inspire compassion in others.

Nonviolent Communication (NVC) is based on the idea that **all human beings have the capacity for compassion** and only resort to violence or behavior that harms others when they don't find more effective strategies for **meeting needs**. Habits of thinking and speaking that lead to the use of violence (psychological or physical) are learned through culture. NVC proposes that if people can identify their needs, the needs of others, and the feelings that surround these needs, harmony can be achieved.

> Components and process of non-violent communication

Non-Violent Communication includes 4 components:

1/ **Observation** of facts (what we are seeing, hearing or touching), free from personal evaluation / interpretation of meaning or significance.

2/ **Feelings** (emotions or sensations), free of thoughts. The way we feel simply reflects whether our needs are met or unmet.

3/ **Needs**: What we deeply need to feel comfortable (to be distinguished from particular strategies for achieving it).
NB: Human needs are universal.

4/ **Request**, free of demand. The other person can answer "no" to a request, which distinguishes it from a demand

.

1/ **OBSERVE** without judging or interpreting

2/ **ANALYSE YOUR FEELINGS**, **EXPRESS HOW YOU FEEL** to the others by using **"I"**

3/ **EXPRESS YOUR NEED(S)**: What do you need to feel better? (Without speaking about action / strategy)

4/ **MAKE A REQUEST** to meet your need(s).

Note: If one makes a request and gets "no" for an answer, it is recommended not to give up, but to empathise with what is preventing the other person from saying "yes," before deciding how to continue the conversation. It is recommended that requests use clear, positive, concrete action language.

EXTRA- ANIMATION TOOLS USED

> "Say STOP!"

Participants split into two equal groups to form two lines. Each person has someone in front of her/him, distant from a few meters. When the trainer gives a signal, the person in front adopts an attitude (relaxed, angry, smiling…) and comes closer to the other, who cannot move and has to say "stop" when his/her counterparts reached a limit he/she doesn't want them to cross. Depending on each individual's personality and on the other's attitude, the "stop" occurs at different times…

> The shower / the car wash

Participants create a channel, as two brushes in a car wash. One person goes inside, asking for a specific kind of shower (for example: energetic, smooth, relaxing, etc.) depending on his/her need at this moment. The others try to respond to his/her request. At the end of the shower, the person who received it tells the other how he/she feels and if his/her need has been fulfilled. Then he/she joins the line of the channel so another person can benefit from the shower.

ANIMATION METHODS AND TOOLS
provided by La Volte
Collectif d'éducation populaire

DAY 1: MONDAY 13.04.2014

1. Games

> "Name contest"
Two teams are separated by a sheet. When the sheet is brought down, with one person on each side, they have to say as quickly as possible the name of the person standing in front of them.

> Moving around in space: "Sun & Sunscreen" & "The two lovers"
Each participant chooses in his/her mind one person that is "his/her sun" and another one that is his/her sunscreen (who will protect him/her from the sun). People move around in a defined space. At the end of the countdown, each person has to be protected from the "sun person" by the "sunscreen person".
Same principles with the "two lovers" but at the end each person has to be at equal distance from his/her "two lovers".

2. Introduction

> Objective: Building a collective knowledge of common work and collective intelligence.
> Principles: Rising knowledge by experimentation; time management; rhythm...
> Roles & Signs: Time Keeper / Atmosphere Watcher / Sheppard / Translator / Cooking Assistant / ...

3. Opening Round

> How do I feel in the Here and in the Now?
Circular speech. 1 minute maximum per person.

4. Acting Preparation

> Building Images.
In a circle. One person starts by proposing a still pose (no moves, no sounds). Another one comes to complete the image. The new picture remains still for a few seconds, then the first person withdraws and a new one comes to make a new picture, and so on...
Images construction can be done about a specific topic (work, activism, etc.)

> "The Machine"
By adding successively individual and repetitive motions and noises, try to build a collective machine (that may symbolize your organization).

5. Role-Playing Game

> Imagine and perform a typical and caricatured French/Spanish/Greek meeting.
3 observers. Once back in plenary and starting with the observers reporting, we try to list the cultural specificities and the bad practices that we might have noticed.

[Lunch break]

6. Energizer

> "The cooperative musical chairs"
Install in a circle way less chairs than the number of participants. When the music stops, everyone has to fit in, without touching the ground. Remove one chair after each sequence.

7. Think-Listen walk

> What do I do and how do I feel in the group I'm involved in?
Choose a partner you do not know yet very well. During 5 or 10 min, one is thinking (and talking), the other one is just listening (and staying silent: no reaction, no interruption, one might only ask a question to understand better). Then we switch the roles.
No restitution in plenary!

8. Mutual interviews groups

> Talking about good experiences and pointing out the facilitating elements.
3 persons per group
Successively each person talks about one personal good experience of a meeting (5 min /person).
Then the group lists the enablers of a good meeting, elements that can facilitate collective work (10 min.)
Plenary restitution by cursive talking. No need to repeat an element already said.

9. What create Participation & Dynamics?

(This should have been done in small groups but we lacked time...)

> Outlines of the group work process.
> Discussion and exchanges among participants.

10. Positioning exercises

On a Yes-No positioning axis:
- Do I feel legitimate in the group I'm involved in?
- Do I think I facilitate collective work?
When people are positioned, the floor is given to the participants to make statements (it's interesting to start with people in a minority and/or with people standing at both ends of the axis).
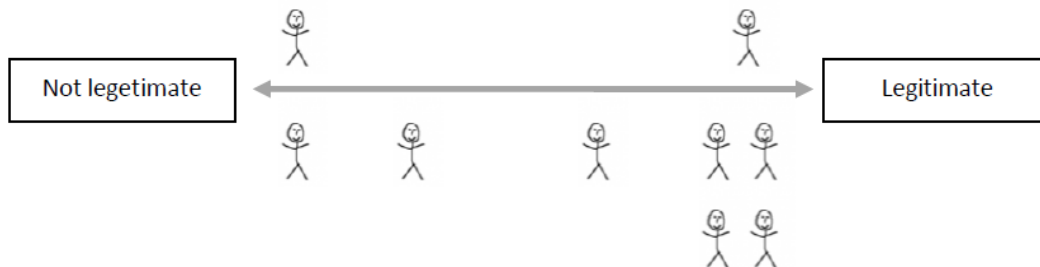
10. Closing Round

> Sharing a statement: Something I have heard / seen / experienced that I particularly liked or disliked.
If one agrees with the last statement, one comes to take the person's arm and makes a statement of one's own.

DAY 2: WEDNESDAY 15.04.2015

1. Introduction

2. Games

> "the PacMan": a semi-cooperative game
Participants sit in chairs across the room. There is one extra chair.
Starting away from the vacant chair, PacMan walks towards it at a constant speed. Participants have to move from one chair to another to prevent him from sitting down.

> "the Wizz": Handing over the energy...
Wizz, Block, Bang-Paw, Rio!, Elevator...

> "The House":
Someone comes into the house and embodies an emotion. Someone else joins him/her and the emotion takes him/hr over. Then the first person leaves and the other one proposes another emotion.

3. Feeling Round

> How do I feel after having experienced those three games?
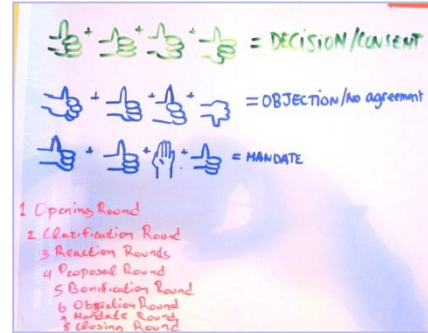
4. Workshops about Decision making process

3 groups (constituted randomly). One observer in each group.
Each group experiments a different method about a different topic.
Reports by observers have to be creative (drawing, schematizing...)

> Sociocracy
Theme: What's next after the seminar (how do we keep in touch and share content)?

## > Various decision making processes
Theme: the Bar
- Validation by Ponderation (weight).
- Brainstorming + Validation by elimination.
- Vote (secret / show of hands / Positioning).
- "Snowball method" (one proposal by pair, then two pairs join to form a team of four persons, and finally make an 8-persons-group).
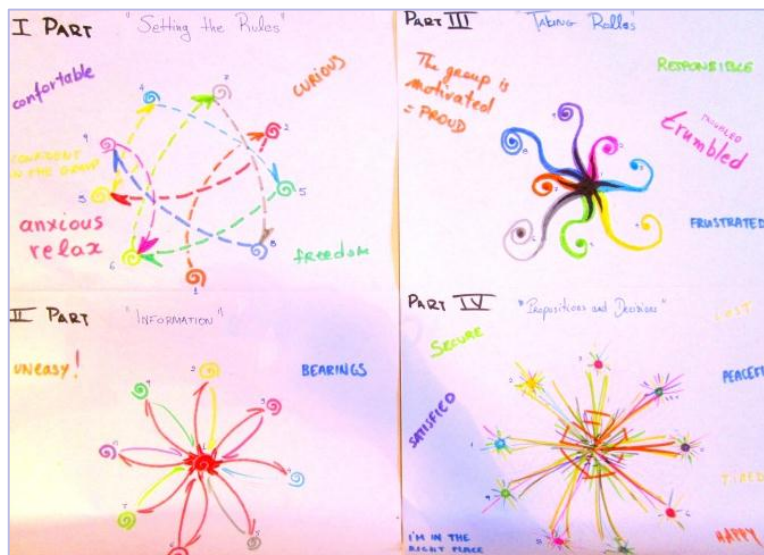*For each method: distributing roles (mandates). Items not covered are carried over by the organisers.*
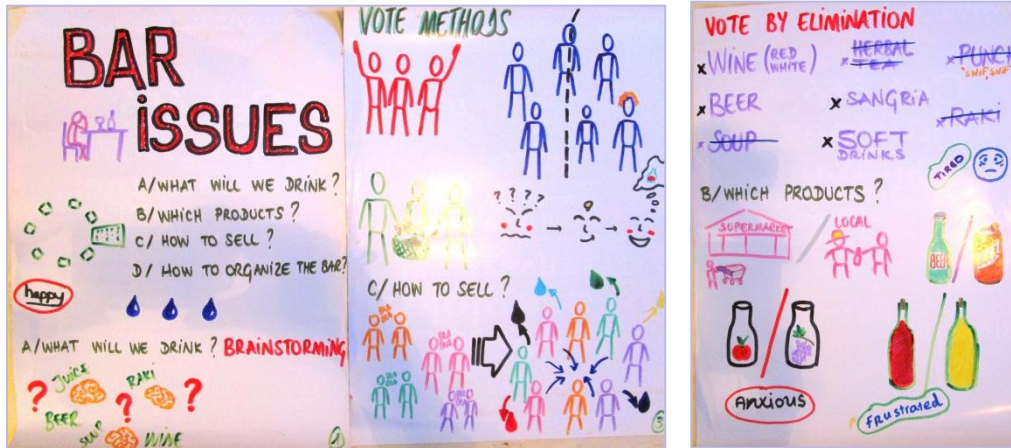
> Free group
Theme: Welcoming people for the public event
1. How do we decide?
2. Implement the method chosen.

5. The photographer

> 2 people groups: a blind person and a guide go for a walk. 3 times, the guide asks the blind person to open his/her eyes to take a picture. Then the pairs are to swap; the guides are now to be blind and the blind are to be guides.

6. Plenary Restitution (of Decisions making workshops)

- The restitution session starts with sharing records of decisions.
- Then observers present their work (observations, understanding of processes...).
- Group discussion.
Choose the right method for each type of decision.
What about frustration? How far can we accept not to be part of a decision making? Let it go, Confidence in the group's abilities...

7. Clarifying

> Defining and Taking a position
What does leadership mean?
Ask someone to come to the center of the circle to propose a first definition.
The others chose a position depending on whether they agree or not with the proposal (the closer you stand, the more you agree with the definition).
First, try to improve the proposition, by asking the closest people to complete or specify the definition. So that people may move closer to the definition.
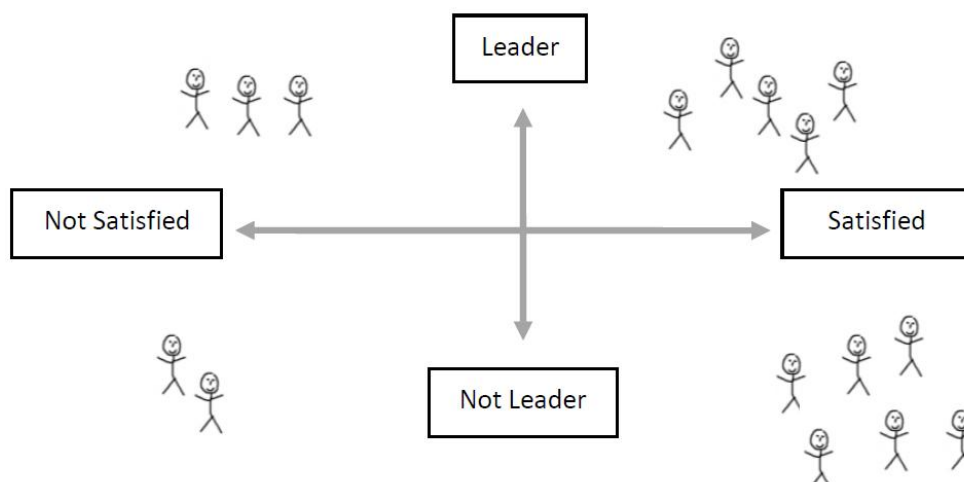*Then, if there are still people standing far away, propose to one of them to start with another definition and repeat the process.*
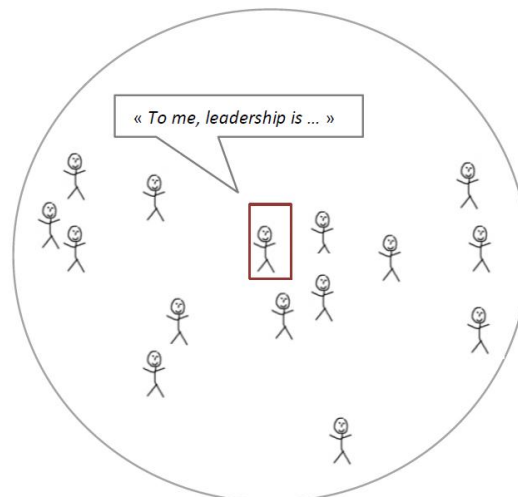
8. Debating

> Cross debate
In the group you're involved in, do you feel:

Everyone chooses a position according to the two axis (so only 4 positioning areas possible).
First, the speech is given to the minority group or person.

> Moving Debate

We all live in political systems called "Democracy": Do you think voting is (still) useful?

Two sides: agree & not agree

Choose your Side. There is no "doubt river" because we don't really care which side people chose first. When everyone is positioned, we exchange arguments one side after the other. Start with the minority. Whenever someone agrees with an argument from the other side he/she moves to the other side.
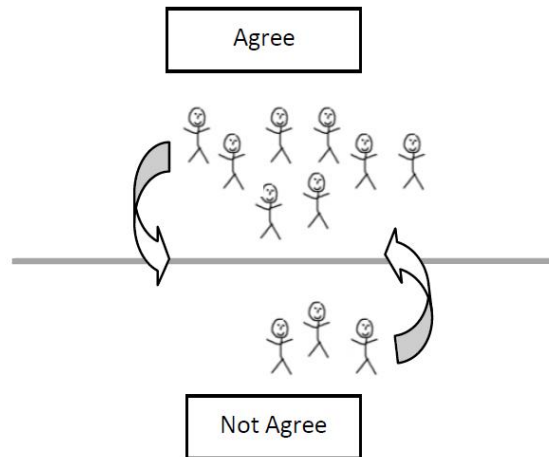
9. Circle Massage!

10. Closing Round

Piece of gold/Piece of sh..t (Nugget/Rake)

THE PERFECT MEETING
CONCLUSIONS OF THE WORKSHOPS OF APRIL, THE 13TH

BAD PRACTICES :-(

- Almost everybody arrives late with wrong excuses; those who arrive on time are pissed
- Not listening to each other and speaking when others are already speaking
- Not dealing with the important subjects, jumping from one topic to another, adding new topics
- Not planning the next meeting
- Hypocrisy and backstabbing: people don't express their real feelings
- Eating, drinking, talking, phoning during the meeting: conviviality instead of working
- Not knowing the topic of the meeting before coming, no preparation beforehand
- No specific role assigned
- No reporting of the meeting, so absent people won't get the information
- Too many points on the agenda
- Sharing useless and pointless information

GOOD PRACTICES :-)

- Respect of the timing/ schedule
- Awareness of the meeting beforehand and set priorities, update about progress in between
- Awareness of the expectations and results, of what is at stake
- Respecting one's speech; Expressing oneself calmly, being polite, empathy
- Tools and time to express: time to socialise before the work
- Finding an appropriate place and create a good atmosphere
- Giving roles and tasks to people; finding a good coordinator, defining who does what between 2 meetings
- Being open to collective intelligence
- No rushing or forcing a decision
- No criticising without offering a solution, constructive critics
- Personal commitment
- Distinguishing work from breaks or convivial moments
- Timing and topics should be noticeable to everyone during the meeting
- Activities and dynamics so that everyone participates and follows
- Relation of trust and confidence, solidarity
- An observer from outside
- Good and suitable material
- Laugh, positive attitude
- Respect of the group's decisions

WHAT IS A PRODUCTIVE AND ATTRACTIVE GROUP?

- Open groups
- Common values
- Wanting to do something
- Having targets you can reach
- Non-violent communication
- Consciousness (I let the other speak, I know what is important to say or not...)

HOW TO DYNAMISE A MEETING? by

La Volte
Collectif d'éducation populaire

PROCESS

Warning: *This is not a static or fixed recipe! The following process must be adapted to specific objectives and groups. Depending on the group and its goals, some steps may not be useful at all or you may have to change the order...*

Furthermore, the notion of process exists inside every following step. For example, getting to know each other is a process, decision making methods such as Sociocracy are processes, starting by knowing people names also... it actually never ends!

- **Before**: find an appropriate place, invite people, prepare the meeting (practical organisation, methods…)
- **Welcoming, conviviality**: Make people feel welcomed and comfortable before starting to work
- **Opening session**: Warm up games, cross presentation to get to know each other better, "Chinese portrait", speak and listen, Round/circle of feelings…
- **Introduction**: Context, frame, rules, roles, schedule…
- **Federating:** bring people together: trust, cooperating issues, group's needs, energy…
- **Information, clarification**: deliver documents (articles, films…), define words or concepts…
- **Emergence**: collect materials (ideas, proposals), produce contents thanks to brainstorming, workshops, debates, creations...
- **Convergence**: Pool, gather, rank, prioritize contents. Precise what can be done now and what has to be discussed / decided later...
- **Decision making process**: Vote, consensus, consent, elimination, weighting…
- **Mandating**: Give responsibility to people, share tasks
- **Review** and **Perspectives**: Evaluation/Assessment / What's next?
- **Closing round**: feelings of everybody
- F**riendly time**, celebrate!

SMALL TIPS TO ENHANCE PARTICIPATION AND DYNAMISM

- Remember **participation is not compulsory**, but everyone may express oneself if one wants to.
- Make contents **attractive**.
- Ensure **equivalence** between participants: status is not important: everybody is on the same scale;
- **Share responsibilities and tasks,** delegate, distribute roles (a time keeper, a Sheppard, an atmosphere observer, a translator, a coordinator), define and give firm mandates...
- Ask participants **to rephrase the instructions.**
- **Be clear** about what you are doing. **Don't mix up** the different phases (information, debate, decision...)
- Be sure everyone is talking about the same thing.
- Make sure participants are at the **same level of information.**
- **Draw a distinction** between **informal moments** and **working time.**
- Think about creating a **pleasant atmosphere** and an **efficient frame:** settings, working areas, material, food and drinks...
- Provide **alternative periods**, **create movement**: go inside/outside; stand up / sit down; split the group into smaller groups; change the mean of expression: write/speak/draw (diagrams, shapes) / play (theatre, roles); give room to both thoughts and feelings…
- **Short periods** of work or exercices / **breaks**
- **Open** and **close** every meeting.
- Feel free to **experiment new methods!** Analyse, criticise, adopt, adapt or reject them.
- **Celebrate!** Even the smallest victories

MORE ABOUT SOCIOCRACY by

La Volte
Collectif d'éducation populaire

Sociocracy (**or "Dynamic Self-Governance"**) is a **system of governance**, **using consent-based decision making** among individuals, and an organisational structure based on cybernetic principles.

The first modern implementation of sociocracy was developed by Gerard Endenburg as a new method of governing businesses, but since then, it has also been adopted by wide range of public, private, non-profit, and community organisations.

Based on the sciences of sociology and cybernetics, sociocracy is a collaborative governance method emphasising **self**-**organising** groups, shared authority and **inclusive decision-making**. Its values are **transparency**, **accountability**, and **effectiveness**.

ORIGINS

The word in itself...

The word sociocracy comes from the Latin and Greek words **socius** (companion) and **kratein** (to govern). It was provided in 1851 by Auguste Comte, a French philosopher from the positivist movement. The word was used and developed later by the U.S. sociologist Lester Frank Ward.

In a wider sense, sociocracy means: the rule by the "socios", the people who have a social relationship with each other – in opposition with democracy: the rule by the "demos," the general mass of people.

A system of governance...

In the mid-20th century, the Dutch pacifist, educator, and peace worker Kees Boeke updated and greatly expanded Ward's ideas by implementing the first sociocratic organisational structure in a school in Bilthoven, Netherlands.

In the late 1960's and early 1970's, Gerard Endenburg, an electrical engineer and former student of Boeke's, further developed and implemented Boeke's principles in the electrical engineering company he managed (on account of his parents first, and then by himself). He worked by analogy to integrate his understanding of physics, cybernetics, and systems thinking to further develop the social, political and educational theories of Comte, Ward, and Boeke. Since he understood how mechanical and electrical systems worked, he applied these principles to human systems.

THE FOUR PRINCIPLES

1. Consent governs policy decision-making

Decisions are made when there are no remaining "paramount objections", that is, when there is informed consent from all participants. **Objections must be reasoned and argued.** "Argued" means reasoned or explained. "Paramount" means important. An objection is not a veto; nor a preference. It is a valid reason why a particular decision will prevent a group member from doing his/her job or supporting the group's aims.

All policy decisions are made by consent although **the group may consent to use another decision-making method.** Within these policies, day-to-day operational decisions are normally made in the traditional manner.

Objections are solicited because they provide positive information. The reasoning behind them allows the group to improve the proposal so all members of the group can work toward the aim more effectively.

2. Organising in circles

The sociocratic organisation is composed of a hierarchy of semi-autonomous circles. Each circle has the responsibility to execute, measure, and control its own processes in achieving its goals. It governs a specific domain of responsibility within the policies of the larger organisation. Circles are also responsible for their own development and for each member's development. Often called "integral education," the circle and its members are expected to determine what they need to know to remain competitive in their field and to reach the goals of their circle.

In a circle each person is equal and has the same power to consent or object to proposals.

3. Double-linking

Individuals acting as links function as full members in the decision-making of both their own circles and the next (higher) circle. A circle's operational leader is by definition a member of the next higher circle and represents the larger organisation in the decision-making of the circle they lead. Each circle also elects a representative to defend the circles' interests in the next (higher) circle. These links form a feedback loop between circles.

4. Elections by consent

Individuals are elected to roles and responsibilities in open discussion using the same consent criteria used for other policy decisions. Members of the circle nominate themselves or other members of the circle and present reasons for their choice. After discussion, people can (and often do) change their nominations, and the discussion leader will suggest the election of the person for whom there are the strongest arguments. Circle members may object and there is further discussion. For a role that many people might fill, this discussion may continue for a several rounds. When fewer people are qualified for the task, this process will quickly converge. The circle may also decide to choose someone who is not a current member of the circle.
No candidate declared. We elect competencies more than people.

CONSENT VS. CONSENSUS

Sociocracy makes a distinction between "*consent*" and "*consensus*" in order to emphasise that circle decisions are not expected to produce "*a consensus*". It doesn't mean agreement or solidarity.
By consensus, I must convince you that I am in the right; by consent, I am asking whether you can live with the decision.
Consensus: Everybody agrees.
Consent: Nobody disagrees.

ONE SOCIOCRATIC PROCESS

Process

> Define the roles

> Opening round
How do you feel, here and now?

> Co-construction of the agenda
- Collect proposals
- Ranking & Timing (postpone topics if necessary).

Start with the first topic, exposed by the one who put it to the agenda.

> Clarifying round
Does someone need precision/clarification?
> Direct answers to each request by the "contributor".

> Reaction Round(s)

> Proposal
Ask the person who brought the topic to make a proposal according to what has been said.

> Consent Round(s)
Any objection? And/or proposition to make it better?
If yes:
- Can the contributor or facilitator amend the proposal?
- How might you solve this problem?

> Closing Round

Roles

- A facilitator

- A scribe

- A time keeper

- The one who brought the topic (the "contributor")

Sociocratic Report

- The Agenda

- Decisions taken

- Topics postponed to the next meeting

- Colour of the meeting (atmosphere)

TIPS, METHODS AND PRACTICES

There are many other methods and practices that support the governance of sociocratic organisation.

Your group will need time and practice to **adapt** or create its own process, so that sociocracy will really fit your needs and be used efficiently.

Don't go too fast! You can start by using only some parts of the process (talking in circle, opening and closing round...).

SOURCES & RESOURCES

> http://www.sociocracy.info/
> http://www.sociocratie.net/
- The Creative Forces of Self-organization (Ed. Eburon, 1998)
by John Buck and Gerard Endenburg
- La démocratie se meurt, vive la sociocratie (Ed. Esserci, 2007).
by Gilles Charest

CLOSING EVENT
THE GREAT AND AMAZING STORY OF PULCINELLA

WHAT IS THE SHOW ABOUT?

The Great and Amazing Story of Pulcinella is an adult street and living-room performance by a puppeteer and a musician, in the - almost - pure tradition of the Italian glove puppetry.

Born in Italy some 500 years ago, *Pulcinella* has played his tricks in the streets and market places of Europe: the same tricks, over and over again, yet they never grow old. *Pulcinella's* role is to play with, laugh at and beat up whatever well-educated people were told not to. Every situation is a pretext to joyously mess about. And doing so, he frees the audience from the weight of good-manners, he allows forbidden emotions to come out. He is free and that is why we follow him, that is why he is immortal and universal.

We believe this *Great and Amazing Story* fitted perfectly our seminar *From Singular to Plural*, firstly because it questions our social rules and our way to be and to interact; and secondly because the show arose from a European cooperation between 4 French, Finnish and Estonian young artists.
Looking at participants' comments after the show and in our final evaluation, we believe it was a shared feeling.

THE ARTISTS: *Le Royal Joutava Teatteri*

Script, Puppets, Directing and Manipulation: Perrine Ferrafiat
Assistant Director: Satu Kivistö
Stage design: Sarune Peciukonyte and Perrine Ferrafiat

Costumes: Sarune Peciukonyte
Music: Kaisa Kuvaja
.

Photographic credit :
Konstantinos Maurias