



Avatud Eesti Fond
Open Estonia Foundation



REGIONAALMINISTRI
VALITSEMISALA



Kodanikuühiskonna
Sihtkapital

KODANIKUÜHISKONNA TOETUSEKS

International learning journey

WISE LEADERSHIP IN PRACTICE

The Art of Hosting & Harvesting
Conversations that Matter

our journey of learning

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Sänna, 22-25 August 2013



Welcome

The international learning journey on “Wise Leadership in Practice” was a deep exploration of questions that matter. More than 30 participants from across sectors and passions gathered in picturesque Sänna to explore:

WHAT IS THE TRUE ESSENCE OF PARTICIPATORY LEADERSHIP TODAY?

WHAT IS NEEDED TO HOST PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES FOR MEANINGFUL CHANGE IN THE WORLD?

WHAT IS MY ROLE AND PERSONAL PRACTICE AS A LEADER?

These were just few questions for many of us seeking meaningful ways to collaborate with people at these times of complexity and uncertainty.

Purpose of This Journey

The four days was a co-created learning space to:

DEEPEN our current capacity to lead various teams, organisations and community in a meaningful way;

CONNECT with other practitioners and their stories from the field and explore ways to work together;

ENHANCE our skills and abilities to host strategic conversations and change processes;

IMAGINE and create future plans using different practices in the individual and collective work.

Participatory Leadership
through the
Art of Hosting and
Harvesting Conversations
that Matter is an
experience for all
who aspire to learn
and find better ways
to work with groups
in ways that nurture
collective intelligence,
shared learning
and effective action
for change.

These days were both a Training Ground to step to the next level as leaders and practitioners as well a Learning Village to engage in open space conversations, have time for reflection, building relationships.

The learning journey was carried out within the framework of development program "Kaasajate Kasvulava". The purpose of this unique program is to raise the readiness and capacities to effectively host participatory processes. The journey is funded by the NGO Fund of the EEA Grants, intermediated by Open Estonia Foundation. As well by National Foundation of Civic Society.



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DAY 1

NAMING THE PRACTICE

WELCOME, FRAMING, FLOW AND CHECK IN

Säanna, 22-25 August 2013



Welcome

Framing the day and setting the context

Check in: what has brought me here?

What questions do I bring?

4 fold practice and applying the practice

Check out

What has brought me here? What questions do I bring?

(by Chris Corrigan)

I am trying to forget why I am here
to let go of agendas and clear my
myself
for new questions in this meaning-
ful mess
the best is yet to come and will
come after we are done
great things happen
when great people come togeth-
er
and get to know each other and
help the flow move.

I am here in the mundane mundi-
al, running from the sun
teaching and finding new ways of
reaching people
impressed by who has come.

I am here to see how to host
myself, and how to host relation-
ships
patient with the spaciousness
of rural life, and to know how the
space in me grows
is filled with who I am.

So why not? Would wouldn't?
Daily life calls for hosting all
the time breaking down the walls
between what's yours and mine.

This world is full of love and light
eyes filled, even at night
seeing again, my mother and my
brothers

and noticing they are me and
not some other music.

We are here to become sane
again
spread who we are near and far
through
the world to inspire and be
inspired
light the fire back at home
find my own bones in my own
home
where thousands of questions
bounce around
and announce their longing for
ground.



a dream found
a journey resounds

An invitation to be a better person
a better mom, a better leader
feeding and seeding
a world that needs friendship
and no regrets.

I am from nowhere and every-
where
part of a tight pair, looking for
another conversation here
a big question to tout about:
what's it all about?

For ten years, I have been working
to come here
and search for how to connect
and make visible
those that are invisible.

My journey is to a new story, to
learn
how to tell my chaordic truth
and to become one with when I
am from
to rest on my land and spend time
with interesting hands
trying to understand how to move
on
to somewhere unplanned.

I am here to pass on my work and
grow
And I want to know which way to
go.

When there is a call from the
heart, we can start to

practice this art, no matter where
we are
it can call us halfway around the
world
help us discover and uncover the
humans around and with us.

My curve of life has asked me
about
what I can serve

with the passion that swerves the
path
mirrors the past and reveals the
future fields
produces the yield that the world
needs in this time.

So I have to be of service without
being nervous
so we can have furious fields of
change
harvest the power that rearranges
our world
by making visible the learning that
is pouring through us.

I am a man of the earth, whose
birth was on this land
who never says no to Piret, and
has no regret
about involving the hand and the
heart
the head and the art of getting
closer.

Back home I am trying to make
this the main language
of how we learn
of how education can spurn the



words of separation
and name new practices for a
nation that wants circle
at the centre of the system of
mentoring pupils.

My practice is learning. My drug is
connection,
my addiction is to the heart and
the hearth and the earth
and to the questions that flow
from what we do not know
about the future and where we
might go.

I breathe learning like air
and am here to prepare the field
of care
that invites me in.

So we are here,
coming to the circle, open and
clear.





Four- fold practice

There are four basic practices that are key to the Art of Hosting and Participatory Leadership:

Being present (pre-sensing)

Engaging in conversations (participating)

Hosting conversations (contributing)

Becoming a community of practice (co-creating)

Being truly present, engaging skilfully in conversations, being a good host of conversations and engaging with others in co-creation, are all practices or skills that are easily understood but it takes a continuous practice to hone these skills.

A practice means actively and regularly doing something to maintain or enhance a skill or ability.



How do we already practice?

Being present:
inner silence
and openness

Practicing conversations:
being curious listening
to each other,
being open – minded

Hosting conversations:
sharing our stories,
experiences,
asking good questions

Co-creating:
creating synergy,
build on each other ideas,
asking for help

Four fold practice on the web: <http://vimeo.com/channels/393360>



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DAY 2

CLAIMING THE PRACTICE

WELCOME, FRAMING, META HARVESTING OF DAY 1,
TEACHING, WALKING AND OPEN SPACE

Sänna, 22-25 August 2013



Welcome

Check in: Creating a story line by line in the circle.

Teaching: Walking with purpose in my gut

Practicing good conversations – “Dialogue walk”

Open Space

Check out

Smoke Sauna Spirit and Pearl River

Harvest:

WHAT IS THE TRUE ESSENCE OF PARTICIPATORY LEADERSHIP?

Creating good space for meaningful conversations, and to give their best.

Honouring humanity: sincere invitation, really caring, letting people to be seen, heard, and acknowledged as unique, creative, resourceful human beings.

Carrying your purpose

Discovering purpose is to discover why something exists. Often we hurry to get into action, before we properly understand why we need to take action. Gaining clarity on purpose, and especially gaining collective clarity is setting the right course for taking action. A purpose, therefore, becomes a navigational tool like a compass as it helps us to discover the direction of travel for our efforts so they can be of service.

Purpose can also be described as ‘the glue’ that brings people’s contribution and efforts together. This is because it defines why we are working towards something and why it is worth working on this together. In fact, purpose becomes an invisible leader as it both connects different actions taken and supports everyone to know why their contribution is valuable.

” Collective clarity of purpose is the invisible leader ”

Mary Parker Follett



SO WHAT ABOUT MY PERSONAL PURPOSE FIRST?

How does it feel to walk without purpose?

How does it feel to carry your purpose, to feel it in your gut and to walk with it?

How does it feel to look into other person's eyes to see the purpose and feeling yours?

If my purpose is clear, being present with my questions is bliss.

Dialogue walk

Encounter with another human being. Walking; asking powerful questions; listening deeply; being present and feeling clarity emerging.

Open Space

Open Space is a powerful tool for creating time and space for people to engage deeply and creatively around issues that are of concern to them. In these meetings there's always a central theme but inside that all participants have possibility to come up with important questions, so there are several parallel working sessions inside an Open Space meeting. All the discussions will be recorded and harvested in some way, and the outcome presented to others later. Along with that it's wise to create also an action plan to fulfil what was decided. Lots of talk but no action: pointless.

Let's remind you 4 basic principles of Open Space:

1. Whoever comes are the right people.
2. Whenever it starts is the right time.
3. Whatever happens is the only thing that could have.
4. When it's over it's over.

And 4 essential roles: "Host", "Participant", "Bumble bee" and "Butterfly". So pick the appropriate role and if hosting, invite people sincerely and create space to discuss your question. It might be that "asking for help can lead to a great party"!



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Kodanikuühiskonna
Sihtkapital

KODANIKUÜHISKONNA TOETUSEKS

DAY 3

DEEPENING AND DEVELOPING THE PRACTICE

Säanna, 22-25 August 2013



Framing and metaharvest

Check-in

Teaching – Theory U

World Cafe

Open Space

Check out

Community celebration

Teaching – Theory U

Theory U is a change management method to change unproductive patterns of behaviour, developed by Otto Scharmer.

Fundamental problems, as Einstein once noted, cannot be solved at the same level of thought that created them. Therefore looking into the past cannot always teach us everything we need to know to solve the big challenges of today and the future. Theory U explores how to lead from the future that is emerging.





When leaders develop the capacity to come near to that source, they experience the future as if it were "wanting to be born" — an experience called "presencing." That experience often carries with it ideas for meeting challenges and for bringing into being an otherwise impossible future. Theory U shows how that capacity for presencing can be developed.

Presencing is a journey with five movements: As the diagram illustrates, we move down one side of the U (connecting us to the world that is outside of our institutional bubble) to the bottom of the U (connecting us to the world that emerges from within) and up the other side of the U (bringing forth the new into the world). On that journey, at the bottom of the U, lies an inner gate that requires us to drop everything that isn't essential. This process of letting-go (of our old ego and self) and letting-come (our highest future possibility: our Self) establishes a subtle connection to a deeper source of knowing. The essence of presencing is that these two selves — our current self and our best future Self — meet at the bottom of the U and begin to listen and resonate with each other.

Once a group crosses this threshold, nothing remains the same. Individual members and the group as a whole begin to operate with a heightened level of energy and sense of future possibility. Often they then begin to function as an intentional vehicle for an emerging future.

Links to look up:

<http://www.presencing.com/executivesummary>

Interview with Otto Scharmer:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8HKxvKVUsU#t=70>

Presencing Institute working with the U process:

<http://www.presencing.com>

Books: „Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges“ by Otto Scharmer, 2007 and Presence: An Exploration of Profound Change in People, Organizations, and Society

by Peter M. Senge, C. Otto Scharmer, Joseph Jaworski, Betty Sue Flowers, 2004

U process in practice - Learning Lab Amsterdam movie - a documentation of how a leadership course in Amsterdam university was designed around theory U and what emerged:

<http://www.thelearninglab.nl/page8/index.html>



WORD CAFE

Method:

Drawing on seven integrated design principles, the World Café methodology is a simple, effective, and flexible format for hosting large group dialogue.

The design principles are:

1. Set the context - pay attention to the reason you are bringing people together, and what you want to achieve.
2. Create hospitable space - a friendly cafe atmosphere
3. Explore questions that matter
4. Encourage everyone's contribution
5. Connect diverse perspectives
6. Listen together for patterns and insights
7. Share collective discoveries, harvest

To read more: <http://www.theworldcafe.com/principles.html>

Questions explored at our World Cafe sessions:

What do you notice about working with people in a participatory way?

What does this tell us about how to practice wisely in the future?

What should be the essence of participatory leadership for tomorrow?

The following key thoughts were collected from the discussions - to work with people in a participatory way we need:

Trust – in ourselves, in people we work with and in the process;

Connection – build a common vision and co-ownership of the process, co-create in your team and bring in different perspectives;

Dream & purpose – build a common understanding why we are in this process and keep it in the centre of everything you do;

Context and creative design – combine different methods and be creative!

Practice participation – it doesn't happen overnight, but is a culture to be cultivated and practiced on a personal, team, organization and community level.



OPEN SPACE

The afternoon session was again devoted to the Open Space method, the opening question being:

WHAT ELSE IS BURNING IN US THAT WANTS TO BE SHARED OR EXPLORED?

The questions and themes discussed were:

- How can we contribute to education system?
- Design of strategy process
- What to do with an empty schoolhouse nearby Sänna?
- How to plan a good process for development round tables?
- Lets create a regilaul (runo song) together!
- How to use theory-U to design projects?
- How to use "dreaming" in participatory leadership?
- Hosting skillfully in living / dying systems
- How have you managed to keep your network sustainable?

Day 3 ended with a **community celebration** – games and music performances and learning Estonian folk songs and dances.





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DAY 4

CELEBRATING OUR PRACTICE

Säanna, 22-25 August 2013



Welcome + framing

Check in

Teaching

Framing design lab

Design lab

Harvest Festival

Check out

Check in question in a circle:

What is the true essence of participatory leadership?

Chaordic stepping stones

(Chris Corrigan)



The Chaordic Stepping Stones

- The Chaordic Design Process has 9 dimensions, beginning with NEED and ending with PRACTICE. Each of the nine dimensions can be thought of as a lens through which participants can examine the circumstances giving rise to the need for a new organisation or to re-conceive an existing one. (p. 66 Wise leadership in Practice Workbook)

- These nine steps help us stay focused on NEED and PURPOSE and design our structure and outcomes based on that.
- The first four steps of Need, Purpose, Principles and People are essential elements for the design of an invitation process. Getting clear on these steps helps us to generate purpose, questions and an opening for good participatory process to flow.



- The next three steps of Concept, Limiting Beliefs and Structure help us to think about how we will organize ourselves to hold space for emergence. This becomes especially important in the Groan Zone, the place where a group is struggling with integration of ideas, diversity and creativity and where they feel lost and tired. Good process helps us to hold a group together through that struggle.
- The last two steps, Practice and Harvest, help us to shape our outcomes, create a process for impact and create useful artifacts and documents of our learning process that can help others to continue the conversation.

The chaordic stepping stones are a design tool, meaning that we think through all of them at the outset of an initiative, and refine them as circumstances change.

1. NEED
2. PURPOSE
3. PRINCIPLES
4. PEOPLE

5. CONCEPT
6. LIMITING BELIEFS
7. STRUCTURE

8. HARVEST
9. PRACTICE

1-4 INVITATION

5-7 GROAN ZONE
DIVERGE

8-9 OUTCOME/INSIGHT
CONVERGE

Read more about Chaordic Design Process:

<http://chriscorrigan.com/parkinglot/?p=3589>

<http://chriscorrigan.com/Chaordic%20stepping%20stones.pdf>





Framing design lab and Design lab



(Photo: Paavo Eensalu)

Everything is ready for a design process. Are you ready?

A number of people were ready and the following projects/initiatives emerged for the design lab:

- Graphic facilitation in schools (Kati)
- Back to School initiative: where to move next? (Triin)
- NEET youngsters need help (Einike)
- School development (Neftali)
- Service culture (Priit)

The hosts of design lab shared later that this process helped them to get a bigger picture, and a holistic way to look at the project, find new people, framework for thinking, diverse perspective, questions to answers, find a focus, ideas and energy.



Harvest Festival



(Photo: Paavo Eensalu)

The harvest is very important, our Harvesting Team created such a meaningful Harvest Festival!

The role of the harvesting team was during the journey:

- Being of service to the strategic group and speakers at anytime
- Collecting the results of the conversations
- Collecting all pieces of harvesting throughout the event
- Recording real time visually
- Producing the artefacts of what the process produced (by p.72)



STORYTELLING

A powerful question by Kati Orav

A long long time ago behind thousand mountains and lakes there lived a king.

Oh, he was one angry king who just loved shouting. He shouted to everyone and for everything. He shouted all the time and so much that the only voice he knew was he's own.

He lived alone in his castle because no one wanted to live with him or work for him. When he went to his forest the birds stopped singing. When he went down to his village all the doors were locked and windows were closed. People stayed indoors because they were so afraid of their shouting king.

One day the King heard a knocking on his door.

"Who is there?" he shouted.

No one answered but another knocking.

"Who's there? Answer right away or I will break the door!" the King got so angry.

"It is your own door", said a little voice behind the wall.

King opened the door and a little boy was standing there with a big basket in front of him.

"What do you want" the King shouted again.

The little boy said shyly: "I thought that maybe you are so angry because you are hungry. I bought you some mushrooms and berries, eggs and birds. This is all from your own forest."

The King was so surprised that even forgot shouting. "I have birds in my forest?" he asked. "I have never heard them singing."

Little boy looked at him with a big compassion and started to go away. Suddenly he turned around and asked

"Have you ever thought what would be life without shouting?"

Then he run away.



The King got so angry again and slammed the door shut. But later, when he was sitting alone and having a nice dinner thanks to a little boy, he thought to give it a try. To listen.

Because he actually was a pretty smart and kind king. He just didn't know how to behave.

He sat quietly.

5 minutes...

15 minutes...

30 minutes...

Nothing happened.

The King almost started to get angry again when he suddenly heard something.

Tick, tick, tick...

There was a sound of something.

King started to look around to see what is doing that voice. And he saw a gorgeous clock on a wall.

"Oh, clock, it is just beautiful what you are telling me", he said.

Then he got up and run to his forest. "Birds, sing me a song," he shouted. But all the birds were gone.

But the King didn't give up. With a smile on his hips he sat quietly under the tree and waited. After an hour he heard it. A nice bird whistling. Then the other one and the other one. Once all the forest was full of birds song. King was so happy and birds were not afraid of him anymore.

King run down to his village. First he thought to shout again but then remembered what happened in the forest. So, he just quietly entered the village and saw his people working. When people saw him, they run indoors. Only the same little boy who visited the King before, didn't run.

"Why everybody is running away? I didn't say anything" asked the King from him.

"Well, they just remember your loud voice and don't trust you yet. Just give them some time" and he smiled to the King.

They did a nice walk around the village and little boy showed everything they were doing there. King was so impressed and just nodded silently.



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When people saw it from the windows, they started to come out. After some time all the people were outside abreast like seeing some kind of miracle.

King stopped in front of them and asked

“Why no one ever told me just to shut up?”

And he cuddled the little boy with a great laugh.

People were so happy to have a great King who knew how to listen.

And they lived happily ever after.





Who said that dreams will not come true? by Kati Orav

Once upon a time there was a lovely princess. She just loved cleaning. Specially she was fond of washing dishes and cleaning toilets. Whenever she got a free moment she run to help the kingdom servants. Her parents didn't like it much cos it wasn't appropriate to a little princess but they hoped that it will pass with time.

Princess also had a big dream and it was to become a queen. Sadly it wasn't possible cos she had an older brother who already had a birthright to become a king. So, little princess just had the moments when she put on his father's crown and imagined to be a great queen who took care of world's cleanliness. Her dolls were her servants who day by day cleaned toilets and washed dishes.

Oh how she wished the dream to come true.

Time passed and little princess grow up. She travelled a lot and she forgot her game and dream. But she got some very great friends. And one day she had a chance to go to help a friend with one big happening. To be a volunteer in organizer's team. One of the team members needed to take care of cleanliness. To make sure that the dishes are washed and toilets are clean. Little princess, who wasn't so little anymore took this duty. In the opening circle her friend introduced her as one of the queens in practical matters. And there she suddenly was.

A queen.

A queen of cleanliness.

PS. sometimes the narratives arise out of some very certain context. And to understand it better, you should know the background. This is one of those narratives.





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WHAT AM I TAKING WITH ME? sweetness

Dreams

Love & trust, learning, confidence!

Current moment

Harmony

Wonderful feeling

Love for music, laughing, dancing & creativity

Friends

New practice

New ideas, connections, confidence to practice new methods; loads of inspiration

3 great techniques: the work; clearness committee; chaotic stepping stones.
A belief that world is a beautiful place and knowledge; I can trust

Good thoughts, Love it greatly

LIFE: Approach it lightly, Love it greatly

Belief in myself and others

Belonging

The dream in my stomach New beginnings
Courage to be a leader,
take responsibility,
being in current moment

I'll take with me the sense of freedom to who I AM!
I finally understood the beauty of U-Theory.

I love Grone Zones!

I can sing!

AOHAR!

New friendships, ideas, needing further development, inspiration & will to do needed stuff
Great memories of sauna, conversations, Groan Zone, singing + dancing.
Personal practice to keep on track

Gratitude

Love

Appreciation of diversity
Two feet law
Wonderful group of people who share their talent, wisdom & therefore make the impossible possible

A little more courage to be vulnerable and give myself second chances.



Closing and celebrating



(Photo: Paavo Eensalu)



The Song

We are going
We are leaving today
And which ever way we're going
is the right way

We are leaving with
A sense of belonging
Beyond right and wronging
Relationships

New ways of Being
Seeing
Freeing
And Peeing

And I am leaving with
A woman in my gut
Who said I think I feel Love
Here I don't feel Judged
And I feel scene
It feels like a dream
Is Spring being born inside me?