



Fundamental Facilitation Skills: Mindset, planning, and tools

Why this Training?

Facilitation means to help members in groups to exchange about objectives, expectations, and deeply held views in order to advance together.

Facilitation is essential **to accompany organizational change**. In an ever faster changing context organizations have to review strategies, set new objectives, improve quality, motivate employees, enhance communication between them, and create conditions for creativity and innovation. As a participatory method, facilitation skills offer an excellent potential to achieve this and are a more and more indispensable part of the change manager's "tool box".



Change management at work: Participants indicate their degree of agreement during a change process close to Paris, France.



Facilitation skills are also relevant for **knowledge exchange** for which they offer novel forms to share experiences – for example by relying on jointly constructed cases studies, idea brainstorming and interactive dialogue. Instead of suffering "death by presentation" participants will come back from these meetings energized and having made good use of their time by enriching their knowledge and building networks and communities at the same time.

Participants during a knowledge exchange event in Bremen, Germany

Content and Objectives

This course provides a **sound, solid and comprehensive basis** to the practice of facilitation. This includes building knowledge on the required mindset or the stance of the facilitator, on understanding how to assess the context in which you are called in as a facilitator, and finally how – in the given context – you plan for the use of the appropriate tools. The course will offer you ample practice time with these tools and give you the opportunity to receive indispensable feedback from your peers on your facilitation practice. Here are the course themes in more detail:

T1: Understand what facilitation is and what it is not. Be able to position facilitation within a range of participatory methods and approaches. Understand the 4 functions of the facilitator.





T2: Identify and be able to appropriately deal with your clients. Learn to identify the different clients that you may have at the same time (e.g. funders, home organization, local project leaders, and local group members) and know which issues you must clarify with them. Understand essential aspects – such as the stance you take towards them - when dealing and communicating with them.

T3: Understand in which cases you have to do thorough **systems and stakeholder analysis** before a facilitated session and when not. Become acquainted with tools – testing them on your own case if you like - that allow you to analyze power relationships and social-ecological system functioning.

T4: Learn about the mindset a facilitator has to adopt when working with the group. Better understand your current functioning (your “way of being”) in a group situation and the consequences for your work with groups. Learn about alternatives and begin to implement them.

T5: Know and practice the basic form of facilitative communication – non-violent communication. Understand its relationship to the facilitator’s mindset (T4).

T6: Become familiar with a practical model for designing workshops and meetings. Understand which kind of tools to use in which phases of your meetings, workshops, or even projects.

T7: Build a comprehensive toolbox for workshops and meetings. Throughout the whole training course experience and practice interactive methods including icebreakers, contracting with the group, learning about expectations, brainstorming, joint modeling, collective diagnostic processes, prioritizing, working with visualizations, shifting between various forms of small groups and plenaries, joint agenda setting, dialogue sessions, gradients of agreement, joint action planning and using group feedback.

T8: Bring the course content into your practice. Reflect on which elements of the course you want to use for your own interventions and plan for honing your facilitation qualities and familiarity with the tools.

Course Methods

This training course uses a wide range of methods that have proven effective for adult education: Work on the participants’ own cases, situational simulations, peer feedback on these experiences, modeling of facilitation by the trainer, group discussions, as well as an additional theoretical and experience-based input from the trainer.



Participants of a facilitation training in Switzerland enacting a difficult situation



Participants in the same training working on a case study





For whom?

This is a course for people who are **either new to facilitation** or who would like a **professional validation of what they have been doing**. In the first case you may have facilitated a few meetings but you don't really feel at ease with your knowledge. In the second case you have collected quite some experience in facilitation but you are sometimes unsure if what you are doing is correct and would like to have a professional regard on your practice. The course has also proven an asset for **project leaders who want to use facilitators** as the course helps them to better assess the qualifications a facilitator needs.

Additional practical information

Length : This is a four-day training but can also be given as a two day or a three-day.

Number of trainees : 6 – 16

Trainer



Yorck von Korff, PhD in political science. Trainer, facilitator, mediator and consultant for participatory processes. Has worked for 18 years in international cooperation, ecosystem and water management, scientific cooperation, intra-organizational change as well as urban and land planning. Various articles in scientific journals on participatory processes.

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