PATH2LC

LEARNING MUNICIPALITY NETWORKS

D2.2 Description of facilitators' kit and collection of helpful documents for broad audience

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CONSORTIUM PARTNERS

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IREES research for future.	Institute for Resource Efficiency and Energy Strategies (IREES)	Germany	Scientific
Fraunhofer ISI	Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research ISI (Fraunhofer)	Germany	Scientific
TU WIEN TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT WIEN Vienna|Austria	Technische Universität Wien (TU Wien)	Austria	Scientific
e-think ENERGY RESEARCH	Zentrum für Energiewirtschaft und Umwelt (e-think)	Austria	Scientific
ENERGYCITIES	Energy Cities (ENC)	France	Scientific
HESPUL	Hespul (HESP)	France	Communication
UCSA Ufficio Comune per la Sostenibilità Ambientale	Ufficio Comune per la Sostenibilità Ambientale (UCSA)	Italy	Local network
SUSTAINABLE CITY CITY NETWORK	Sustainable City Network (SCN)	Greece	Local network
OESTE SUSTENTÁVEL AGÊNCIA REGIONAL DE ENERGIA E AMBIENTE DO OESTE	Agência Regional de Energia e Ambiente do Oeste – OesteSustentavel (Oeste)	Portugal	Local network
CITIES NORTHERN NETHERLANDS	City Northern Netherlands represented by City of Leeuwarden (CNNL)	Netherlands	Local network
ALTE69 Agence Locale de la Transition Énergétique du Rhône	Agence Locale de la Transition Énergétique du Rhône (ALTE69)	France	Local network

THE PATH2LC PROJECT

In the PATH2LC project public authorities are working together within the framework of a holistic network approach (so called learning municipality networks) with the aim to achieve low-carbon municipalities.

The core of the project activities are the SE(C)APs (Sustainable Energy (and Climate) Action Plans) or similar climate protection plans developed by the municipalities. The PATH2LC project will foster exchange of existing knowledge and experiences among municipalities, enhance coordination among different administrative bodies within the municipalities, improve cooperation with local stakeholders and civil society and will equip stakeholders in public authorities with required planning and monitoring tools to develop and implement transition roadmaps for achieving the targets set in the SE(C)APs.

The holistic network approach intends to link stakeholders in public authorities among municipalities enabling peer-to-peer learning and to increase the engagement for the energy and climate transition. Policy makers and public authorities at local level are supported with scientific analysis and expertise in order to understand and implement their SE(C)AP measures. Five existing networks of municipalities in Italy, Greece, Portugal, the Netherlands and France are participating in the project.

A special interest of the project is to invite other municipalities to replicate the learning municipality network approach and take advantage of the knowledge base collected in the project.

Further information on www.path2lc.eu

Project information

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CONTEXT

The overarching objective of the PATH2LC project is to support policy makers and public authorities at local level in the transition process towards a low carbon society. Through a holistic network approach, stakeholders in public authorities are linked among municipalities in order to enable peer-to-peer learning and increase the engagement in energy and climate transition.

The holistic network approach is described as Learning Municipality Networks (LMN), where several municipalities of a region build a network and work and exchange on common topics. In the present case, the topics are chosen from the field of the transition towards a low carbon society, more precisely, heating and cooling planning, energy in buildings, renewable energy, stakeholder engagement and financing.

The methodology of the LMNs follows a certain concept. This concept addresses the challenges by facilitation of meetings, target setting and commitment, social control processes and mutual motivation. The core piece in these networks is a very close cooperation in the form of regular, well organised and facilitated meetings. Twice a year, the participating municipalities meet to report on their activities in the chosen fields, exchange on their experiences and their plans. At these one-day network meetings a lively exchange between the cities and municipalities will be stimulated by the facilitator. For this purpose, the facilitation kit developed during the elaboration of the network methodology for energy efficiency networks for companies has been adapted to the target group of the municipalities. A training has been conducted with all operators of the PATH2LC networks. This document describes the core elements of the facilitation kit to grant access to the knowledge of network facilitation and to give a handout and thus support to further network operators.

Why such a focus on facilitation?

The experience that was made in accompanying network activities showed that:

• conducting network meetings in a professional way is underestimated,
• there are skills necessary to conduct network meetings in a professional way,

The advantages of a professional way of facilitating meetings lead to:
• more commitment,
• more acceptance,
• a smooth implementation of measures and decisions made,
• time savings and
• higher chances of a follow-up.

The aim of this deliverable is to offer the municipalities tips and hints to efficiently conduct meetings and different types of workshops formats that are proven to be effective.

Network meetings have to be facilitated

Facilitation is a service. The facilitator strengthens the participants' identification with the objective of the network meeting. The facilitator fosters the exchange of information among peers, the work on topics, as well as creativity and learning processes within the meeting. He/she knows, develops, and competently uses appropriate techniques and tools to facilitate target-oriented and topic-related collaboration within the meeting. The facilitator selects the techniques and tools to be used. Selection criteria of the tools/techniques include:

• Fits to the objectives/topic/contents
• Acceptance of techniques by participants, level of prior knowledge, variety
• Fits to the situation (e.g. new/experienced network)
• Technical equipment available in the room, available space

- Time available (for preparation, implementation, and follow-up)

Beyond that, the facilitator may also play the roles of a guide, a listener, a diplomat, a mediator, a leader, an entertainer, a challenger, a coach, a servant etc. according to the situation. The facilitator therefore has to be flexible and react appropriately in the different situations. He/she is the one to discover biases, disturbances, missing involvement, or hidden conflicts. He/she is the one to present to the audience an ambiance of trust and cooperation that is needed for a target-oriented working together.

Through transparent step sequences, good introductions, questions and summaries and supportive visualisation throughout the entire working process, the facilitator makes a significant contribution to the development and structuring of knowledge as well as to the positive open exchange of experience in the network. To do so, leadership skills in the broader sense are required.

Network meetings have to be prepared

The preparation of a workshop begins with the decision to hold such a workshop, for which the topic and aim should be defined: What exactly is the topic or the problem to be solved? What is the question to be answered in the workshop? It is recommended to not go through those questions superficially, but to rather take your time to develop the central question or issue. The answers to these questions build the basis for the following steps.

The second step is the participation. Who is supposed to participate in the workshop? Who could contribute to the discussion and the results? Which experience and expertise is needed to come along with the topic? Then, the moderator should reflect on the possible interests and the needs of the participants, what are the resources and competences of the participant? It might be helpful to explain to the invited people why they were invited, and which contributions are expected from them during the workshop.

The next reflection is about duration, which includes time and day, location and accordingly food and drinks. If the participants feel well and receive appreciation – by offering them coffee, tea, drinks, snacks, fruits, and a friendly environment – their motivation to actively participate and contribute may be facilitated.

Preparing the methods for the workshop goes in parallel. What kind of format is suitable for working with the participants? Which techniques, tools and instruments are the right ones? Which rules and sequences have to be defined? Prepare the pin boards, the structure of a query, a brainstorming, or an evaluation. Reflect on a suitable introduction phase where everybody may show his competences, think about methods to update everybody concerning to topics to discuss, and always visualize the aim, the starting point, the central points of a discussion, the milestones if any and the results, the commitment and – at the end – the action plan with responsibilities and deadlines.

At the beginning, it is especially helpful to introduce the topic and to commit the participants to the aim or to develop the aim together with the participants. The mandate from the participants gives a strong identification to the group and facilitates the work of the moderator. He/she can always refer to the commitment or mandate, hence again, the importance of the workshop's aim is highlighted. It is not always possible to anticipate a debate or a discussion, so the facilitator has to be open-minded and able to adopt if things are developing different from what he/she expected. Be as prepared as possible and have a storyline as guidance, but do not stick to this map to 100 % if necessary changes occur.

Network meetings have to be evaluated

The facilitator should regularly ask participants for feedback on his/her job. That gives him/her confidence and works as an incentive for improvement but also shows participants that different working methods are useful. Feedback can also be used to evaluate whether the workshop's aim was achieved and to what extent the participants are satisfied with the aim, the process, the workshop and the moderator.

There are lots of formats of feedback and evaluations (see facilitator's kit): structured, unstructured, oral or written, during or at the end of the workshop or even some time after the workshop. The most time consuming and complex method of feedback is the classical evaluation with questionnaires. The fastest feedback is a short question raised in the meeting "What do you think about it?" And there are lots of varieties in between, and the choice depends on both the aim and the time available at hand. Feedbacks have the advantage that the moderator and the participants stay connected to each other. If things turn wrong, a quick feedback round among the participants may be helpful to avoid a bad atmosphere or even conflicts.

The structured flashlight may serve as an example. It is a special form of oral feedback given by participants during or after a facilitated meeting. It is used to reflect about various aspects, such as selection of topics, results achieved, procedural steps chosen or the quality of teamwork. The facilitator writes down relevant aspects on a poster by using "open questions" („How satisfied are you with today's presentation in terms of content and understandability?"). Each participant then reflects orally how s/he rates these parameters at the time. The answers are often more precise compared to using unstructured questions („How did you like today's meeting?") and they comprise suggestions for improvement. As with all feedback: Positive aspects first!

THE FACILITATORS' KIT

The facilitator's kit is a tool kit that may be adapted individually by the facilitator according to his/her preferences, routines, meeting conditions and contents of the workshop or meeting to facilitate.

The content of the facilitators kit is divided into seven categories (see figure 1), which will be explained in detail on the following pages:

1. Values and purpose
2. Principles and rules
3. Theories and models
4. Sequences
5. Meeting formats
6. Techniques
7. Tools and instruments of these techniques

Fig. 1: Overview of the facilitators' kit (Source: IREES)

In the following, the different tools and instruments, basics and theoretical aspects are explained shortly. The examples are in no way intended to represent a comprehensive list, but rather aim to give some ideas and insights of what might be possible to integrate into the scheme. It might be changed and complemented with respect to the individual needs of the facilitator.

1 Values and purpose

Values and purpose give the network an orientation for its work, for regular gatherings and for its existence. Especially the facilitator may be aware of his/her own values and purposes. In difficult situations, one may have recourse to it. And, if the values and purpose of the network are clear and known, they provide orientation throughout the whole duration of the network.

Values and purpose

1 👤

Self-perception of Learning Municipality networks
Logical levels (Robert Dilts)
Start with the WHY (Simon Sinek)
Common target
Sustainable solutions, green city,
Teamwork, transparency, „think big", ...

Fig. 2: Facilitators' kit, category 1: Values and purpose

Self-perception of Learning Municipality Neworks:

Carrying out group work over a longer period of time requires staying power. Therefore, it may make sense to invest some time in the self-perception of the network. Why does the network exist, which values prevail, which beliefs do the participants have, are they going in the same direction, what goals und goals behind the goals should be achieved? If the facilitator knows this, he/she can more easily handle problems, conflicts, offer solutions in difficult times.

Some values und purposes may be (besides the concrete aim to come down with energy consumption, GHG and CO_2 emissions):

- We want to find sustainable solutions both ecologically and economically.
- We work on a sound technical basis and with care.
- We know our personal motifs and intrinsic motivations.
- We are team players.
- We agree on a common target and support each other in achieving the target.
- We make our contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).
- We want to live in a sustainable world and take action to get there.
- We care about future generations, and so on.

It is helpful for the network activities to remember some of these aspects of self-perception of the network from time to time. The facilitator refers to them and gets quickly back to a common basis of the activities.

Logical levels:

To achieve the goals defined in the network, things have to be done, to be decided on, to be changed. That has all to do with a certain behaviour, with competences, and beliefs. According to the logical levels of Robert Dilts, that has also to do with identity or even spirituality in a larger sense.
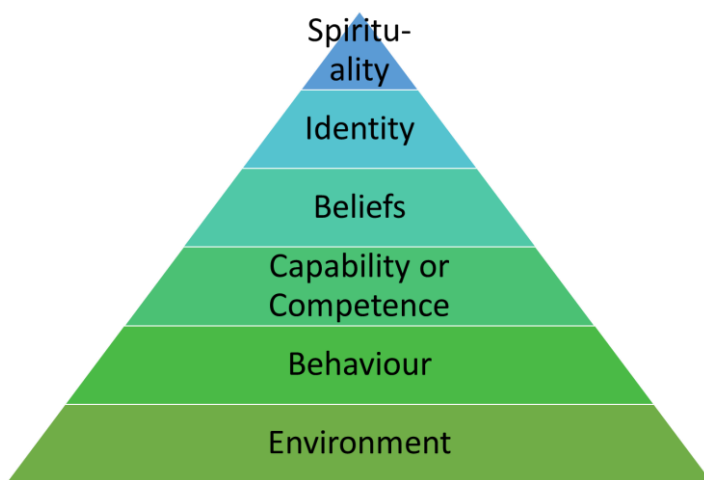
Figure 3: The logical levels of Dilts

The logical levels describe why some changes are so much easier to achieve than others. And why some last longer than others. In general, the levels have their impact from top to down. Whether on a personal or organisational level, it has all to do with the logical level on which you are trying to make the change. If for example, a person does not succeed in changing his behaviour or when, then only for a short period of time, maybe there are underlying beliefs of that person that prevent the behavioural change. If you work on these beliefs, the change in behaviour just takes place.

The reason why this concept is shown in the category of "Values and purpose" is that often, the identity is capable to open doors to beliefs, capabilities, and further down to behaviour and environment. Therefore, a facilitator, who is aware of these levels, may put emphasis on the beliefs level or the identity level if a problem in the network occurs.

Start with the WHY:

Another concept that goes in the direction of the logical levels is the concept of Simon Sinek who describes in his book "Start with WHY – how great leaders inspire everyone to take action". Sinek distinguishes between leaders and those who lead. "Leaders hold a position of power or influence. Those who lead inspire us. Whether individuals or organizations, we follow those who lead not because we have to, but because we want to. We follow those who lead not for them, but for ourselves." This is a very important point, as the network idea corresponds completely with this concept of following. In the ideal case, every participating municipality of the network, at one moment or another, inspires the other municipalities by telling what it has done, achieved, tried to work out. And thus, the others follow, not because of the inspiring municipality but because the other municipalities belief what this municipality also beliefs. For more detailed information, please follow the book or TedTalk of Simon Sinek.[1]

Common target:

Try to find a common target on which the group commits itself. The engagement or commitment is much stronger then. The common target process strengthens the team spirit and gives everyone the opportunity to contribute to the target. The motivation is many times higher. The facilitator can always refer to it. It is the basis of the network activities and the goal at the same time.

Other values and purposes:

Sustainable solutions or the goal of **a green city** may also serve as common values or a common purpose. **Teamwork** is a very important value, especially for a facilitator: To take care of involving everybody and of not losing a single party. Take decisions in common. Argue and discuss if there is not yet an agreement supported by everybody. Be aware that according to "the wisdom of crowds" the many are smarter than the few. **Transparency**: Act in a way that

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[1]   Sinek, Simon, Start with Why. How great leaders inspire everyone to take action. 2009. On youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4ZoJKF_VuA

everybody can follow your explanations, argumentation, and conclusions. Beyond participation, transparency and plausibility are also main pillars of acceptance, acceptance of measures, procedures, or people. The slogan "**Think big**" may motivate a group to go beyond the nearest goals and to expand boundaries.

2 Principles and rules

Principles and rules may seem self-evident, but they are not. We see this in many meetings that end up unstructured and inconclusive or produce only vague partial results. It is a matter of awareness and has a strong link to the first category, the values.

Therefore, principles and rules are not always mentioned explicitly in a workshop or meeting. They seem to be obvious. For the facilitator, it might be worth having a look at them and being conscious of them. For example: efficiency and sound preparation, consensual results, participants act in a self-determined way, always keep minutes, always use visual aids. The facilitator may think of these issues and decide whether they correspond to his/her values and convictions or not, whether he/she wants to act that way or not or where the alternatives are.
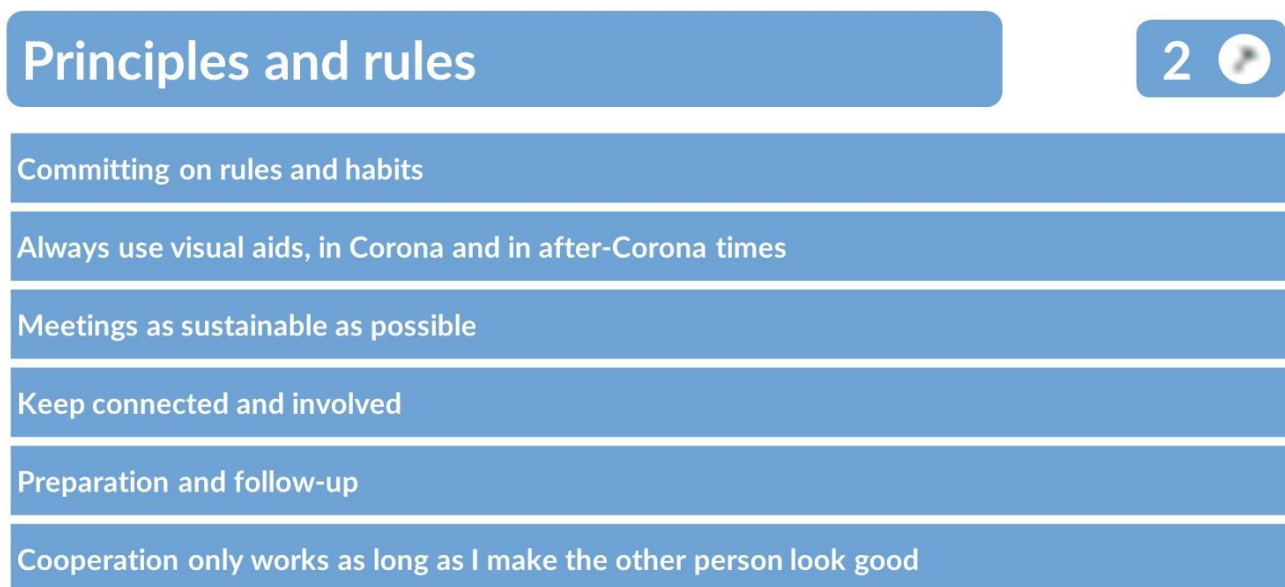

Principles and rules	2
Committing on rules and habits	
Always use visual aids, in Corona and in after-Corona times	
Meetings as sustainable as possible	
Keep connected and involved	
Preparation and follow-up	
Cooperation only works as long as I make the other person look good	

Fig. 4: Facilitators' kit, category 2: Principles and rules

Committing on rules and habits:

Playing by the rules is state of the art. But what rules are intended? They have to be negotiated. When for example a discussion gets out of hand, it is useful to refer to them – if they have been agreed upon beforehand. Therefore, it is recommended to take some time for the most important principles and rules.

The process that goes along with the establishment of rules and habits at the beginning of network activities is also a process in which the facilitator and the group learn to know each other. A side effect of special importance. So, take your time, debate on rules and habits, discuss the way in which you want to collaborate for a certain time and get to know each other.

Always use visual aids

A highly recommended principle is to use visual aids: Visualization techniques always facilitate meetings and especially network meetings and give them a higher quality with regards to effectiveness and commitment. If you use a flipchart, a beamer, a white board, software tools like Miro board, cards or whatever you think as suitable, it will help you to keep the focus and increase the engagement.

Meetings as sustainable as possible:

Since the networks are about energy efficiency, low carbon society and climate protection, meetings should be as sustainable as possible. Therefore, think about the environmental impacts of meetings. That concerns travel, accommodation, catering and food, venue, handouts, wastes and gadgets. Always think of alternatives and compare different options. There are lots of guidelines available. Many locations, hotels, venues have environmental standards. Be aware of them and chose according to the situation.

Stay connected and involved:

A very simple but profound principle is "stay connected and involved". The way in which you do this is not so important. There are many options to do so. The principle refers not only to the facilitator himself/herself. If you are the facilitator, for sure, you should always stay connected and involved to the network, the values, the people, the goals. It also refers to the group in the sense of "keep them connected and involved". Use feedback methods, interaction, mailings, telephone calls or other methods to stay with the people and their issues. Show them that it matters what you do together.

Preparation and Follow-up:

The importance of the preparation of a meeting or a network meeting is obvious. But this is often not considered. What exactly is the purpose of the meeting? What should be different afterwards? Which criteria are there to show that there is a difference? Who should attend the meeting and why? Which expertise is needed? These kinds of questions should be asked beforehand. To foster the team spirit and the principle of "keep the group connected and involved", also the participants of the network could be asked and involved in the preparation. Same procedure with the follow-up. Always send the minutes in due time. And pursue the implementation of the resolutions made at the meeting. Or obtain the consent of those who were not present at the meeting. If there is no follow-up, the commitment of the group will decrease. If you do not show that the issue is of importance for you as the facilitator and role model, the group will do neither.

Cooperation only works as long as I make the other person look good:

This is a principle whose value has already been proven many times over. It is the story of mutual respect and appreciation. You always see each other twice – at least. Be careful not to say something that puts the other person in a bad or darker light. That happens so easily and unconsciously. As a facilitator, your job is also to prevent these kinds of situation. That does not mean that you should never criticize. How to handle these issues, see the following category, the communication models.

Other principles and rules:

There are many other principles und rules you may apply. The importance is to have them clear at least for yourself as facilitator. Feel free to add those that are important for you.

3 Theories and models

Theories and models help the facilitator to work in a structured way. They also enable reflexion and adjustments. There are some examples for theories and models in quite different areas such as group work, communication models, conflict management, and calculation methods. As mentioned above, the presented theories and models are only examples and may be supplemented.
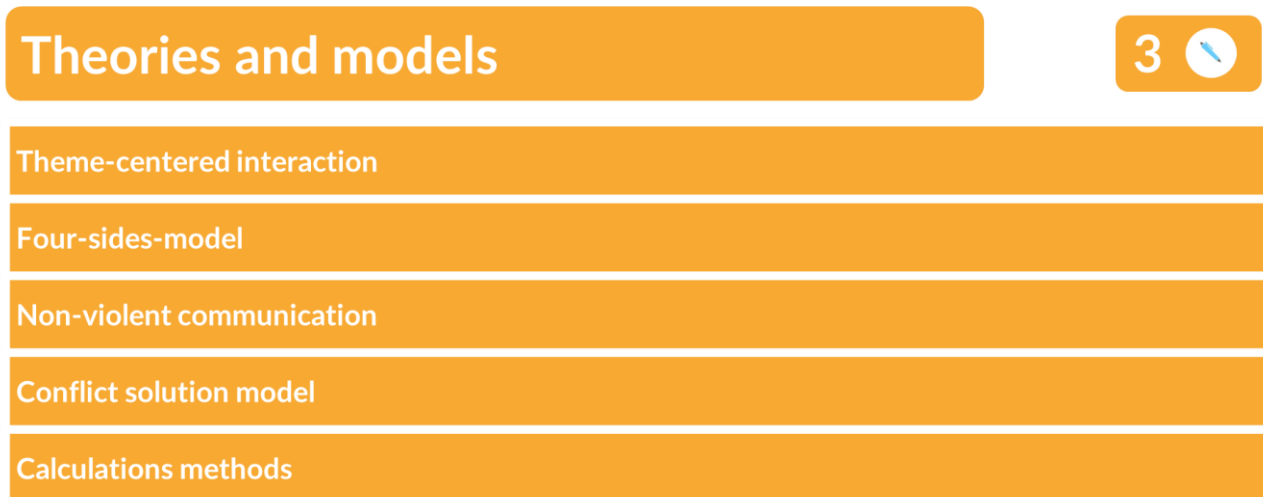

Theories and models 3

- Theme-centered interaction
- Four-sides-model
- Non-violent communication
- Conflict solution model
- Calculations methods

Fig. 5: Facilitators' kit, category 3: Theories and models

Theme-centered interaction:

The theme-centred interaction is a method for working in groups. It balances the different needs of the theme (IT) that formulates the common task and the goal of the group, the individual subjects (I) and the team (WE) with its relational patterns (see figure below). The globe represents, in a narrow and wider sense, the conditions under which the team works, for example the organisational, physical, structural, social, political, ecological framework. The model itself is complemented by axioms, postulates and auxiliary rules.

There are many ways to bring to life the different aspects in the network activities. The theme (IT) is the most obvious one. And within the business context the most familiar. It is about the substantive issues, technical issues, professionalism, entrepreneurial thinking, etc.

The individual aspect (I) is more about personal attitudes, individual approach of each employee, needs and sensitivities. If the facilitator knows about these issues and if he/she can take them into consideration, it will be easier to get motivation, engagement, and creativity.
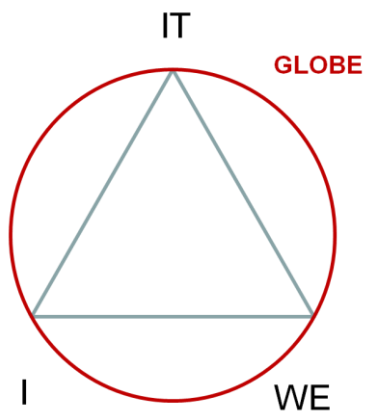
Figure 6: Theme-centered interaction

The collective aspect brings also motivation and perhaps also fun into the meetings. Possibilities to foster the team spirit are as effective as the commitment on rules and habits (see category 2). All aspects are always moving, from time to time, one aspect is more important than the other ones and then it is vice versa. The facilitator's task is to realise and act in an appropriate way.

There are axioms, postulates and auxiliary rules in the theme-centered interaction model. The axioms are:

• The individual is a psycho-biological unity. He is both autonomous and interdependent.

• All living entities and their growth and decline deserve to be respected. Respect for that which grows is the basis for all evaluating decisions.

• Making free decisions happens within provisory internal and external boundaries. It is possible to extend these boundaries.

The postulates are:

• Be your own "chairperson!" => Be aware of your own internal and external situation and make decisions responsibly taking both the other person and yourself into account.

• Disturbances and passionate involvements take precedence. Look at them as a chance, and regard them as a sign of something that has been over-looked or repressed.

The auxiliary rules are:

• Represent yourself when you speak; speak in the "I" form, and do not use "we" or "one".

• When you ask a question, say why you asked and what the question means to you. Speak for yourself and avoid an interview.

• Hold back on interpretations of others. You should express your personal reactions instead. Hold back on generalizations.

• When you say something about another person, also tell what it means to you.

• Private exchanges take priority. They interfere and are usually important.

• Only one person at a time should speak!

Four-sides-model:

There are lots of communication models available. The communication square is the most familiar, and by now the most widespread model by Friedemann Schulz von Thun. Due to its structure, the model also became known as the 'four-ear-model'. It shows that one speaker ('sender') speaks with one mouth, his/her message consists of information that the receiver could interpret in four different ways, as illustrated in figure 7.
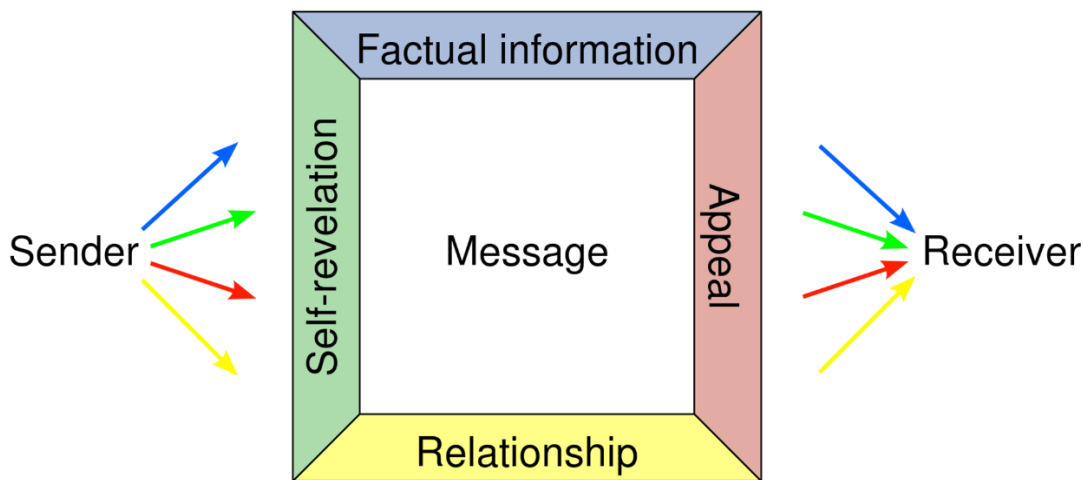
Figure 7: Four-sides-model

The following table provides more information about what else can be contained in a message, apart from the factual information.

Factual information	Objective, matter of fact, information like data and facts
Appeal	Desire, advice, instructions, commands that the sender is seeking
Relationship	Information on the relationship between sender and receiver, how they get along, what they think of each other
Self-revelation	Implicit information (conscious or unconscious) about the sender, e. g. his motives, values, likes/dislikes etc.

The four-sides-model explains why there are so many misunderstandings in communication. The best way to bring clarity to a message is to ask how the message is meant. The following communication method, the non-violent communication model is an appropriate way to do so.

Non-violent communication:

The non-violent communication of Marshall B. Rosenberg may be seen as the royal road of communication. Similar to the four-sides-model by Schulz-von-Thun, you may get aware of your own feelings and needs and guess the feelings and needs of the other person. In difference to the four-sides-model, however, you are more challenged in searching inside of you and you get trained in empathy, for both parties. That might seem difficult but can be learned.

The model consists of four steps: observation, feelings, needs and request. One can use it as self-empathy discourse or for empathy in a conversation with others. In the following table, the setting of self-empathy has been chosen.

Observation	Observation without judgement (like a video camera) • I see … • I hear …
Feelings	Identifying the own feeling • I am nervous, hesitant, confused … • I am scared, impatient, alarmed …
Needs	Identifying the own needs • … because I need/value … • (respect, reassurance, support, trust, understanding, acceptance, consideration)
Requests	Request on relationship or action • Do you understand this? • Would you be willing to … ?

The non-violent communication can perfectly be used as a communication tool. It works for the facilitator as well as for every participant of a network. It is also helpful in conflict situations. But if you want to use it in a durable manner, it is recommended to integrate it into your attitude and make a routine out of it. For further details, please refer to the publications of Marshall B. Rosenberg and others.[2]

Conflict solution model:

Conflicts are the biggest challenge for facilitators. According to the conflict escalation model of Friedrich Glasl, it is recommended to address a conflict in the very beginning. Otherwise, a facilitator cannot mediate any more. A mediator is needed from step 4 on. From step 6 on, a judge is needed and step 9 is "together into the abyss" (see the following figure 8).
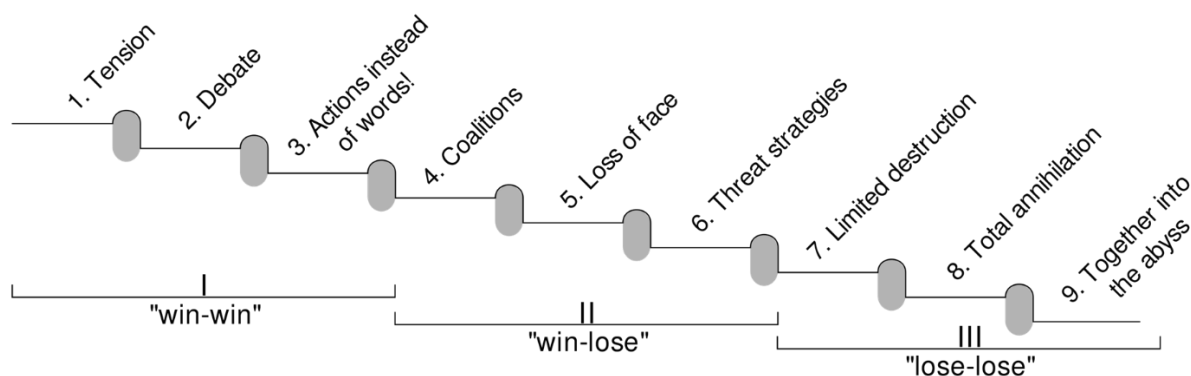
Fig. 8: Conflict escalation model according to Glasl

As a network moderator, you must be very careful to quickly deescalate any potential or upcoming conflict. The very first question to ask yourself is: What is disturbing? And then go searching according to the conflict solution model (see following figure 9). The model includes four levels. The first one is clearing, the second one is the research for the reason(s) or the cause. It is important that the conflicting parties can complain about the circumstances and the

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[2]   Rosenberg, Marshall B.; Non-violent communication : A language of Life.

reasons in order to step forward more easily to the level of possible solutions. At level three, creativity is needed and the facilitator should stay at this level most of the time. It is a time to construct and not to destroy. So, it is recommended to stay at the level of the solutions. Then, do not forget to pass on to level four, the transfer and the implementation. Many conflicts can be de-escalated at the very beginning. It is up to the skill of the facilitator to analyse the situation and to react accordingly.

C — **Clear**
- What is disturbing?
- What do the other participants think about?

R — **Reason/Cause**
- What are the reasons for this problem?
- Which conditions do we have that ….?

S — **Solution**
- What would you like to have happen?
- What could be the solution? What options do we have?

T — **Transfer**
- What would you like to have happen?
- What could be the solution? What options do we have?

Fig. 9: Conflict solutions model with its most important questions

Calculation methods:

Calculation methods are a good way to bring things to a common basis and to make them comparable. For example, if a municipality wants to invest in a measure, the evaluation of the profitability on payback period, internal rate of return or present value can be compared. Often, investments are not done due to a payback period that is too long. Considering other parameters, the profitability shows more options than the responsible person is used to take into account.

Required Parameters	Payback period	Internal rate of return	(net) present value
Investment including all planning and installation costs	X	X	X
Change of operating costs and reduced energy costs	X	X	X
Calculatory interest rate	(X)		X
Expected operating lifetime		X	X

Table 1: Calculation methods and necessary parameters

4 Sequences

The sequences and routines differ from city to city and from country to country. They comprise decision making processes, processes of permits by the municipal council or participation processes with its citizens. In some cases, there is an overlap with other categories. The process of a Learning Municipality Network can be described as sequence. There is an acquisition phase. After that, the network meetings follow a certain logic: kick-off meeting, target setting, monitoring.

Also, the agenda of a meeting has its own sequence (see next category "Meeting formats"). The SEAP/SECAP has a given structure and so on. If the moderator does not know these sequences or disregards them, it could be difficult to lead the network to success.
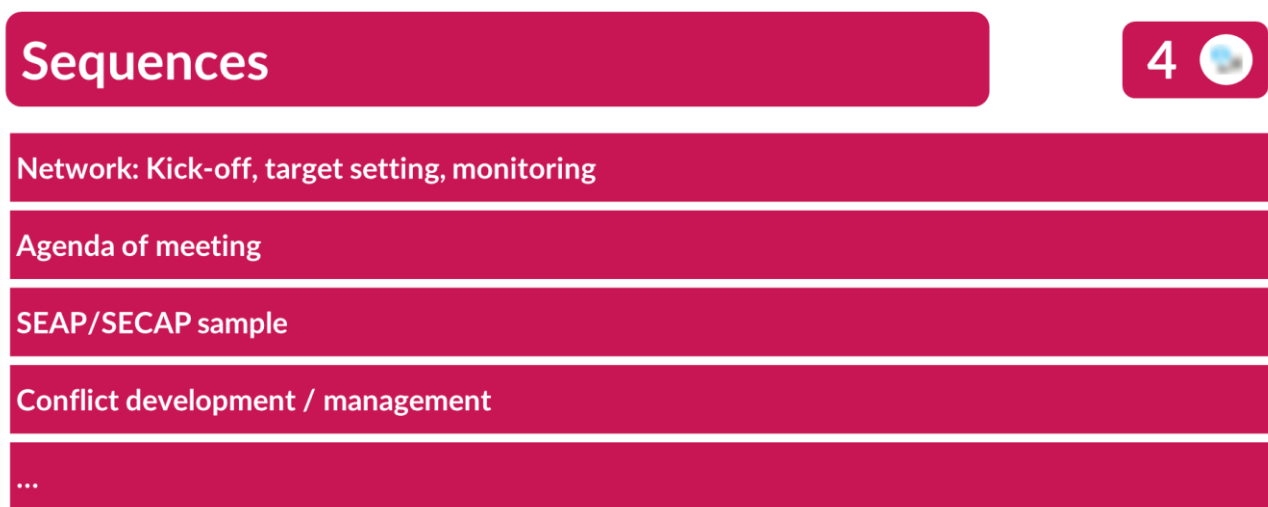

Sequences 4

Network: Kick-off, target setting, monitoring

Agenda of meeting

SEAP/SECAP sample

Conflict development / management

...

Fig. 10: Facilitators' kit, category 4: Sequences

5 Meeting formats

An experienced facilitator is skilled to deal with different circumstances. In times of restrictions due to the pandemic situation of COVID-19, it was necessary to switch to another meeting format than usual. In the PATH2LC project, mainly virtual meetings were held. As soon as the situation allowed, physical meetings or hybrid meetings were conducted. Therefore, only these two formats are described in the following.[3]
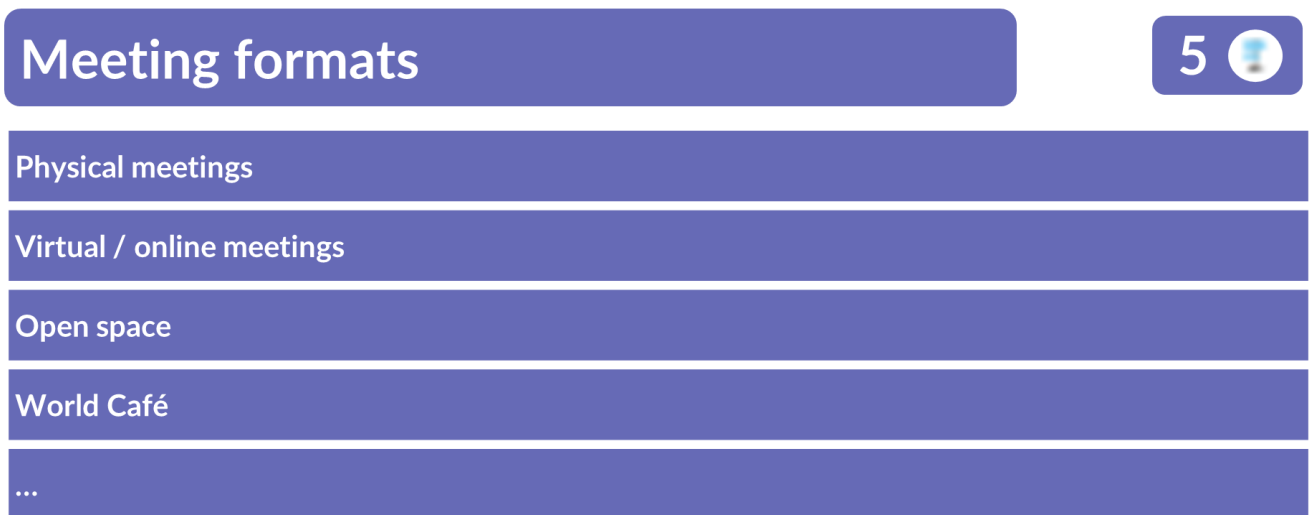

Meeting formats	5
Physical meetings	
Virtual / online meetings	
Open space	
World Café	
…	

Fig. 11: Facilitators' kit, category 5: Meeting formats

Physical meetings

Physical meetings are very important at the beginning of a network. It is important that the participants get to know each other and that a trusting relationship is created. That is the task of the facilitator to offer a platform (physical or virtual) where these things may happen. An ordinary one-day meeting of a Learning Municipality Network may offer the following structure:

- Clearly reflected about time, topics and contents, participants
- Start with an "official" welcome and minutes of the last network meeting
- Presentation of the hosting municipality (approx. 30 minutes) focussing e.g. on implemented/ planned SE(C)AP measures
- Plan a coordinated exchange of experiences by an enquiry of implemented/planned measures
- 3 pauses (e.g. 2 coffee breaks at 30 minutes each + 1 lunch break) for a free exchange of experiences
- Discuss important organizational topics when all participants are present (e.g. after the first coffee break)
- Site tour in consultation with the host of the meeting (approx. 1 hour)
- Data protection-relevant topics at the end (without external speakers)
- Monitoring
- EU-project related issues (evaluation)

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[3]   For the municipalities, other formats are possible, according to their goal, the target group(s), and the circumstances. For example, stakeholder processes can be facilitated in a world café format which is very effective. For brainstorming purposes with a big target group, the open space format is recommended.

As mentioned in category 2 "Principles and rules", the preparation phase is very important concerning the success of the meeting. Once the goal, the expertise needed, the participants and the level of knowledge of the participants are clear, the meeting invitation is sent out. It is recommended to send the invitation at least two weeks prior to the meeting. Please send all necessary data: date, venue address, on-site contact (phone number), agenda, route description for cars and public transport, and documentation of cancellations/acceptances. The host of the meetings needs the number of the participants for catering and room requirements.

Considering the agenda, it is recommended to abstain putting too many items in order to allow time for discussion. Make sure there is a responsible person for each item in case of any questions. Be ready and flexible to adapt, as things will go wrong sometimes. As the topic deals with low carbon municipalities and decarbonisation, please also consider the principle "as sustainable as possible" from category 2.

Virtual meetings

For virtual meetings, there are several software solutions that offer virtual meeting rooms. In the following, we shortly describe some of these platforms

- Zoom.us
    - Video conferencing and messaging;
    - Elements: group chat, recording, chat, screensharing, transcripts, calendaring, filters, reactions, polls, hand raising, breakout rooms, remote control
    - Access to the meeting through a link or a meeting ID and password

- Microsoft Teams
    - Video conferencing, messaging, phone calls and sharing documents
    - Elements: group chat, screensharing, calendaring, reactions, hand raising
    - User has to be part of the team to take part in the meeting

- GoToMeeting
    - Video conferencing for up to 250 participants
    - Subscription to GoToMeeting starts from 19 Euros per year
    - Elements: screensharing, writing/highlighting while screensharing, white boards, remote control, recording, transcripts
    - The link to the meeting is connected to the user starting the meeting and is not changing within time

- Jitsi
    - Video conferencing for up to 100 participants
    - Elements: screensharing (multiple participants can share their screen simultaneously), remote control, recording, calendaring, live stream via YouTube, seeing how much someone has spoken
    - Integration of Google, Microsoft and Slack
    - GDPR-compliant

- Mibo
    - More for the fun character of a meeting
    - Walking around on an island called Mibo while talking to friends, goofing around and having fun
    - Up to 12 participants in the free version; a subscription starting from 49 Euros per month is needed for more participants

- Gathertown
    - For meetings with a conference character

- Walking around in a virtual world
- Up to 25 participants in the free version
- Access via link

- Wonder.me
  - For meetings with a conference character
  - Moving avatars closer to join a conversation; moving avatars away to leave a conversation
  - Elements: broadcasting videos, screens or any other media
  - GDPR-compliant

Please consider that a virtual meeting demands a different agenda. As the possibilities of an online site visit are limited, you could think about alternatives such as videos or interviews with experts from companies or other municipalities working in a similar area as you. Integrate more breaks, as virtual meetings demand more concentration. Also, it might be more difficult to 'read the room', meaning your task as a facilitator is more difficult especially when participants switched of their camera. You may also integrate small mobilisation slots as for example five minutes of yoga. Put the focus more on interaction elements and on workshop character than on presentations.

6 Techniques and 7 Tools and instruments

Coming to techniques as well as tools and instruments, there are plenty of possibilities. Please find the following figures which showcase some examples for introduction techniques, feedback techniques, visualization techniques for physical and virtual meetings, creativity techniques, documentation techniques, planning techniques, evaluation techniques, questioning techniques and discussion techniques. Please consider the list as not exhaustive, it may be supplemented as well. It is important for the facilitator to be willing to vary the techniques and instruments as deemed necessary and beneficial to the participants. Your network participants will appreciate the effort and variety.

Techniques I   6 🔺 7 ⚒

Introduction techniques	Presentation in turn Pairwise introduction Check-in	Bingo Preparation of profiles
Feedback techniques	Flashlight Questioning E-mail	Questionnaire (online, written) Structured/unstructured 5-finger feedback
Visualisation techniques Physical meeting	Powerpoint Beamer Pin board	Flipchart White board Cards
Visualisation techniques Online meeting	White board Jamboard Smiling	Sharing screen with office apps Reaction functions chat function
Creativity techniques	Brainstorming Mind map Incisive questioning	World café Collection of associations

Techniques II

Documentation techniques	Minutes Records (audio, video) Report	E-mail Photos
Planning techniques	Gantt chart Doodle	MS Teams planner
Evaluation techniques	Survey Pairwise comparison SOWT analysis	Derivation of criteria Voting Sticking dots
Questioning techniques	Open questions (W-questions) Closed questions	Interview technique Enquiring
Discussion techniques	Deriving guiding questions Introduction of topic Yellow card, red card	Fair distribution of speaking time Time watcher (bell, clock)

Fig. 12.1 and 12.2: Techniques I and II

TRAINING ON LEARNING MUNICIPALITY NETWORK FACILITATION

Within the project of PATH2LC, two half-days trainings lasting three days each have been conducted in February 2021, with network operators and some representatives of participating municipalities. At the end of the training, the participants rated the training, see the following figures.
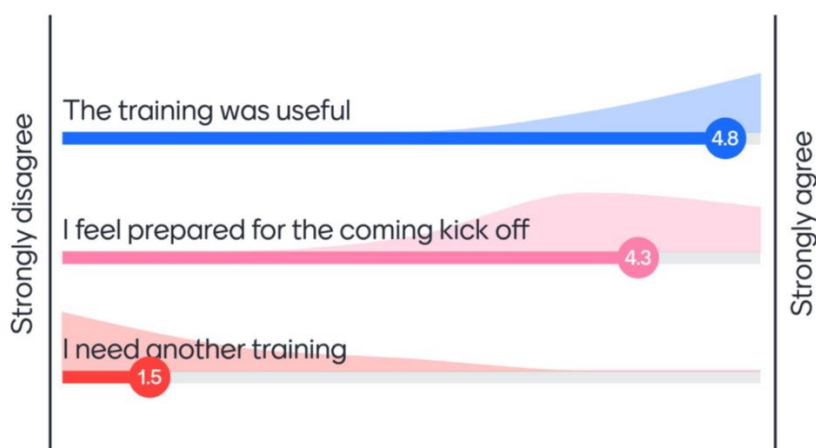

Fig. 13.1: Feedback by group 1

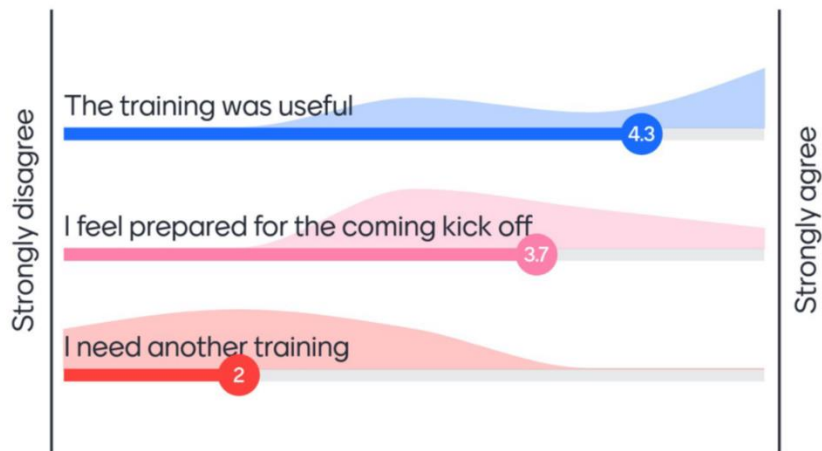# How would you rate the training?

Mentimeter

Fig. 13.2: Feedback by group 2

The rated and the individual feedback, collected through the software Mentimeter, show that the facilitation training was perceived as useful by both groups. In a survey conducted in September 2022 with the trainees, the questioned persons remembered the different categories and their items. Participants stated that they use elements of the facilitator's kit, especially the values and purposes, principles and rules, sequences, meeting formats and techniques. The use of the theories and models were ranked lower. The participants would highly recommend a training on facilitation methods to their colleagues.