

CAMPAIGN ACCELERATOR TOOLKIT



DEFINE



SENSE



CREATE



PROTOTYPE
& TEST



PLAN & PITCH

The Campaign Accelerator blends high-performing campaign strategy tools with proven methods inspired by design thinking. This is a practical guide for planning campaign projects that put people at the centre of our efforts for change through a collaborative process that involves the entire project team using visual templates, methods and exercises.



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These tools are presented in the order we use them to define a campaign however...you may not need all of these tools for your project. Start by evaluating the tools and determine which ones make sense for your specific project. Then map out the path and methods you will use to define your challenge.



Throughout the guide you will also find some tips from experienced users of these tools. Send us your tips to add to the guide.

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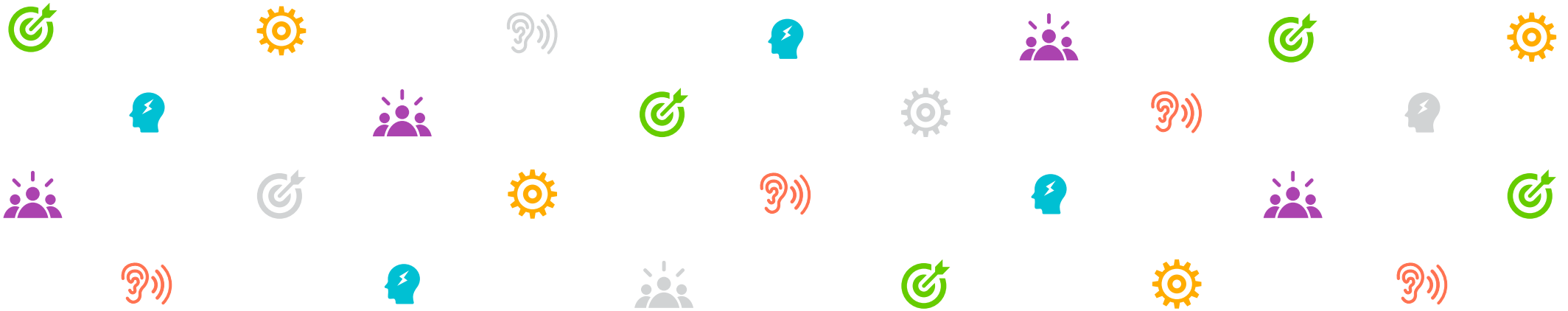
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About Campaign Accelerator



This is a participatory process.

By bringing together project teams with diverse skills and perspectives to develop strategy and tactics through participatory exercises, integration is baked in and brings greater team alignment.



People are at the centre of our planning.

Throughout the process we involve people outside the project team — allies, supporters and people we wish to engage — to gain insight, inspiration and test ideas to make them fit for purpose.



These are practical tools.

They are a blend of campaign strategy tools, including system thinking, and human centred design that can be combined in different ways to create a process that works for your team.



This is a work in progress.

Everything in this toolkit is a prototype. We are constantly testing, evaluating and learning how to improve this process and we invite you to provide feedback on the methods and tools to improve it based on your experience.



This approach is flexible and adaptable.

This process isn't intended to be linear. You may need to iterate several times to get to your solution. We encourage you to adapt, hack and improvise to improve on what you see here.

Introduction

People powered campaigns thrive on strategies that put people at the centre of change. It's a shift for many campaigns and campaigners, so we created the Campaign Accelerator to blend a systems approach to strategy with proven methods inspired by design thinking. We've found that this hybrid approach enables teams to build campaigns that engage more people in deeper, more powerful ways, quicker. By accelerating the planning process we can get campaigns out the door faster, and learn and adapt from our campaigning to create more effective people powered campaigns.

This is an action-based process. We develop ideas and test theories. We get out of the meeting room and work with key audiences. Over five days, the plan evolves and gets refined. By the end of the five day programme, teams generate a project plan with clear next steps based on an analysis of the problem and solution, audience feedback, and tested ideas that address the campaign challenge. Teams also walk away with processes and tools for radical collaboration and planning that can be taken forward and used long after the Accelerator ends.

We have presented the Accelerator here as an intensive 5 day process, but **how you use these tools is up to you.** You can break it down and develop your plan over a longer period or select a few tools and methods to create a campaign in a day to respond to current events. In reality you'll find the process is not linear; you may revisit these tools and techniques many times as you learn and develop the campaign based on feedback.

Are you ready for a people powered approach?

The Campaign Accelerator puts people power at the centre of the strategy and campaign planning process. No matter how many skilled staff and volunteers we claim, it will take more than our individual organisations to create and sustain the change the world demands of us. People powered movements are transforming the world — and our work.

By building strong and effective people powered strategies into our campaigns and projects, we can enable countless individuals to take an active role in change-making. The result: more campaigns, more wins, bigger victories and sustained movements that can scale to take on the enormous challenges our planet and humanity faces.

While there may be other strands of work your organisation or team takes on to deliver change, in this process we focus in on who can help us create change and connect with them through this process to inspire campaign stories, activities and engagement.

Before embarking on this process, your team and key decision makers need to be committed to a people-powered approach to campaigning.

To learn more about people power, download the [Mobilisation Cookbook](#).

Are you ready for a participatory approach?

Collaboration is one of the core values of this approach. Team members contribute equally throughout the process by relying on diverse perspectives and expertise. Together, problems are identified and solutions tested, building a culture of collaboration that lasts beyond the planning process.

Team members have remarked that there was no difference between roles during the process. By bringing together project teams with diverse skills and perspectives to develop strategy and tactics through participatory exercises, integration is baked in and brings greater team alignment.

Alignment on strategy and plans through the process brings higher levels of autonomy during implementation. While the team will agree the strategy, creative direction and big elements together, other details of the plan can be developed by those with specific expertise. This means the team is able to focus on the big picture together instead of small details.

This can create a level of internal disruption which surfaces current power dynamics and provides an opportunity to transform them. Those people who have traditionally held power over decisions need to be open to everyone's perspectives and input during the process and willing to share power and decision making with all team members in order for this collaborative approach to be successful.

Why do we take a systems approach?

Often the problems we are trying to solve are deeply complex and are part of larger integrated systems. When we try to create change and “fix” just a part of that system, the system often adapts and the problem reappears somewhere else. In order to create lasting change that addresses the root of the problem the whole system needs to be transformed.

When our aim is to transform the system, we need to explore and understand the whole system including its many components, players and the relationships between them.

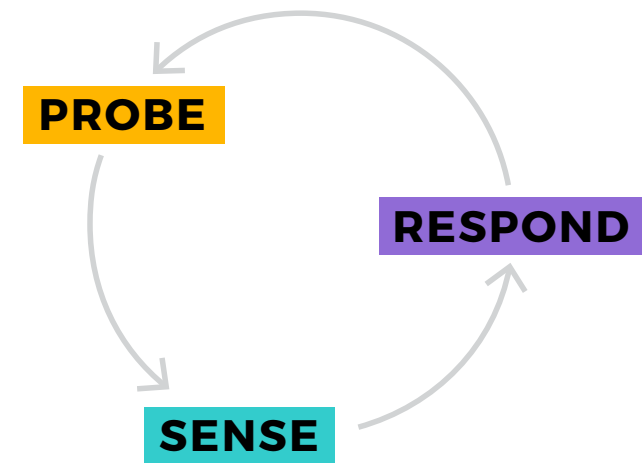
Because systems are complex and dynamic, it requires us to embrace a process of real world experimentation, learning and adaptation.

Most of today’s major crises are tied up within complex economic, political and social systems; they are global and deeply cultural. To understand these complex systems and how we can create change and transform them we need to take an approach that is based on probe-sense-respond. We probe the system by creating experiments and testing assumptions. We sense by listening, evaluating and integrating feedback from our experiments into our understanding of the system. And we respond by changing our experiments and adapting our strategy or scaling what is working to disrupt and transform the system.

This approach is built into the Campaign Accelerator process by exploring what we currently know about systems, challenging our assumptions, generating ideas and seeking feedback and adapting ideas.

It is also an approach that needs to continue long after the Campaign Accelerator process in order to create systemic change.

To learn more about a systems approach to campaigning see SmartCSOs report [Reimagining Activism](#), or the Greenpeace (draft) [systems campaigning toolkit](#).



Why do we integrate design thinking in the process?

As organisations we regularly tackle complex issues that are the result of dysfunction in larger systems including poverty, environmental destruction, inequality and violence, and design thinking offers advantages for working within complex and dynamic environments.

Design thinking has earned a reputation for generating innovative new products and services. We're seeing the methodologies spread quickly throughout the international aid and development sectors, and the NGO / advocacy worlds are beginning to take note as well.

Design thinking has its roots in professional design traditions including ways of thinking and working. In order to engage non-professional designers in the process of design, these traditions have been simplified into a set of practices or tools and popularised under the terms "design thinking" and "human-centred design."

Design thinking requires cognitive skills other than deduction and induction, and this can sometimes be uncomfortable new territory for staff from NGOs which are more commonly influenced by scientific traditions. Yet as with any new skill, with practice and experience this approach can become natural or automatic.

We have integrated design thinking practices into the Campaign Accelerator because it is a process designed to tackle complex problems — problems where the solution is not known from the beginning. Design Thinking is a solution-focused process, one that recognises many possible solutions exist, and as we design solutions and experiment, we also learn more about the problem.

Adapting and including a design thinking approach in campaign planning develops empathy with audiences, challenges assumptions, and helps us better understand people's challenges and needs. The process includes field research and interacting with key audiences to uncover what inspires action. Gaining empathy helps remove the barriers between 'us' as staff and 'them' as people we wish to engage. This creates inspiration for innovation and greater creativity in our campaigns.

Design thinking uses prototypes to gather direct feedback on how and why people engage in and interact with campaigns. The process of prototyping, getting feedback and iteration is an essential part of the process and evolution of the solution. It also frees teams up to try wild ideas while minimising risks. Free from failure, participants find courage to try new things rather than sticking to what they already know.

There are many resources available online to learn more about design thinking, including free online courses from [Acumen and IDEO.org](#).

How to use this guide

This process was created and optimised for project teams to turn around plans quickly — to spend less time planning and more time campaigning.

It works best for developing specific projects within a wider campaign. Teams should have completed their basic research and have a good understanding of the problem they are tackling and the context of the problem, even if they don't know their specific strategy yet.

Whether you're using this for a totally new campaign or to reinvigorate an existing campaign, you'll need to have a clear idea of what you want to get out of the process at the end so that you can adapt the process to meet those specific needs.

Each exercise comes with step by step instructions based on what we found works best with teams; you might have better ideas. Take inspiration from this, adapt it as necessary, and make it work for your team. Always keep your outcomes in mind. The process, methods and tools should serve the outcomes you need.

You may find some of these tools and methods useful for long term planning, or at specific points during implementation. It's up to you how to use them and when. We hope this guide will provide you with inspiration and a useful toolkit to create more responsive, people powered and impactful campaigns that spark system transformation.

What the Campaign Accelerator will not do

This toolkit will not deliver answers to all your questions or cover all the work you may need to address in the life of your campaign. (Sorry!) The process is about accelerating your planning and launching people-powered campaigns more quickly — which should allow you to learn from your campaign activities and adapt plans based on your experience.

The Campaign Accelerator probably won't replace all of your current campaign planning tools, templates and methods; hopefully it can supplement them, complement them and provide your team with some new ways of working to supercharge your campaigns.

With Gratitude

This guide is only possible because of the great work that has come before it. We are grateful for the inspiration and guidance these organisations have provided: Fantastic Studios, Greenpeace Response Lab, Grove Consultants International, Hyper Island, IDEO.org, Kaospilots, Nesta, SmartCSOs, Strategyzer and Greenpeace Mexico for providing incubation space.

Before you begin...

This guide is not intended as a general guide to learn facilitation, it focuses on facilitating a specific process and there are many good resources if you're looking to learn facilitation for the first time. However, it is worth covering our approach to facilitation and the basics of organising a Campaign Accelerator workshop to make sure you're prepared and get what you need from the process.

To learn more about facilitation, check out these resources and trainings:

- Book: Dale Hunter, The Art of Facilitation, 2009
- Trainings: Zenergy Global <http://www.zenergy-global.com>
- Book and Workshops: Grove Consultants International, Principles of Facilitation and <https://www.grove.com/workshops.php>
- Book: David Sibbet, Visual Meetings, 2010

Role of a Facilitator

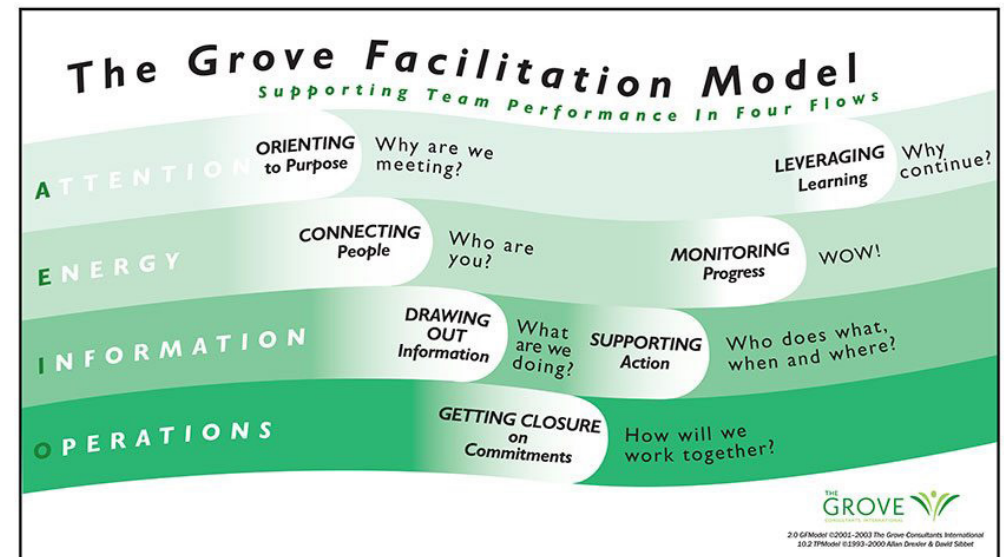
A facilitator plays many roles, at the most basic a facilitator is a process guide and servant to the group to help them achieve their purpose and desired outcomes.

As the facilitator, it is essential that you create alignment among the group on their shared purpose and vision for the campaign in order to enable collaboration as equals so that all individuals can fully participate in decisions that affect them. Without this alignment on the purpose and outcomes of the workshop, as well as the vision for the campaign, it will be impossible to guide the group forward together.

As the facilitator it is your role to clarify desired outcomes since you will need to have clear outcomes to decide what elements from Module 5 need to be in your workshop or design additional elements to get what you need for your project plan. Outcomes should include the elements of the plan and work products as well as shared understanding, deeper relationships and commitment to decisions made together during the workshop.

Facilitators need to manage teams across four levels.

As the facilitator you must manage the **attention** of the group by creating a sense of purpose. This goes beyond the immediate purpose of the workshop, to connect with individual's and the team's purpose for doing this work. You can also bring awareness to the group about attitudes, ways they work together, what they have learned and how they can apply learning in future. To do this it is important you stay grounded. Take extra special care of yourself before and during facilitation in order to maintain mental and emotional clarity.



The **energy** of a workshop describes what is felt viscerally. It includes emotions, pacing and motivation. You can help define this with the group explicitly by setting values and behaviours that support the group's values. When people feel safe they feel more free to be creative and more prepared to challenge themselves and others constructively. Conflicts should not be avoided, they mask legitimate concerns. As facilitator you should make space for groups to discuss competing needs and find solutions together.

Managing the **information** of a meeting or workshop is where the content happens. This includes communications between participants, sharing knowledge and presentations. Keep in mind that we cannot hold more than six pieces of information in our brains at one time. Use visual methods to share and record information since this will help recall and supports big picture thinking. As

facilitator you can ask questions to clarify direction, engage others and summarise to check understanding of the group.

Managing the **operations** means being clear about the outcomes - what decisions have been made, who is doing what, how and by when? It includes decisions, commitment, resources, tools and time. You may also need to manage hierarchy here and be clear about who the decision makers are and the role of the group. However, decision makers need to be aware that participation in decisions also increases commitment and follow through.

Facilitating a Campaign Accelerator

While the methods and tools in the guide can be used in many ways, the process as we lay out in this guide is optimised for developing specific projects within wider campaigns. Teams should have completed some basic research and have a good understanding of the problem and context even if they have not yet talked about strategy.

The methods and tools can also be used for bigger campaign themes, however you will need to allow more time for their initial use and will likely need to conduct several rounds to iterate strategy and ideas.

We encourage you to hack, adapt and repurpose any of the exercises you see in this guide. If you are clear on the purpose and outcomes you would like to achieve you can mix and match these exercises to meet your needs.

Helping the group reach its goals with this process may require you to support the group by pointing out emerging patterns or themes. It may require you

to be propositional to help the group see something clearly and or find a way forward. Understand when you're doing so and make sure it's needed and the group is ready for it.

If you want to run a Campaign Accelerator for your own project, we encourage you to bring in facilitators so you can fully participate in the process. However if this isn't possible, it is an opportunity for you to practice facilitative leadership.

No single person can lead a project to success, you need to engage the talents, skills and contributions of others. Facilitation can be an effective leadership tool to maximise the collective intelligence and talents of a group. This can be challenging for some because it means providing direction for the group without completely taking control or making the decisions. However when groups do not share ownership over decisions and outcomes they are less likely to follow through so practicing facilitative leadership can also boost motivation and commitment to the outcomes of your workshop.

You will be successful facilitating people through this process if you believe:

- everyone holds a piece of the truth
- conflicting ideas are normal and healthy
- everyone can be creative, and
- there is more than one right answer.

What do you want to get out of this process?

While the purpose of the Campaign Accelerator - to plan and develop people powered campaigns faster, collaboratively - remains the same across our workshops, the specific outcomes often change based on the organisation and project. You will need to set out what essential information you need from the process in order to move the project forward.

When we first created the Campaign Canvass (page 68) it was based on key questions and headings in Greenpeace's project template. It has changed several times since then and been simplified for general use, however you may have additional questions that need to be answered before a project can move forward and you should design your workshop to address these outcomes, particularly when you get to the Plan & Pitch module (page 226).

You will also want to be clear with participants about the decision making process - who in the organisation takes the final decision, how is the decision made and when? It is also useful to clarify with decision makers in advance if there are any criteria for making their decision or anything specific they would like to see in project plans. These criteria can then be helpful in the group's evaluation of strategies and ideas.

Are you ready for a Campaign Accelerator?

The Campaign Accelerator is often a new way of working for project teams and you will need to ensure that people are primed and the raw materials are available. This is a process of aligning expectations and discovering where the team is in developing the project.

Here's the most important things to cover with the team in advance of an accelerator workshop:

Ready for a people-power focus? This process is built on the belief that people power will be a significant part of delivering success on the project.

How aligned is the team on the problem we are solving? They should know what problem they are tackling and have done some basic research. What works has been done already? What else needs to be done before you can begin developing the project?

Are the decision makers open to involving everyone in the team? For many this will be a new, more collaborative way of working bringing all of the team in from defining the vision and strategy through to tactics. This requires a greater level of openness and humility to put it all on the table.

Who should be involved in the workshop? This is a participatory process involving all of the key people, and skills, to deliver a project, but who else needs to be in the room? Are there senior leaders or decision makers who should be in the room to get their participation and buy-in? People who are not on the project team but are essential to your success? You can also include other voices and perspectives at different points in this process. For example, perhaps you want to invite allies or partners in for the Define day to get their perspective on strategy. Or you might invite constituents or creative allies in for the Create day to get their insights and ideas on an issue.

What are the criteria for success? It is useful to understand if there are any greater organisational needs to be delivered as part of this project. This could include desires to change the image of the organisation, attract new supporters or incorporate lessons learned from previous projects.

Tips for Facilitators

The key to a successful creative workshop is preparation and practice:

VENUE REQUIREMENTS: As this is a very active workshop it requires more space than you would need for a meeting. Allow 3m² per person as a minimum. You need wall space or flip chart stands for each group, tables and chairs that are movable, and windows are great!

SUPPLIES: This will depend on the number of people in the workshop. Have roughly one block of post-its per person, good markers for everyone, plenty of flip chart paper and masking tape. It's helpful to have a diversity of creative supplies for prototyping including scissors, glue, colour paper and cardboard.

EQUIPMENT: Projector, speakers for music, extension cords.

ENERGISERS: It's always useful to have some energisers planned and some backups to lift energy and create focus. There are several of our favorites at the end of this section of the guide.

BREAKS AND MEALS: Don't forget to plan breaks with coffee and snacks or you'll have some grumpy participants. We recommend meals on location to save time.

FOCUS QUESTIONS: Make sure you have ample time to prepare your focus questions (see Module 2: Sense) and test them out on a few people to make sure they are clear and easily generate ideas.

THE ROLE OF A FACILITATOR

- A process guide and servant
- Focused on helping the group reach its goals
- By designing a route/process
- Supporting the social process
- Guardian of the group's culture and rules

Designing a workshop

This guide has been created to guide you through the Campaign Accelerator process as we run it, however you may want to customise this process to your needs.

There are two primary tools we use together to design workshops. IDOART (page 29) and The Double Diamond (page 22). With these two tools you can design everything from a short exercise to a five day workshop.

We design workshops for collaboration.

People's minds are not passive. Presentations and overviews can help to bring people up to speed, but for people to think strategically and creatively they need to be engaged with more than information. Participants need to be involved in sharing information, recognising patterns, exploring solutions – whatever is needed. Direct involvement is key.

With greater participation comes greater alignment and buy-in. By engaging people in a participatory process we more fully engage the diversity of skills and perspectives to make our campaigns stronger and more resilient. A collaborative process also helps to shift mindsets from delivering on requests to leading in their area of expertise.

To support collaboration we have to **structure the journey** over time.

As a facilitator you need to guide people where they need to go – to decisions and actions. Creating structure helps to move people through the steps at the same time, allowing exploration, organising our thoughts and contributions, creating clarity and direction.

When designing a workshop, **be visual** to support collaboration.

Visuals make communications easier, it also makes participation easier. You should create visual templates and methods of working to engage people and focus their energy. This also helps to work across cultures and languages.

Visuals also help us to focus on the big picture by tapping into our imagination – our hopes, dreams and visions become more accessible. They also help us to make sense of complexity and recognise patterns as there is only some much

information we can hold in our heads.

And evidence shows that visuals aid memory. When outcomes are recorded visually there is greater trust in the decisions and can more quickly help trigger memory. Since it is important for team members to remember what they agreed on and agreed to do, recording outcomes from the meeting for everyone to see is key to keeping commitments.

IDOART

CORE FUNCTION: **YES**

CORE TOOL: **YES**

Level of difficulty:

Easy

Time:

Depends on length of your workshop, allow several hours to build a full workshops

People:

Individually or with your co-facilitator

Materials:

Purpose of this exercise:

Tool for process design to plan your workshop and each element of your agenda.

Expected outcomes:

A complete and detailed plan for your workshop.

Facilitation Pointers:



This same tool can be used to design each level of your workshop, from the overview of the whole workshop, individual days, and individual exercises.



You may not need IDOARTs for every session, but you should be clear at every stage about why you're doing what you're doing, what you're trying to achieve at the end, and how you'll get there.

Step by Step:

- 1** To create an IDOART for your workshop, start by filling in what elements you know, the rest will follow.
- 2** Start with the intention and desired outcomes before building your agenda to meet these.
- 3** Use the Double Diamond tool on the next page to structure the journey of your agenda.
- 4** Make iterations and refine to improve on your IDOART.
- 5** Once you have an IDOART for the workshop, you can create one for each element of your agenda.

I INTENTION

Answers the “Why?”

DO DESIRED OUTCOMES

Products, knowledge, feelings

A AGENDA

Schedule of core activities, step by step

R ROLES & RULES

Who does what? What are the guiding principles and actions?

T TIME

When? For how long? Deadlines?

Double Diamond

CORE FUNCTION: **YES**

CORE TOOL: **YES**

Level of difficulty:

Moderate

Time:

Depends on length of your workshop, allow several hours

People:

Individually or with your co-facilitator

Materials:

Post-its, markers

Purpose of this exercise:

Tool for process design to structure the journey of your workshop for participants.

Expected outcomes:

The overall journey for the workshop and step by step plans for each exercise.

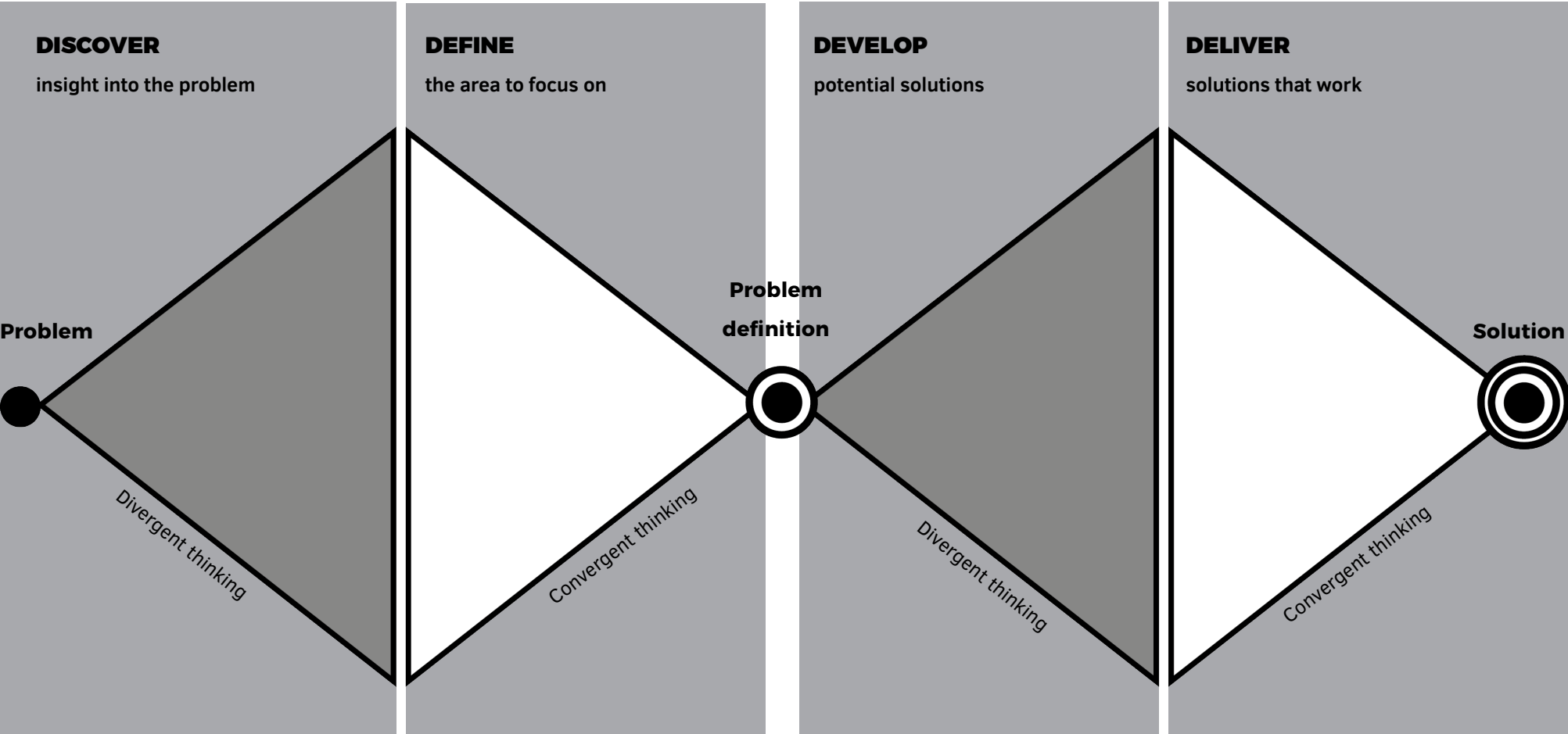
Facilitation Pointers:



The Double Diamond was created by the The British Design Council to map the design process, and you can see their version on the next page, however we have found it a useful tool for all process design.



While it's called a 'Double' Diamond, you can have as few or as many iterations of the divergent and convergent process as needed. Just one for a simple exercise, or many linking diamonds for a whole workshop.



(Double Diamond, British Design Council 2012)

Step by Step:

- 1** Start with a clearly defined challenge or problem. This could be the overall purpose of your workshop, or the intention for a specific exercise.

- 2** We start with a phase of divergent thinking exploring the problem or challenge. Think of ways you can open up space to explore the many different aspects of the challenge and possible directions. This is not a time for critical thinking or analysing the responses, you should emphasise that we want to get all information and ideas out at this stage, every opinion and perspective is valid to get on the table now. The visuals and activities should support exploration in many directions.

- 3** In the next phase you need to support the transition to convergent thinking and provide methods or tools for the group to make sense of the information and ideas they shared. They might organise, categorise or find patterns or themes from their exploration. The activities or steps you take them through should narrow their focus down to the most important or creative ideas from exploration.

- 4** You might only go through one round of divergent and convergent thinking depending on the scope and complexity of the challenge. Or you may go through several rounds, each building on the last to explore these specific ideas in more depth until you come to the outcomes you need.



It can be helpful to explain the divergent and convergent process to participants, especially on the Create day, so that participants understand the process and everyone is in the same mode at the same time - exploring and thinking creatively while reserving judgement, or analysing, evaluating constructively.

During the workshop

There are several facilitation tools we use throughout the workshop to create space for reflection, raise concerns, find consensus, take the temperature of the group and create a complementary energy and focus for upcoming activities.

The primary tools we use to manage group dynamics, energy, focus, culture and evaluate progress are:

- **Rules and Norms**
- **Reflection**
- **Check-in/Check-out**
- **Games and Energisers**

Reflection

Reflection is an important element of the way we run workshops and trainings.

You can use the well of knowledge as a tool to explain reflection.

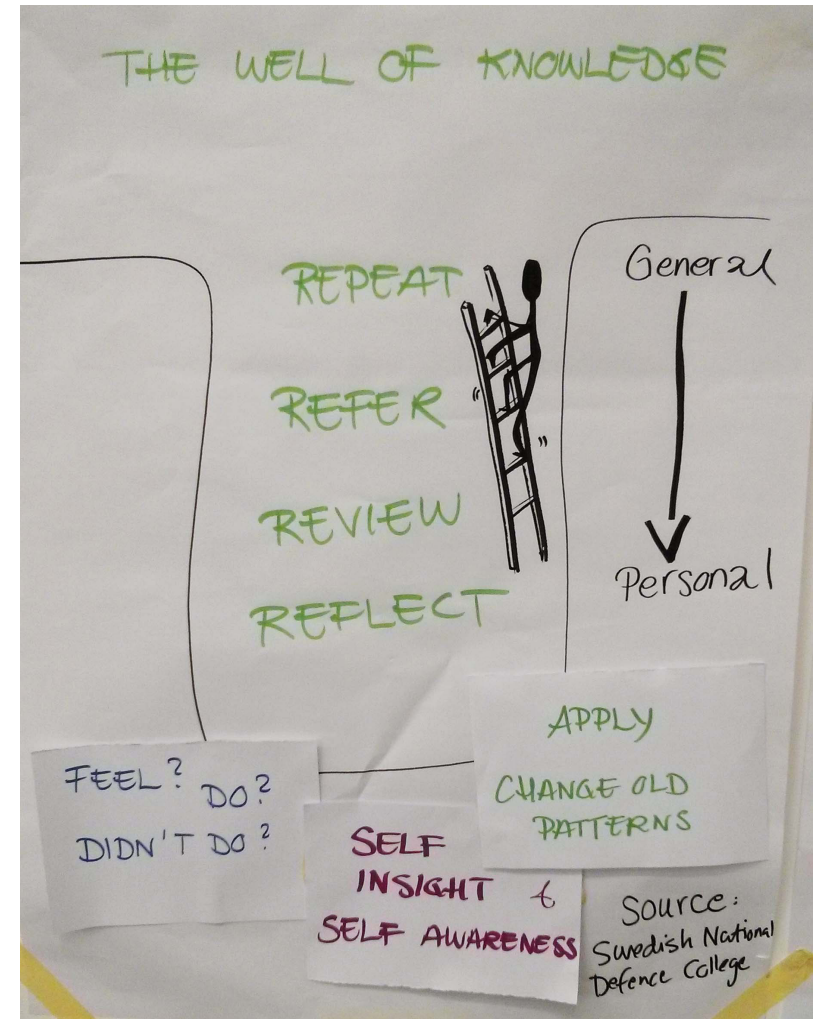
Repeat - the first step is to recall what happened?

Refer - What worked? What didn't? how did this make you feel?

Review - What were your most powerful lessons and insights? This is where you really begin to extract what you have learned.

Reflect - How will you apply what you've learned to your life and in future? This is where you apply your experiences to changing your behaviors.

In order to learn from our experiences and decide how we will apply this learning in future we need to dive deep into the well of knowledge and reflect on the experiences we have. It's not that the upper levels are unimportant, and often you can only reach a deeper level of understanding by going through the upper levels.



Check-in/check-out

Checking-in and checking-out is a simple way for a team to open or close a process, symbolically and in a collaborative way. Checking-in/out invites each member in a group to be present, seen and heard, and to express a reflection or a feeling. Checking-in emphasizes presence, focus and group commitment; checking-out emphasizes reflection and symbolic closure.

Checking-in

Stand or sit in a circle, ideally with no tables or obstructions in the middle to create physical openness. Invite each member of the group to share one thing they “check-in” with. This could be a feeling, a reflection from the previous day, an attitude they bring into this session, or something playful. Choose a check-in question based on the group and the purpose of the program.

One-by-one participants check-in, either in order around the circle or at random. Once every person has checked-in once, check-in is over. It’s important to avoid check-in turning into a conversation between a few people - this is a time when everyone gets to have a voice and share their unique perspective.

Checking-out

Stand or sit in a circle. Invite each member of the group to share one thing they “check-out” with. This could be a feeling, a reflection experience or the most important thing they take with them. Choose a check-out question based on the group and the purpose of the program.

One-by-one participants check-out either in order around the circle or at random. Once every person has checked-out once check-out is over.

Facilitation Tips

The time you take for check-in/check-out will depend on the size of the group and you can introduce different constraints to a check-in or check-out to allow for more or less time. For example:

“In one word...”

“In one sentence...”

“Think of three things...”

“Taking as much time as you need...”

You can also pose specific questions to get a better sense of where the group is and probe for deeper reflection. Think about what would it be useful for them to reflect on and share? Choose a reflection question that will support the kind of mood and atmosphere that you want to create.

For example:

What do I need to share to be present in this session?

What are you excited/concerned about?

What am I bringing to this group?

How do I feel working in this team?

What’s making me heavy and what’s making me lighter right now?

What has been my highest high and lowest low from this project?

What big insight am I taking with me?

What am I going to do differently as a result of this workshop?

Games and Energisers

Games aren't purely for having fun. Research shows that having fun not only reduces stress, it also expands perspective, improves decision making and increases flexible thinking and creativity.

Games and energisers are an important part of your workshop design. You can introduce games or energisers that set the tone and focus for upcoming exercises. For example, you can introduce a thinking game that reveals habitual pattern thinking before working on strategy to encourage awareness of well worn paths of thinking and encourage more divergent thinking. Or introduce a silly game that lifts energy and gets people laughing before beginning a creative exercise to increase creativity and make the group feel more at ease sharing their "silly" ideas.

Great energisers and games have a moral or lessons that you can match to your workshop activities, much the same way the creative principle exercises set participants up for idea generation and development.

However you may encounter some skepticism about the value of games or energisers in a 'serious' work meeting. It can help to smooth the introduction by referencing the fact that having fun has been shown through multiple studies to increase your capacity for creativity and improved decision making.

We've included some of our favourite icebreakers, games and energisers on the following pages or you can check out this great online resource for inspiration <http://improvcyclopedia.org/>



Portrait Gallery

CORE FUNCTION: **NO**

CORE TOOL: **NO**

Level of difficulty:

Easy

Time:

30-60 mins depending on size of group

People:

10-30

Materials:

A4 or letter paper and multicoloured markers , one per person

Purpose of this exercise:

This is an energetic and fun icebreaker that gets participants interacting by having the group collaboratively draw portraits of each other.

Expected outcomes:

A collection of colourful portraits, one for each person in the workshop created by multiple people.

When to use it:

At the start of a workshop with participants who don't all know each other.

What is it good for:

The activity builds a sense of group because it results with each participant having a portrait drawn of him/herself by the other members of the group together. It also demonstrates the creative capacity of the group when we build on each others' ideas.

Facilitation Pointers:



If there is an uneven number of participants the facilitator must step in as an “extra”.

Step by Step:

- 1** Split the group into two equal halves, called group A and group B. Group A forms an inner circle facing outward; group B forms an outer circle facing inward. Each person in group A should be facing one person in group B.
- 2** Members of Group A, the inner circle, are the subjects of the portraits. Group B are the artists. Explain that group B will be the portrait artists for group A. Every member of group B should have paper and marker in hand and begin by writing the name of their subject at the top of the paper.
- 3** When the activity begins, the artists in group B begin drawing the subjects in Group A. They do so in 10-15 second intervals. After each interval, the facilitator calls "Rotate!" and the artists rotate one step to the left while handing their paper to the person to their right. Thus, each artist is standing in front of a new subject with that subject's portrait in his/her hands. When they rotate, the artists must keep their markers.
- 4** Rotate at 10-15 second intervals until the artists in Group B have rotated all the way around. By this point, each portrait should quite developed (and quite messy). When the artists arrive back at their original subject, the rotation ends and they may hand back the portrait to that person.
- 5** Switch the groups and repeat. The artists become the subjects and visa versa.



Dance off

CORE FUNCTION: **NO**

CORE TOOL: **NO**

Level of difficulty:

Easy

Time:

5-30 mins

People:

10-100+

Materials:

Collection of energetic music, speakers

Purpose of this exercise:

Participants dance playfully in small teams. Periodically, the music changes and members take turns leading the dance. The aim is to generate fun energy and playfulness in a group.

Expected outcomes:

Raises the energy in the group, relieves tension and helps to ease anxiety about looking silly in front of each other.

When to use it:

It can be anytime you need to lift energy and is a good counter-balance to more “serious” group work.

What is it good for:

It allows everyone in the group to take the lead while others follow.

Facilitation Pointers:



It's best to choose familiar, highly danceable songs that will energize people right away. Even better if each song is a different genre to mix up the dancing styles. Be mindful that some people may not feel comfortable dancing. Encourage all to participate, but do not put pressure on any who may choose to opt out.

Step by Step:

- 1** Organize the group into teams of 3-5 people.
- 2** Explain that when the music starts one person in each group starts dancing and the others follow the leader. When the song changes, another member in each group becomes the new dance leader. Encourage them to be wild and exaggerated with their dance moves and move around in the space.
- 3** Change the song every 30 seconds or so. Play enough songs that each member in every group is the leader at least one time. End by fading out the music and initiating a big cheer.

Ultimate Rock, Paper, Scissors

CORE FUNCTION: **NO**

CORE TOOL: **NO**

Level of difficulty:

Easy

Time:

5-10 mins depending on size of group

People:

10-100+

Materials:

none

Purpose of this exercise:

This very quickly and easily raises the energy in the group with some friendly competition and cheering.

Expected outcomes:

Increased energy and one ultimate rock, paper, scissors champion.

When to use it:

It can be anytime you need to lift energy and is a good counter-balance to more “serious” group work.

What is it good for:

Provides an opportunity to meet more people in the group for a face off, especially if you encourage people to find someone they haven't met yet to begin. It also demonstrates how we can support and encourage each other when they are 'winning'.

Facilitation Pointers:



If there is an uneven number of participants the facilitator must step in as an “extra”.

Step by Step:

- 1** Review the rules of rock, paper, scissors: paper covers rock, rock smashes scissor, scissor cut paper. Explain all the the steps before you begin as once it starts it will becomes very noisy and goes very fast.
- 2** Each person will find a person to face off with for a best two out of three game of rock paper scissors.
- 3** The winner of the first game will move on to find another winner in the group to repeat the game. The loser of the game becomes the winner's cheerlead and follows them around cheering them on.
- 4** The process is repeated with each winner finding a new champion to compete with and the group of cheerleaders behind them growing with each game, until the game is down to two final competitors and two large groups of cheerleaders facing off for the finale and the title of ultimate rock, paper, scissors champion!



Mind grooves

CORE FUNCTION: **NO**

CORE TOOL: **NO**

Level of difficulty:

Easy

Time:

5-10 mins depending on size of group

People:

10-40

Materials:

paper, pens

Purpose of this exercise:

A warm up for systems thinking exercises to create awareness about habitual thinking and encourage participants to look beyond the obvious answers.

Expected outcomes:

Participants will have a set of answers written down on paper and will share answers when prompted. A greater awareness of our thinking processes and how conditioning shapes the way we think.

When to use it:

Before exercises related to systems thinking.

What is it good for:

Part of the challenge of thinking systemically is to be aware of our habitual patterns and pathways of thinking, or the well worn grooves in the brain. This game provides an opportunity for participants to reflect on their own thinking processes.

Facilitation Pointers:



Spend more time in the debrief to get to deeper insights and ideas for how they can support each other to break out of pattern thinking.

Step by Step:

- 1** Participants write on a piece of paper the first word that comes to mind when they hear the following words:
 - colour
 - furniture
 - flower
- 2** Ask how many in the group wrote down "red"? How many "blue"? How many wrote "chair" for furniture? How many said "sofa" or "couch"? Who wrote "rose"? "Daisy"?
- 3** The majority in the group will have written down red, chair, and rose. Or one of the second choices. Ask the group why they think this happens?
- 4** Socialisation is stronger than we think, and the more we think in a particular way the deeper the grooves get. Here are some more questions you could ask to draw out the lessons from this exercise:
 - How can we become aware of associations we are making?
 - How can we encourage diverse perspectives in order to be aware of and explore our own mental pathways?

Source: Sweeney & Meadows, 1995, The Systems Thinking Playbook.

Sync clap

CORE FUNCTION: **NO**

CORE TOOL: **NO**

Level of difficulty:

Moderate

Time:

5-30

People:

10-40

Materials:

none

Purpose of this exercise:

This circle exercise is simple, but challenging and very effective for generating focus and alignment in a group.

Expected outcomes:

Increased energy and focus as a group. Some reflections on what they need as a group to focus and work together

When to use it:

Best to use this before an exercise that will require focus and cooperation on a complex subject.

What is it good for:

Making eye contact, non-verbal communication, and prompting a discussion about cooperation in the group.

Facilitation Pointers:



Step 3 is very challenging for unfocused, stressed or very new groups. If the group struggles to pass the clap in step 3, consider using the opportunity to debrief by asking the group: “why was it such a challenge to pass the clap when the task became more complex? What would you need as a group to master it?”

Step by Step:

- 1** The group stands in a circle.
- 2** One person starts. They turn to the person next to them and the two clap at same time, while making eye contact, as synced as possible. The second person then turns to the next person in the circle and they clap at the same time. The clap continues like this around the circle. The group should try to pass the clap more and more quickly with as many perfectly synchronized claps as possible.
- 3** When the group has mastered the above, introduce the double clap. When a pair claps twice, the direction of the clap reverses. This presents a challenge, as pairs must non-verbally agree whether to clap once or twice. The group must be highly focused and attentive to each other for the clap to continue smoothly around the circle in this step.

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