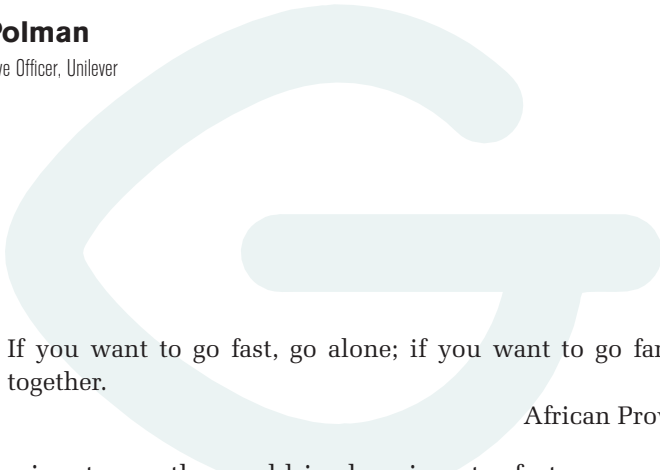


Foreword

Paul Polman

Chief Executive Officer, Unilever



If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together.

African Proverb

It is a truism to say the world is changing at a faster pace than any of us can remember—or could ever have imagined. Yet the challenges we face today stem not only from the pace of change but also from its sheer unpredictability. The fact is we are living in a world that is increasingly—and accurately—characterized as Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous (VUCA).

Wherever we look, old assumptions are giving way to new realities. Natural resources, for example, we are discovering, are not finite. Economic growth is not guaranteed. The world order is not immutable. Planetary boundaries are not inviolable. Navigating these new realities is made more difficult by the increasingly interdependent and highly connected nature of today's society. An issue in one part of the world soon magnifies as it ripples and spreads throughout the globe.

Many of these new realities derive from advances in science and technology. If anything, therefore, we can expect the pace of change to quicken even further, because what we have learned over time is that each new technology simply becomes a tool with which to invent other

new technologies. That is why, for example, science has advanced more in the last five years than in the previous five thousand! Change is exponential.

Whatever the uncertainties inherent in all of this, one thing is clear: the scale and magnitude of the changes we face are too big for any one organization, or even one nation, to deal with alone. Real progress can only be made on the basis of genuinely collaborative efforts.

That is the concept that sits at the heart of this book. It is also the thinking that underpins the new model we have developed at Unilever. Under the Unilever Sustainable Living Plan we have made a commitment to double the size of the company, generating much needed growth and prosperity, but in a way that has never been done before: by reducing our overall environmental footprint and by increasing our positive social impact on the communities in which we operate. It is a model based on a total value chain approach. In short, we are only as strong as our weakest link.

The Unilever Sustainable Living Plan represents an audacious goal. More remarkably still, it represents a new approach. From the outset we have made clear that we cannot deliver our objectives alone. We have to learn from—and partner with—others. And the reasons are clear. When you pledge, for example, to source all of your agricultural raw materials from sustainable supplies, it is not enough merely to change your own practices; you have to change the whole context in which you operate. Change has to be systemic, not incremental. This can only be done on an industry-wide basis and with the active participation of other stakeholders, including governments and NGOs. We see this particularly on an issue such as sustainable palm oil and the collective attempts now being made—by governments, retailers, producers, and suppliers—to put an end to illegal deforestation, a major contributor to climate change.

The stakes are high but there is a huge prize if we can get it right. As Klaus Schwab, founder of the World Economic Forum, has shrewdly observed: “The greater the complexity of the system, the greater the risk of systemic breakdown—yet also the greater the opportunities for transformation.”

New approaches of the kind we are pioneering at Unilever require leaders with a different mind-set and with a new set of capabilities—men and increasingly women comfortable working in collaborative

networks and in partnership with others. That is the only way to address issues as pervasive and deep-seated as, for example, food security, climate change, water scarcity or access to basic sanitation.

Yet, as we know, many business leaders have grown up in traditional hierarchical structures and with a relatively narrow focus on serving the interests of shareholders. Leaders of the future will need to have an intrinsic understanding instead of how networks operate and how to collaborate and build coalitions of the willing. They will need to be as comfortable and as well versed in dealing with NGOs and policy-makers as with customers and suppliers.

For all these leaders—current or potential—this book provides an invaluable roadmap. It demystifies the process of collaboration and shows how, through a structured approach, it can become firmly embedded in any organization. Refreshingly, however, it also recognizes that this is an art not a science. Experimentation is encouraged.

In commending this book, I do so on the basis of proven experience. A year after we launched the Unilever Sustainable Living Plan we initiated our first “Sustainable Living Lab”—an open but structured online forum in which to collect ideas, share good practice, discuss possible partnerships and ultimately co-create solutions to the many challenges we face. The response, in terms of both quality and quantity, was extraordinary. It is an exercise that we have repeated—and will repeat. Guided by the ideas and suggestions in *Collaboratory*, we can now take it to another level.

Paul Polman, April 2014

22

Designing a collaboratory

A narrative roadmap

Katrin Muff

Business School Lausanne, Switzerland

Using the example of a collaboratory that took place for two days in Norway, this chapter is an attempt to provide a step-by-step roadmap of how to go about co-designing and co-creating a collaboratory.

Collaboratories can take very many different shapes and forms and need to be designed, better still, co-designed, for the occasion each and every time afresh. I am using as an example the two-day collaboratory on “Leadership in Transformation” that took place from 27 February to 2 March 2014 in Trondheim, Norway. This event is part of a European Union-sponsored project (Leadership in Transformation: LiFT) featuring five collaboratories across Europe in a period of 18 months.

The chapter is structured in a series of reflections on how to:

- Level 1: Co-design a collaboratory
- Level 2: Co-create a collaboratory

We will shift back and forth between these two levels in order to simulate a real-life occurrence of such an event. We will start with Level 1 Part 1, move to Level 2 Part 1, spiral back to Level 1 Part 2, then spiral forward to Level 2 Part 2, and spiral one level back to Level 1 Part 3.

Level 1 Part 1 → Level 2 Part 1 → Level 1 Part 2 → Level 2 Part 2 →
Level 1 Part 3

I will complement each level with references to relevant chapters in the book.

Level 1: Co-designing the collaboratory event (Part 1)

Co-design starts way before the event, a few months ahead when the group of organizing participants meet to decide on the purpose of the collaboratory event. In our case, we met virtually on Skype a number of times to clarify the purpose and intention of the “workshop,” who we wanted to be present, and how to go about inviting them.

As an initial framing, we had decided initially that we, as a core group would meet for four days around the issue of “Transformative leadership in changing times.” The first and last days would be reserved as our own space—both to set the stage for ourselves and the group of stakeholders that would join us for the second and third days and to reflect on the collaboratory event and close the space afterwards.

We met again on Skype approximately one month before the event to discuss how the stakeholder engagement went, how this would influence the event, and if and how each of us could be engaged in the role of co-designing the event at the same time as wanting to be active participants.

One week before the actual event we connected again to finally set the skeleton agenda for the two days (see [Figure 22.1](#)). As the appointed facilitator, I presented a proposal and as a group we discussed how the agenda would enable the transformative journey we all aspired to. We decided to split the collaboratory into two separate sections: Day One afternoon, downloading–dialoguing–visioning–harvesting; Day Two morning, review harvesting–prototyping, with an option to potentially re-do another short visioning exercise to start. We sent this very rough agenda to all signed-up participants so that they could start their inner and outer journeys to the event. At that point, we knew that we could expect roughly 25–30 participants from seven countries.

Figure 22.1 The proposed skeleton agenda one week before the event**LiFT - Leadership for Transition Collaboratory 2-day session****TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP IN CHANGING TIMES**

Are you aiming to lead change or make progress on complex issues? Do you find a need to translate your ideas from one domain to another? Do you and your colleagues see the issues you are facing continually becoming more complex and connecting with the needs of ever wider circles of stakeholders, who themselves also struggle to find the leverage points for change?

Friday, 28 February

9am	Check-in – purpose of the 2 days	In a large plenum
	Reflections on leadership	In small teams
	Reflective walk	In pairs
11.30	LUNCH (45 min.)	
12.15	Collaboratory 1 – downloading & visioning	Circular setting with fishbowl
	Open space	Free
16.00	Closing for the day	

Saturday, 1 March

9am	Check-in – clarification fo purpose	In a large plenum
	Collaboratory 2 – prototyoining	In groups
11.30	LUNCH (45 min.)	
12.15	Presentation of prototypes	In the plenum
	Reflective walk	In pairs
	Open space	Free
	Space for personal reflection	Individual
	Final reflection and closing	In the plenum
16.00	End of event	

The northern darkness greeted us as we arrived late at night from many different directions at Trondheim airport. Our local host very kindly picked us up and drove us to our respective hotels. The next day, ten of us met as the core group at an amazingly inspiring spot in the heart of Trondheim. We spent the morning checking in and warming up to the topic of transformative leadership. Interesting elements came up around “lazy leadership,” the tension of wanting to assure impact, and the subtle inner space of lightness where change actually happens. We treated ourselves to both a lecture and a concrete application of holacracy as an emerging new organizational form that we had agreed to use as our own organizational model for the 18 months we were working together. Having a holacracy expert in our midst was too precious a gift not to explore.

Shifting into a different energy, we then stepped outside and started to prepare the space for the two-day event that would take place for the

following two days with the invited stakeholders. We started first by sharing who was coming (background, perspectives, and motivations as far as was known) and then closed our eyes to open the space for the two-day workshop inviting the intentions and presence of all participants into this subtle space we would be co-responsible for holding. I am always fascinated by what happens once the “space is created” and how this enables—probably subconsciously—participants to start floating in and populating the energetic field.

We looked at the rough agenda design we had drafted a week earlier and started to fill out the details. The afternoon of Day One was the heart of the event, with a visioning exercise that would call on the emergent future to inspire us with new insights that we would then transform into prototypes on Day Two. For this it was critical to ask precisely the right question for the collaboratory theme. After much debate and word-smithing (this is critical and deserves all the time in the world) we settled on “In these coming times, what kind of a leader am I called to be?” From this central question, we worked backwards to define the preparatory stages we considered to be important for all participants to go through in order to be ready to answer this question in the afternoon of Day One. For this, we needed to define:

1. The check-in question
2. The question for the small group reflection on transformative leadership
3. The question for the reflective walk right before lunch

Not surprisingly, we spent most of the time defining what was needed to set up the space both physically and metaphorically in the opening moments. We sorted out both logistical and contextual framework information and most importantly how we wanted all stakeholders to check in. We shifted from the initial proposal of “What in your past has triggered you to accept this invitation?” or “What brings you here?” (a classic) to “What wants to move now?” This question was to be introduced with the remark that we were all moved to come here for one reason or another and that we invited everybody to share “what wants to move now?” for them. We had somebody assigned to decorate the center of the circle of the check-in by bringing a tissue and a few items of different textures to be placed on this tissue.

The other two questions (b and c above) derived from the check-in as we decided to focus all stakeholders on clarifying where they were

themselves—personally and individually—in terms of transformative leadership.

For the question for the small group reflection (b), I borrowed a set of questions used by Andrew Dyckhoff: we invited the groups to first individually reflect on and then share the following questions: In terms of transformative leadership, what is (1) my remembered self? (what am I proud of?) (2) my reflected self? (what do others say about me?) (3) my current programming? (what are my beliefs and assumptions about myself?) and (4) my aspirational future self? (what kind of leader would I like to be?).

For the reflective walk questions (c), I suggested that pairs of people who had not yet worked together would further digest and develop this set of questions by looking at: What could I (1) stop doing, (2) continue doing, and (3) start to do?

The organization of the collaboratory required three preparatory actions:

1. Deciding together who the initiating “experts” in the fishbowl would be—for example, would we draw them from our core group or would we invite key participants? We decided on two of each based on the desire to have as much diversity and contrasts in the discussion right up front. We agreed on who would approach the two participants and we also had two back-up volunteers in case the two “externals” did not want to be “experts”
2. Determining the four volunteer note-takers for the harvesting after the visioning process and clarifying among them how they would smoothly take notes by defining a rotation mode
3. Writing the visioning journey. Given that we had now agreed on what we wanted to achieve in the collaboratory, I took on the task of developing the storyline for the meditative visioning journey for the group. I let this sink in for a few hours and ended up finalizing the story late that first night. As I consider developing such storylines as the most sensitive part in facilitating a collaboratory, I add here as an example the exact notes of the storyline (see [Box 22.1](#)).

The only thing left to consider was the open space after the collaboratory. Well, an open space is an open space and all I brought to that in preparation was an idea of what could be proposed. But, open spaces follow the law of two feet (we all go where the energy leads us) and so this cannot be prepared much in advance.

Related chapters**Chapter 5** Enabling the transformative journey—Bill Burck**Chapter 7** Creating collaboratories in society—Zaid Hassan**Chapter 8** Inviting stakeholders to engage—Caroline Rennie)**Chapter 9** Creating and holding a space—Janette Blainey**Chapter 11** Building cooperative capacity for generative action: Appreciate Inquiry—
Ronald Fry

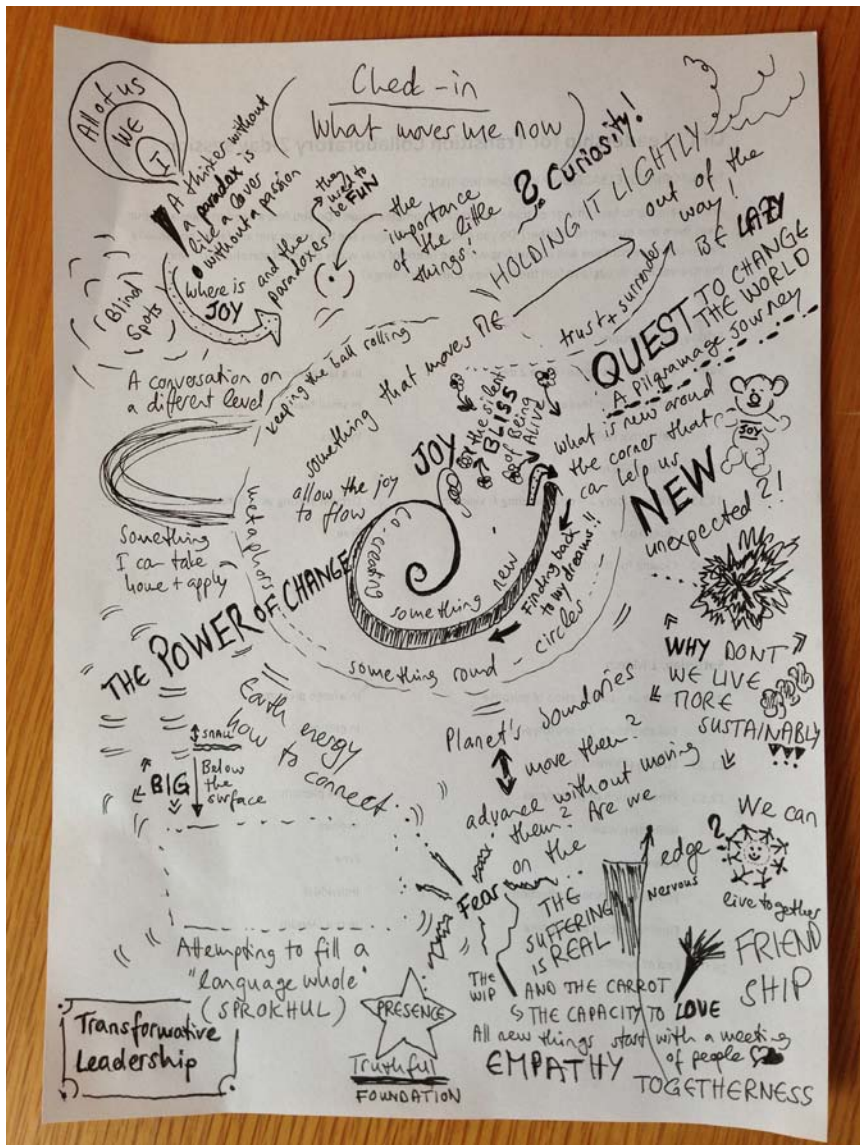
Level 2: Co-create the collaboratory event (Part 1)

Luckily, I had checked on the room the night before the event—everything we had asked for had been forgotten and I needed to persuade the night guard to help remove all tables, search for the four flipcharts, and find all the chairs we needed for the circle of chairs. At least I could sleep well, knowing that the next day we would find the place as we expected it.

We started at 9 a.m. sharp with the introductions as planned. What I added was an explicit description of my role as a facilitator and the disclosure that I would add “editorials” here and there during the process to offer transparency of what my moves and considerations as a facilitator were. I did this because many participants had a keen interest in further developing their own facilitation skills. I clarified my facilitator role by explaining that I was of Swiss-German origin and that our people were not gifted with a sense of humor (which of course got everybody to laugh and relax). I made this cultural reference as the large majority of the group were Scandinavians and I had no experience in how to relate to Scandinavians in terms of their cultural programming and frame of reference. I told them that the Germanic tribe was known to be very direct and straightforward and that I could be known to come across as harsh in some of my interventions. I explained that my intention in my interventions would be to differentiate between activities that held back the process and those that would help advance it, and that I would try to prevent the former and encourage the later. I also said that I was not a flawless facilitator and that I did not always manage to make this distinction correctly and that I would do my best to own up to my mistakes. I added that they could be just as harsh and direct with me, if they felt the need. The resulting effect was a great relief and sense of relaxation in the room. The rules of play were clear.

The check-in (see Figure 22.2) was amazing and took a full hour. The centerpiece arrangement with the handful of small items (a seashell, a rock, a small pig, a globe) contributed significantly as participants often related their choice of object to what they had to say. We invited everybody to share on “what wants to move now?” What was revealed was highly inspiring and revealing and set the tone for the rest of the event.

Figure 22.2 Day One check-in on “what wants to move now?”



After the check-in and the small ten-minute intervention, we were left with just one hour before lunch, which felt a bit short for the two exercises we had still planned to do. The group, however, was in a great spot and I figured that if I manage to ensure all were mindful of their time and how their actions would impact their small groups, a tight timeframe could still allow enough space for everything. Rather than 90 minutes, we had 40 minutes for the first small group exercise and 20 minutes for the reflective walk (see Phase 1 above for the related questions). We quickly established both the groups and the buddies for the pair-walk and got them to self-manage their break and the start of the group work. After half-time, the individual part was completed leaving 20 minutes for sharing. I briefed them for the pair-walk and reminded them where to find lunch and when to be back. The discussions at lunch were both animated and deep.

In the afternoon we launched right into the collaboratory (see [Figure 22.3](#)) for which I quickly explained the context (50+20) and the rules:

- The experts in the inner circle (fishbowl) would start off with their individual positions and an exchange among themselves
- Thereafter, everybody in the outer circle was encouraged to replace the experts in the inner circle by tapping on their shoulders or using the one empty chair
- The talking stick would moderate by sitting in the middle of the inner circle and whoever held the talking stick could not be interrupted for as long as he or she held the talking stick

We had an inconsistency between the PowerPoint slide, which still showed the original collaboratory purpose questions (“How does each of us (how do I) develop our transformative leadership potential?”) and the flipchart, which showed the questions we had developed the previous day (“In these coming times, what kind of a leader am I called to be?”). We needed to explain that the former was meant to guide the initial discussion while the latter would be the question we wanted to answer by the end of the collaboratory. I failed to use this occasion to uncover a moment of improvisation. At that moment, I wanted to get going.

Figure 22.3 Collaboratory setting with inner circle (fishbowl)

Interestingly, our “transformative leadership in changing times” topic brought up little or no controversy and the energy in both circles was slow and quiet, to the point that two people on the outside were either meditating or had fallen asleep. I was wondering if I should intervene by drawing attention to the energy and empowering people to influence this. Not 20 seconds after my reflection, one of participants who had shown signs of impatience got up and moved into the inner circle. Within two minutes, two more high-energy participants followed shifting the energy to a productive and stimulating level. Most impressive in this “downloading phase” was how the energy shifted to include the emotional level. One of the participants made a very personal and emotional statement, which another participant acknowledged and recognized. The air changed and the entire room shifted.

The visioning (see [Box 22.1](#)) and the harvesting that followed went as planned. As it turned out, the harvesting contained a lot of controversy and mixed messages (see [Figure 22.4](#)). I was confused by not being able to come up with a summary picture. Rather than taking the time

to tell the story that resulted from the harvesting, I let everybody take a 15-minute break. We continued with a ten-minute personal reflection whereby I invited everybody to come up with emerging prototype ideas that people could develop for an hour in the open space. Seven ideas were put forward and there was much energy in the open space hour and around these ideas before we closed at 4 p.m.

Box 22.1 Storyline developed for the visioning process

I am now going to take you on a visioning journey and I am asking you to trust me for the five to seven minutes this journey takes. Respect the process by staying in your seat and not leaving the room. I promise I will bring you all right back here again at the end (smile).

Please put both feet on the ground and sit comfortably in your chair, putting whatever you have in your hands on the floor. It often helps to close your eyes during this process; it helps you to see better.

We have talked a lot about transformative leadership and I invite you now to connect to your body more fully. Take a deep breath and follow your breath within your body (pause).

Let's explore where in your body you connect to transformative leadership:

- Where do you feel something when you "set direction"?
- What happens in your body when you "build commitment"?
- When you "create alignment" where do you sense something in your body?
- When you "support initiatives" what moves in your body and where?
- How does your body feel when you "develop a coalition"?
- How does that feel? What happens when you interconnect all these different spots and spaces? How do you experience this sensation within you? Now, imagine that you had a volume knob that you could turn on full blast—how would that feel? Take a deep breath and let this sensation expand and grow.

Feel fully in your body grounded and connected, you as a human being the link between the earth on which you stand and which grounds you and the sky and heaven above you that is full of insight and inspiration. Imagine you could feel that connection, that you are between these spaces.

Now, imagine the world in which you live and belong, and how it is evolving:

- The increasing volatility in everything
- The increasing speed, and information flow
- The overlapping and contradicting demands

- The external forces, the cracklings of the old systems
- The sprouts of new emerging hope
- The innovative solutions, the breakthroughs
- The tensions, the confusion, the choices, the loss of orientation

(pause) Take a deep breath and reconnect to your earlier bodily sensation.

Who can you be in this world—what is calling you? What happens when you connect this inner sense of self and of what leadership feels like. In your body. How does the world react and respond to you? What images appear? What sounds? What words? How do people look at you? Interact with you? (long pause). What roles do you play? What opportunities emerge? What do you hear, see, smell, sense? (long pause).

Take a deep breath and wiggle your fingers and toes, and come back to the “Here and Now.” Do it in your own time. Open your eyes. Welcome back!

Note: obviously reading this storyline is weird—the experience of the inner journey needs to be lived and cannot be simulated by reading a dry storyline. This example is provided for those who are struggling to come up with such stories. Chapter 15 (Students leading collaboratories) shows another more readily adapted example of such a storyline.

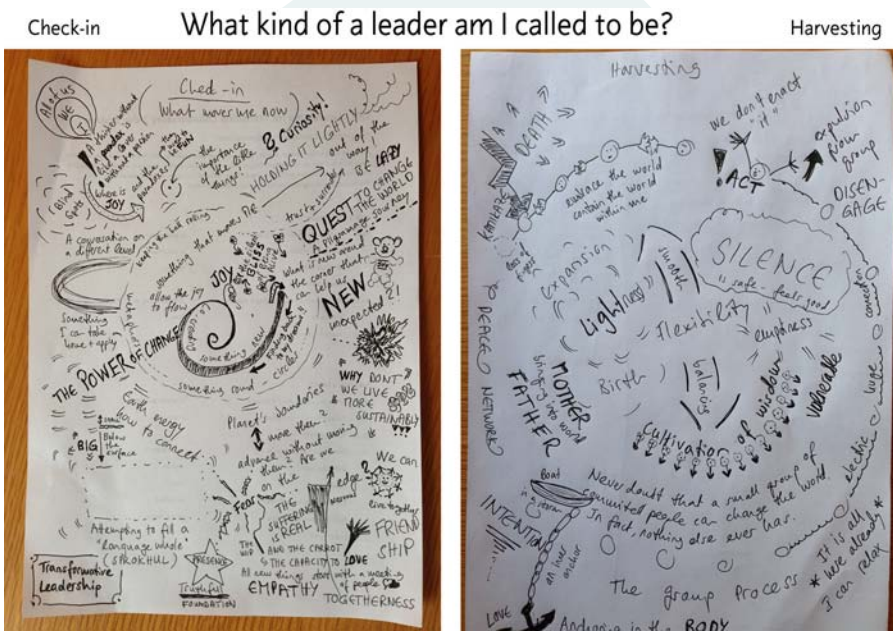
Level 1: Co-designing the collaboratory event (Part 2)

Our core group met at the end of Day One to reflect on how to continue on Day Two. We debated whether we should start with another visioning exercise in the morning of Day Two or should simply continue with the prototypes we had already started. We ended up deciding that we wanted to keep both alternatives open and that we would choose according to where participants were in the planned check-in. There were other valuable suggestions including the idea of starting the day in silence. What we had planned was to start with a few revealing constellation questions, yet we had had no time yet to explore these. This had to be done in the evening in addition to developing another visioning storyline in case we might want to have another visioning.

I further reflected on what to do with the group on Day Two and decided to be fully transparent about my confusion, having been unable

summarize the results of the visioning process in a conclusive picture. I prepared a comparison with the check-in in the morning (see Figure 22.4). After a good night's sleep things were clear the next morning: we would do a check-in with everybody; I would provide my “editorial comments,” highlighting process-related choices; and we would engage in another visioning exercise from which we would draw additional prototype ideas that would be combined with those that emerged in the open space.

Figure 22.4 Attempt to see shifts from check-in to visioning harvesting



Level 2: Co-create the collaboratory event (Part 2)

The check-in and two constellation questions revealed that the large majority of the participants did not have concrete or specific expectations from the workshops—they were mostly curious. There was also broad alignment that transformative leadership combined both the individual and the collective spheres. I reflected on these notions by making the consequences of unclear expectations transparent and also by reflecting

that our visioning exercise the previous day had focused on the individual dimension only (“In these coming times, what kind of a leader am I called to be?”). I built the path for us to experiment with a new visioning exercise: “Imagine a world where transformative leadership is a lived reality at all levels—the individual, organizational and societal (I—we—all of us) levels.” This time, I gauged the journey on my own speed as I physically went through the experience (the visioning model I used was an adaptation of the model described in Chapter 15). The harvesting was extremely rich and resulted in a coherent and comprehensive picture of what such a world would look like (see [Figure 22.5](#)).

Figure 22.5 Harvesting result from visioning of Day Two

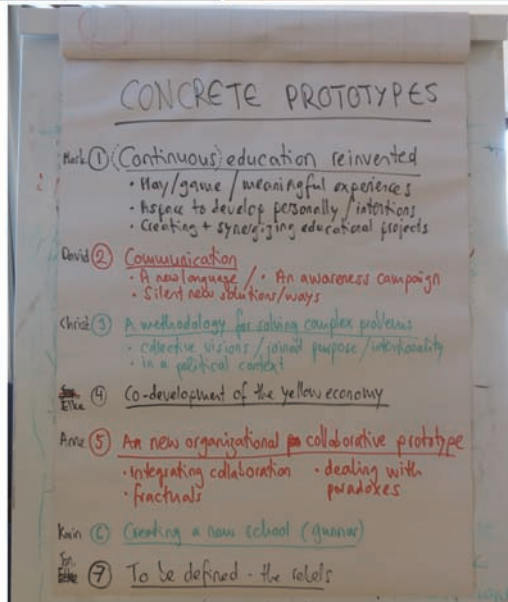
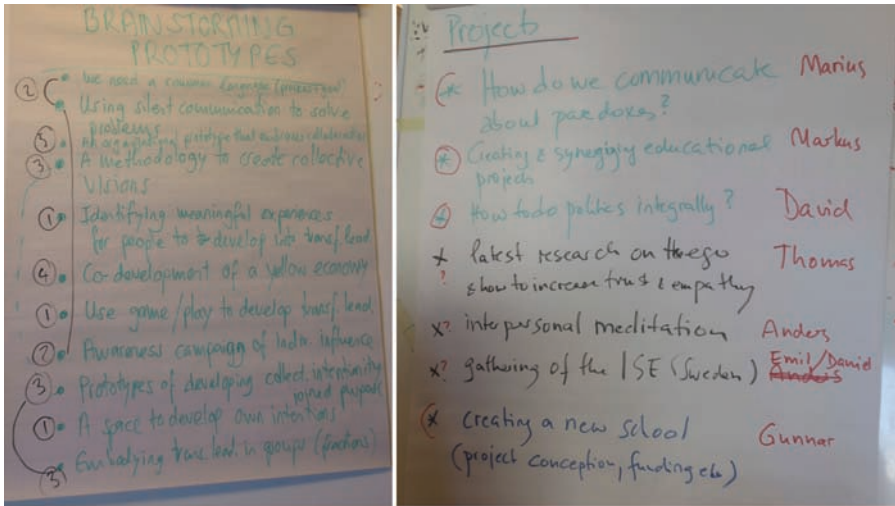


The harvesting took us through to 11 a.m. and was followed by a 30-minute free brainstorming on possible relevant prototypes that could be created now based on the inspiration of the lived experience of the future. By the (Norwegian) lunchtime of 11.30, we had a full flipchart of ten ideas that were about halfway between the ideal future and an implementable prototype.

The core team met during lunchtime to condense and rephrase the long list of brainstorm ideas and those projects developed in the open space of Day One, coming up with six concrete proposals and an open “to be defined” rebel group (see [Figure 22.6](#)). We defined the “prototyping rules” and distributed facilitator roles among us to ensure that each of the potentially seven teams would be well accompanied to come up with concrete actions to be implemented in the next one to two months together with an accountable person. After an hour and a half of intense teamwork, the results were most impressive and astounding. Most teams had developed a series of “next action” steps and even the rebel group surprised us with a very concrete and highly relevant project with clear action goals and accountabilities.

After a 30-minute reflection walk, where participants were invited to select somebody they had not yet connected with and share their personal learnings from the course, we were ready for the final debriefing and closing round. We had prepared a survey where we collected feedback of participants about the effectiveness of our proposed process and journey. And at 4 p.m. sharp we ended two intense days around transformative leadership in changing times—with still a bit of time for a long walk up to the local castle before the sun set quickly in the north of Europe.

Figure 22.6 The challenge of combining emerging brainstorming prototypes and open space projects from the previous day



Related chapters:

Chapter 6 Facilitating a collaborative space—Bill Burck, Svenja Rüger, Patrick Frick, Aaron Williamson, and Grégoire Serikoff

Chapter 10 Whole person learning—Claire Maxwell

Chapter 11 Building cooperative capacity for generative action: Appreciate Inquiry—Ronald Fry

Chapter 12 Stepping into the emerging future: principles of Theory U—Otto Scharmer

Chapter 13 Transformative scenario planning—Adam Kahane

Chapter 15 Students leading collaboratories: University of St. Gallen—Thomas Dyllick and Katrin Muff

Level 1: Co-designing the collaboratory event (Part 3)

On Day Four, our core team met to review and reflect on the two-day workshop. These were the key learnings in a nutshell:

General:

- The way we ran the collaboratory meant there was too much pressure on the lead facilitator
- The topic was too generic and insufficiently specific to generate very powerful results. There are many ways we could have better dealt with this: (a) to provide that clarity upfront by being very specific about the invitation, (b) by harvesting the perspectives and expectations at the beginning of the workshop and then developing strategies addressing key challenges, (c) using the entire workshop to work out the clarity of the question and create powerful learning experiences in the process
- We were unsure if we could expect the participants to be as open as they were in future events
- Reflecting outside of the space of the workshop, for example, visiting a museum, was most useful

- The way we issued the invitation was too general and broad, leading to very divergent expectations of participants

Process and design-specific feedback:

- It would have been good to have more formal time to meet and exchange among the many participants
- There was a hunger for more formal input/inspiration/insight/resources (documentation) about the topic—in a situation where the topic is more specific this would happen naturally
- It would be interesting to have a track where the methodology and process were discussed (further developing the “editorials” introduced during the session—a very useful idea). At the same time, there was a question of to what degree it was helpful or confusing to invite participants into such a multilevel “nested” space. This issue arose because the core group wanted to understand the methodology (and was still hungry for more)
- We understood that there were different elements of the “editorials”: (a) meta-level comments, (b) comments about the methodology, (c) facilitation-related comments, and (d) comments about our core team reflections about the process. It would be worth deciding which of these would be smart to share, when and how, and which of these are not necessarily constructive to share

A question we were left with was whether the collaboratory methodology was actually suitable to advance more meta-level, unspecific issues. Most successful applications of the collaboratory so far were addressing complex but concrete multi-stakeholder issues. Given that the Trondheim collaboratory workshop was one of the first events dealing with a very broad, unspecific topic such as “Transformative leadership in changing times,” our core group’s reflections were inconclusive. The prevailing feeling was that even though not perfect, the collaboratory did produce serious, important and relevant results. And nobody was aware of a methodology that could have produced better results. Our host finally concluded that it was very worthwhile to prototype a sequence of improvements of this methodology in the context of being delighted to have a “clumsy solution for a wicked problem.”

To be experienced, lived, and enjoyed!

23

Differences from other facilitation approaches

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This chapter presents two personal reflections on the facilitation of the collaboratory process from two very different and experienced group facilitators. The differences in the process from the facilitator's viewpoint are drawn out including the challenges faced in the processes and the need for the facilitator to live with the discomfort this creates during the process itself. Both facilitators use the first part of the collaboratory process only: the talking circle element. They use this as a means of deepening a group conversation rather than leading straight into a visioning process.

Reflection 1

I'm probably quite a "traditional" facilitator normally in that I tend to work with groups to help facilitate an outcome to a set agenda. Normally I have a brief of what the question is and, to a degree, what the desired