

The Collaboratory – a short introduction

The [Collaboratory](#) (collaboration laboratory) is a collaborative multi-perspective, multi-stakeholder dialogue forum aiming at engaging relevant actors in an outcome-oriented collective visioning process around big social challenges, helping them to co-create meaningful solutions and to join forces in order to bring them into being. It has been developed in the context of the 50+20 Initiative to reform management education towards educating business leaders who act in service of the larger society and common good.

Based on Scharmer's Theory U, Bohmian Dialogue, Appreciative Inquiry, Art of Hosting, Dragon Dreaming and other methodological sources, the Collaboratory

- invites participants to get involved as whole persons and to meet each other on a personal, not just factual level
- allows for deep and appreciative inquiry into complex problems the respective stakeholders are facing
- lets participants experience a visualization processes of an ideal future based on their collective intelligence, thereby going beyond existing logics of thinking and problem-solving (which in most cases have to be overcome in order for transformative change to happen)
- enables the creation of prototypes that are back-casted from the ideal future to where we are now
- facilitates a co-creative laboratory in the course of which participants design tangible projects emerging as outcomes of their joint process
- invites participants to take responsibility for and carry forward the results.

The Collaboratory is particularly suited as a hands-on method for diverse stakeholder groups who wish to come together to cooperate around a shared problem or challenge for which they are in need of innovative, tangible and sustainable solutions. The process is designed to address the topic in focus in an outcome-oriented way while making sure all relevant perspectives are included and given the necessary space to contribute their concerns and potentials in a constructive, mutually inspiring way.

One example where the Collaboratory can prove to be effective is for scoping regional development strategies and planning integrative actions, based on multi-stakeholder engagement. Typical participants could be regional authorities, leaders of business communities, civil organizations, expert communities, municipal governance bodies, financial institutions, local and regional political forces and other relevant stakeholders.

The [Leadership for Transition \(LiFT\)](#) project has been working and experimenting with the method of the Collaboratory for over three years now. It has gained considerable experience with conducting Collaboratories in varying contexts (i.e. with groups of various composition and size, local and stakeholder settings etc.) within reasonable, yet varying periods of time (from half a day up to several days). Each Collaboratory workshop is being designed individually to match the respective context optimally.

Previous Collaboratory workshops conducted by members of the LiFT project include:

- Collaboratory on "Reducing food waste", Lausanne, 2013
- Collaboratory "Why School" in Stockholm, 2014
- Collaboratory on "The Evolution of Organization" in Vienna, 2014
- Collaboratory on "Learning Transition" in Luxembourg, 2015
- Collaboratory on the Refugee Crisis in Germany, 2016
- Collaboratory on "Adaptive Learning and Job Creation in the Digital Age" in Trondheim, 2016

More information: www.leadership-for-transition.eu