

Session 5.1. World Café

On the last day of the course, you will have the opportunity to discuss those important issues for which there was not enough time for discussion during the training programme. We would like to receive participants' advice on how to include these issues in a revised version of the training programme.

Discussing outstanding issues will be done in the form of a "world café": small groups of participants will be seated in conversation clusters in several conversation rounds. Tablecloths, candles and place settings will be used to create an informal café atmosphere.

Upon completing the initial round of conversation, one person will remain at the table as a host, while the others go to new tables and carry key ideas and questions into their new conversations. The table host will welcome the new guests and give a short recap of the initial conversation. The new people at the table will be encouraged to link and connect ideas coming from their previous table conversations. By providing opportunities for people to move in several rounds of conversation, ideas, questions and topics will begin to emerge and circulate. In every round, conversations become deeper and richer. During the third round, people will return to their original tables to synthesize the main ideas.

After the three rounds, participants will engage in a plenary discussion of 30 minutes where they can share feedback.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The world-café methodology is often used for qualitative evaluation purposes. The idea was born in 1995 during a two-day dialogue among a global, interdisciplinary group known as the Intellectual Capital Pioneers. Impressed by the depth, scope and innovative quality of their collaboration, they asked, "What happened here that supported such great conversation and breakthrough thinking?" Reflection on the largely improvised process, together with subsequent research and experimentation, resulted in the distillation of seven world-café design principles and a sketch of "café etiquette."

As a conversational process, the world café is an innovative yet simple methodology for hosting conversations about questions that matter. These conversations link and build on each other as people move between groups, cross-pollinate ideas and discover new insights into the questions or issues that are most important in their life, work or community. As a process, the world café can evoke and make visible the collective intelligence of any group, thus increasing people's capacity for effective action in pursuit of common aims.

More information on the World Café is to be found on www.theworldcafe.com/ or www.weitzenegger.de/cafe/index.htm Cafés.