NVL

Evaluation of Transformative Learning Circles

A learning model from an NVL pilot project

Nordic Co-operation

Nordic Council
of Ministers

EVALUATION OF TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING CIRCLES – A LEARNING MODEL BY THE NORDIC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' NETWORK FOR ADULT LEARNING (NVL)

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Preface

The Nordic network for adult learning (NVL) is a programme under the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) which aims at developing practice and policy in the field of adult learning. The NVL promotes Nordic cooperation in lifelong learning by focusing on cross-sectoral cooperation in the priority areas defined by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The pilot project on Transformative Learning Circles (TLC; 2015–2017) is a multi-layer initiative of adult educator competence development. It contributes to the professionalization of adult education staff in the Nordic region by improving the quality of further training and by testing an innovative model that supports the competence development of adult education professionals.

The TLC pilot project is a true example of cross-sectoral cooperation and networking at the Nordic level. The project has ensured a dynamic flow of knowledge and experience among the different countries and sectors involved and has created a learning environment, which embraces the differences. It has also ensured that in depth learning takes place, resulting in the transformation of own practice. The innovation potential of the TLCs has been acknowledged by a vast range of participant organisations including the public employment services, business colleges, adult education centres, municipalities, enterprises, organisations, and authorities dealing with migrants and newly arrived persons in the Nordic countries.

The project has made the Nordic cooperation visible through the participant organisations of the Nordic learning circles and their local background groups and networks. It has been successful at both, the Nordic collaboration level and at the local implementation level. The knowledge base has been created through a collaborative process at the Nordic level and has been directly implemented in the participant organisations locally, bringing in this way positive results from Nordic experiences to the local communities and organisations.

The fact that each participating organisation has introduced a challenge from their national or local context, has made the created solutions highly relevant. The collaborative Nordic work dealing with a vast range of challenges has been based on the participants' knowledge and experience, and supported methodologically and theoretically by a team of scientific advisors from the Nordic countries. This is why the results have a high transfer value at the Nordic level and are of immediate relevance at local or national level. The evaluation of the TLC pilot project shows that the methodology supports the creation of an entrepreneurial mind-set particularly in changing practices, transforming the perception of things and building new relationships.

The TLC model proves to be an innovative way of organising further training for adult education professionals and shows results that promote entrepreneurship. For future organisation of TLCs, the evaluation of the effects at the local level is desirable. NVL will continue exploiting the results from the TLC pilot project and welcomes new cooperation suggestions.

I would like to thank all the involved persons and organisations, the Nordic project group and the research team for their engagement and commitment!
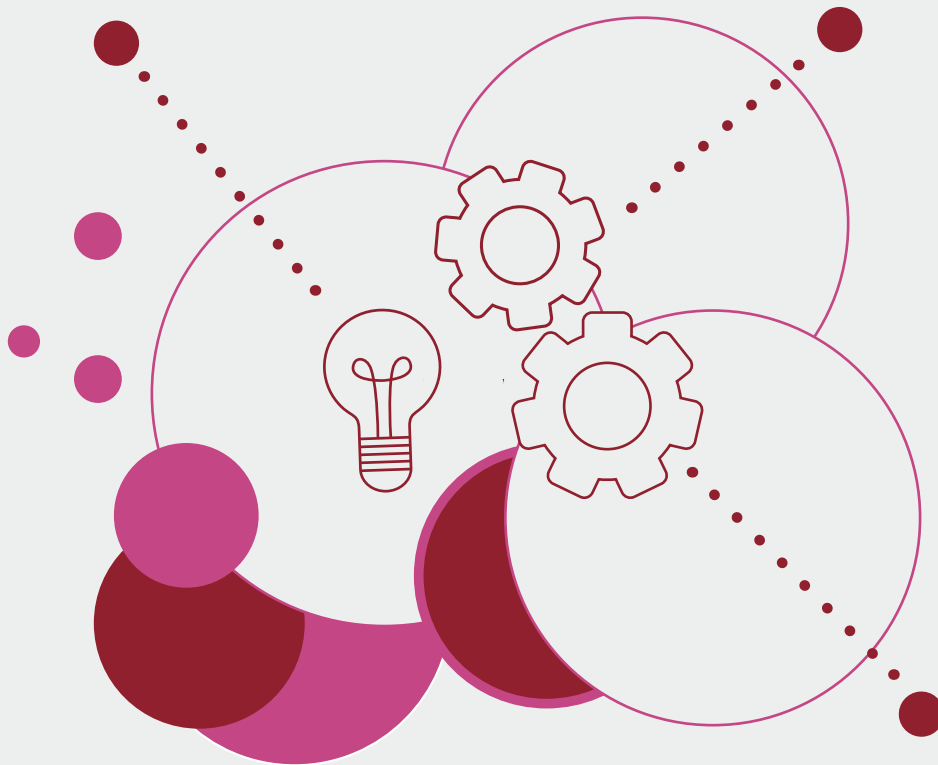
Enjoy the reading!

Antra Carlsen, NVL Head-coordinator

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Implementation, involvement and development process of the project

– Maria Marquard –

INTRODUCTION

The Nordic Network for Adult Learning (NVL) is a program under the Nordic Council of Ministers, (NCM). It promotes lifelong learning through continuos adult education. The NVL works through transnational and cross-sectoral networks on the basis of themes prioritized by the NCM.

The Nordic welfare societies are under pressure due to global, Nordic and national changes. Changed competence requirements, cohesiveness, sustainable development, inclusion and democracy are challenged areas in ever more super diverse societies. In several of the Nordic Council of Ministers programmes the challenges are on the agenda.

In order to meet these challenges and improve the quality in adult learning it is necessary to develop new ideas and possibilities for lifelong learning and competence development so that adult educators, who work with adult learning processes — can make use of them. The NCM has for some years prioritized innovation, creativity, entrepreneurship and promotion of entrepreneurial mindset with a focus on the competences of adult educators, the pedagogical ways of working and on the structure and learning environments. The NVL develops, tests and disseminates ways of working with innovation, creativity and entrepreneurial learning related to adult education and competence development of adult educators.

The pilot programmes have been implemented by two NVL networks:

2006–2011 *The NVL task force on adult pedagogy* **described competence requirements for adult educators in innovative learning environments. The network finished the work in 2011 with the report "Innovative Learning Processes in Practice".[1]**

2013–2017 *The NVL's network for Entrepreneurial learning and innovation* **collected, developed and disseminated experience and knowledge of the Nordic Countries on Entrepreneurial learning and innovation. The final report describes the results from the pilot development project "Transformative learning circles" accomplished by the network.**

It is expected that the results of these projects will contribute to the promotion of new thinking on Nordic continuous training and to establish solid networks of adult educators in the Nordic Countries.

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1   *http://nvl.org/Content/Innovative-lreprocesser-i-praksis-et-udviklingsforlb*

NVL NETWORK FOR "ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING AND INNOVATION"

The Network on Entrepreneurial learning and innovation
was initiated by the NVL in 2013.

THE TASK AND PURPOSE

The purpose of the MCM and the NVL is to

1 Compile, analyze and clarify important factors in the best Nordic practices within the field of innovation and entrepreneurial learning, on this background...

2 Create, try out and evaluate a l earning model for the promotion of entrepreneurial and innovative competences of adult learners.

The focus is not only on promoting entrepreneurship but also intrapreneurship and "entrepreneurial mindsets", understood as the individual ability to deal with social, societal, and work related changes and challenges in a more complex and diverse society were sustainable solutions are required.

THE WORK PROCESS

The process was divided in two phases. The work of the network follows the same structure.

Part 1. 2013–2014

The network compiled, analyzed and described Nordic experiences and important factors in successful innovative and entrepreneurial learning environments.

Part 2. 2015–2017

On the background of the results from part one, the network and researchers developed a pilot project trying out and evaluating a learning model for promoting adult learners entrepreneurial and innovative competences.

The work is therefore described as a two-phase process that includes different models, and supplementary comments.

Part 1. 2013–2014

THE PARTICIPANTS

The advisory board and research involvement

An advisory board of Nordic researchers was created to follow the project. These researchers have continuosly participated in the discussions of the networks. Some of them have contributed to the design of surveys, logs and evaluations. Others have also contributed to the analysis and the final evaluation. The research members in the 2013–2014 advisory board were:

PART 1.

- **Anssi Tuulenmäki**, the research program Mind at Aalto university Helsinki
- **Kaj Mickos,** Innovation Plant, Mälardalen University
- **Marie Kirstejn Aakjær,** DPU/Aarhus university
- **Shahamak Rezaei**, Roskilde university Denmark

PART 2.

The research members in advisory board working with evaluation of the pilot project

- **Anssi Tuulenmäki,** the research program Mind at Aalto university Helsinki
- **Kamran Namdar,** Mälardalen University,
- **Pirjo Lahdenperä**, Mälardalen University

Discussion forums and continuos feedback on the process

- **Benson Honig**, McMaster University, Canada

Network members

The network is composed by reflective practitioners. When selecting them, the NVL took into account the practitioners who worked in innovative, entrepreneurial learning environments, and had practical experiences working with innovative and entrepreneurial pedagogical working methods.

The participants represented different sectors and Nordic countries. In the network 2013–2014 the participants were from:

- "Yes GL" a new Greenlandic project developed as a private /public initiative
- "Biophilia" an Icelandic project developed by the musician Björk and implemented by government initiatives in Iceland
- The "Innovation factory" at Kolding International Business academy; (University of applied Science) in Denmark
- "AIR" a national rehabilitation center and private NGO in Norway
- The International Entrepreneur Association in Sweden (IES)
- Pro-academy at Tampere university, Finland

Model of the work.
Part 1. 2013–2014

2013

NVL network

"Entrepreneurial learning and innovation" is created.

Invited participants are all working in innovative, entrepreneurial adult learning environments.

The participants represent all Nordic countries and different sectors involved in adult education

An advisory board for the NVL network

"Entrepreneurial learning and innovation" is created

Participants: Researchers within the field of innovation, entrepreneurship and adult learning

Meetings and preliminary discussions on

Design and plan for the survey and analyze of the best Nordic practices

Concept clarification

The innovative and entrepreneurial aspects in the different practices related to target group, content etc.

Task and purpose clarification

2014

Study visits and analysis

An advisory board for the NVL network

a Survey
Two researchers from the advisory board developed a survey for the study visits

b Mutual study visits
The NVL network participants accomplish mutual study visits in their practices. Information and data are collected through the surveys.

c Analyze and results
Two researchers analyze and describe characteristics of the learning and the learning environments in the innovative and entrepreneurial practices.

Discussion forum
December at Design factory, Aalto University

The NVL network initiated a Nordic discussion forum to discuss the results in a future oriented perspective.
Invited participants:
• The advisory board and other researcher within the field
• Stakeholders from a broad field of innovative entrepreneurial adult learning and education

From the discussions
Two development projects were decided

1. **Transformative learning circles,** implemented by "NVL Network for entrepreneurial learning and innovation"

   "NVL Island network"

2. **To-do Seminars** accomplished by "NVL Island network"

The two projects are separately implemented and evaluated.

THE ACTIVITIES MEETINGS AND STUDY VISITS

During the first two years, the participants in the network had several meetings to discuss different practices, and to clarify concepts and understandings related to different contexts. With the purpose of getting closer to possible common characteristics and important factors to encourage "entrepreneurial mindsets" in the different practices, two researchers[2] were asked to develop a guide for study visits. The study visits were carried out in 2014. The results were analyzed by the researchers and discussed during the Nordic discussion forum at the Design factory at Aalto University.

Differences and similarities in the five cases

The analysis of the five cases (very different learning environments) shows both

"fundamental differences in structure, organisation, duration in time, target group, the type of learning activity and primary focus of the learning arenas in the five cases, and remarkable similarities in the pedagogical approach:

Key points from the analysis regarding similarities:

• "In most of the cases the content is more or less (co)created by the information that the participants have previously gathered."

THE ANALYSIS[3] – KEY POINTS AND IMPACT ON THE PILOT PROJECT DESIGN

The results of the analysis of study visits and the elaboration of them at the discussion forum became of crucial importance for the continuing work in 2015–2017. In the analysis, some central points of focus on co-creation were:

What are the possibilities of participants to influence frames and content?

To what extent can participants (not in the meaning of teachers or planners of educational activities, but rather the traditional 'learner' or 'student') influence the frames and content?

Talking about 'frames' in relation to this includes *structure, time, legislation, process, order and sequence of activities.* 'Content' includes *the topic, actors or participants and approach.*

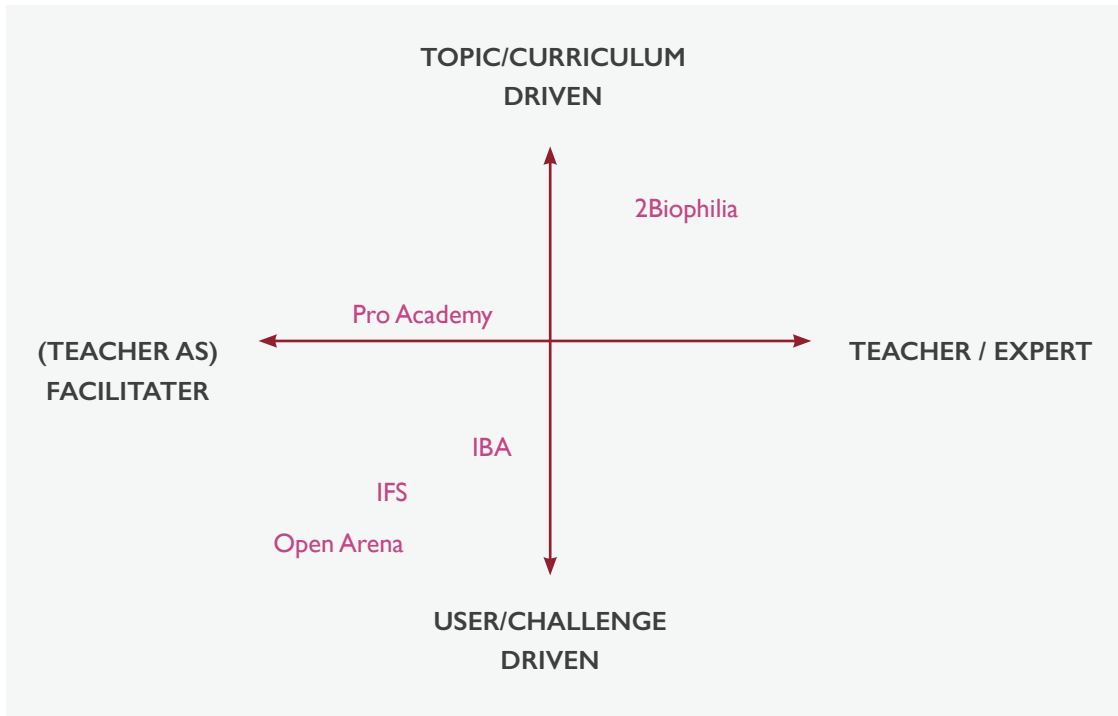
2 Marie Kirstejn Aakjær, DPU/Aarhus university
   Shahamak Rezaei, Roskilde university Denmark

3 Analysen www.nordvux.net/Portals/0/_dokumenter/2015/Co-creating_learning_arenas_2014.pdf

- There is a "theme/challenge-based approach to structuring of activities and a clear focus on diversity as a driver of innovation.

- The pedagogical approach combines theory and practice in different kinds of "learning by doing" processes which have "resemblances with experience-based, problem- and practice oriented learning approaches… which can be described as informed by the pragmatic approach to learning, knowing and doing"

In all the study visits, a very high degree of motivation and engagement was registered among participants.

The similarities and differences regarding steering of content and "the educators" role of the learning process are illustrated in the following model:

TOPIC/CURRICULUM DRIVEN

2Biophilia

Pro Academy

(TEACHER AS) FACILITATER   **TEACHER / EXPERT**

IBA

IFS

Open Arena

USER/CHALLENGE DRIVEN

Project Development, Part 2. 2015–2017:
Transformative learning circles

2015 PLAN AND DESIGN

On the background of the analysis and insights from the discussion forum in December 2014, it was decided to plan and carry out a Nordic pilot project. The purpose was *"to try out and evaluate a learning model for promoting adult learners entrepreneurial and innovative competences".*

It was very important to find a model which took into account the described special characteristics of the learning process and learning environments in the innovative and entrepreneurial best practices. These were:

- A collaborative / co-creative approach to learning,
- Work with "real" tasks
- A very high degree of participant's responsibility and participant involvement,
- That facilitators and not teachers supported the learning processes.

Inspired by the Nordic tradition for adult learning organized as study circles, and especially the Swedish work with research circles, it was decided to use a circle organisation for the pilot project. Learning circles were regarded as a learning model, which make it possible to accommodate the important characteristics from the analysis.

TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING CIRCLES

The concept "transformative" is emphasized with the purpose of promoting changes at a deeper and more transforming level in the participants' practice.

The content in the circle work is exclusively defined by the "real" tasks and challenges the participants raise for discussion and development.

Transfer and strong linkage between work in the Nordic circle and own practice is pivotal and strongly emphasized

To strengthen implementation it is required that all participants have a local team, circle or group, where they can discuss and try out new insights from the Nordic work.

The Nordic circles are cross national and cross sectoral (members from different countries and sectors)

Circle organisation is not a new way of working. The pilot project therefore became a kind of revival of an old Nordic pedagogical approach, and raised a demand for clarification of what new insights the project could possible give, and what were the new perspectives of working in this way. Very important keywords were highlighted during the process: transformative, transfer between new knowledge and practice, implementation and cross national and cross-sectoral co-creation / collaboration. (See part 2)

Facilitators and creation of the Nordic circles

The NVL network decided to use the strong competences of facilitators within the network and choose network members as facilitators in the two circles and a facilitator from one of the island network institutions in the third network.

The facilitators invite participants and create the Nordic circle

Circle 1. Entrepreneurial learning and rehabilitation in working life

Circle 2. Entrepreneurial learning and education

Circle 3. Entrepreneurial learning and integration

Each member in the circles was encouraged to create a platform (circle, team, group) back in their own practice to discuss, try out and implement new knowledge. Many of the participants succeeded in doing this.[4]

Pilot project preparatory education and circle work 2016

During the spring 2016 preparatory activities were carried out. A researcher[5] created an evaluation design for the pilot project based on the use of logs and continous reflection.

The NVL network for Entrepreneurial learning and the NVL island network created a commonsteering group for the pilot project.

Two researchers[6] conducted preparatory education for NVL network members, the steering group and the circle participants. The purpose was to create a common understanding of working with "learning circles", to help with the evaluation design and to explain the concept of transformation.

During 2016 the three Nordic circles had two common physical meetings and a number of digital meetings. The data was collected through logs, observations and interviews by a group of researchers at Inland Norway University of Applied Science: Daniella D Lundesgaard, Marit Haave, Inge hermanrud, Victoria Konovalenko Slettli, Åse Storhaug Hole, Xiang Ming Hei, Martin Nkosi Ndlela and Kjell Staffas (Uppsala University)

The steering group had three meetings to discuss adjustments of the learning and evaluation processes.
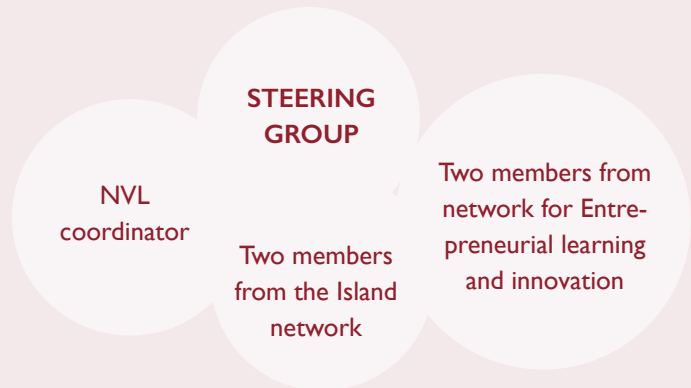
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4   See later examples National impact
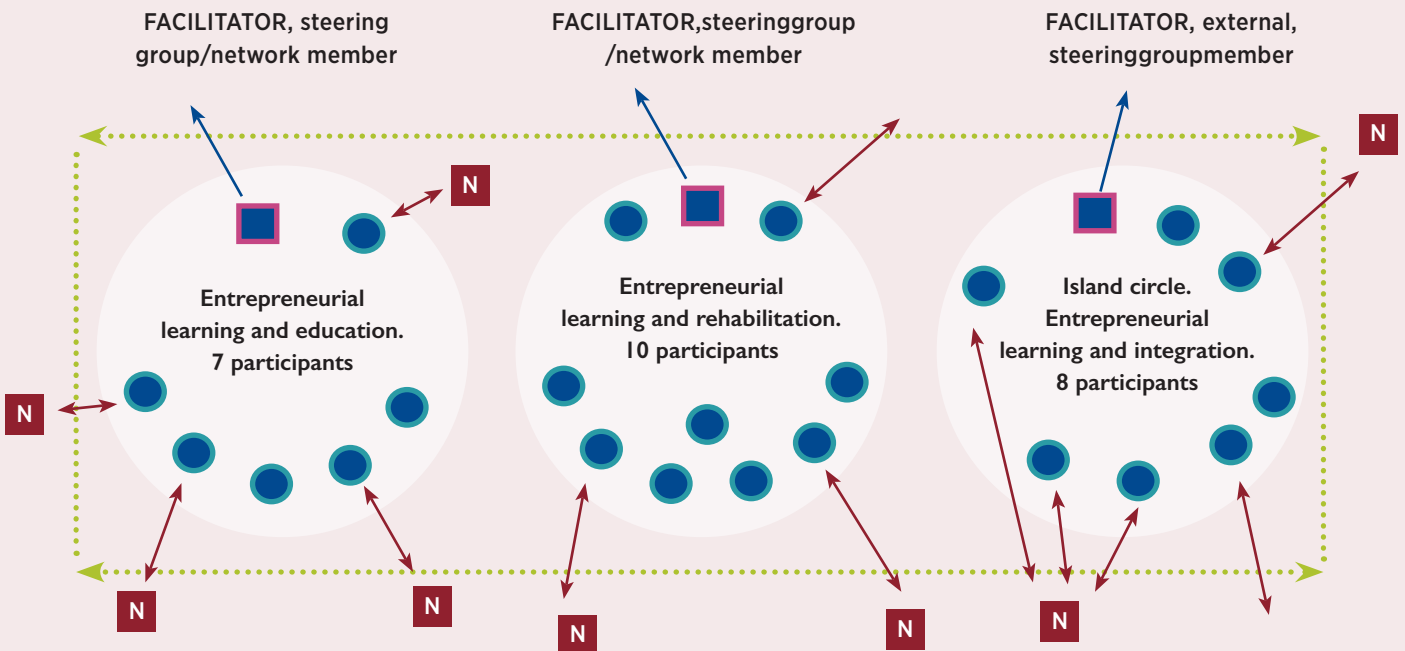5   Kamran Namdar, Mälardalens Högskola
6   Kamran Namdar, Pirjo Lahdenperä Mälardalens Högskola
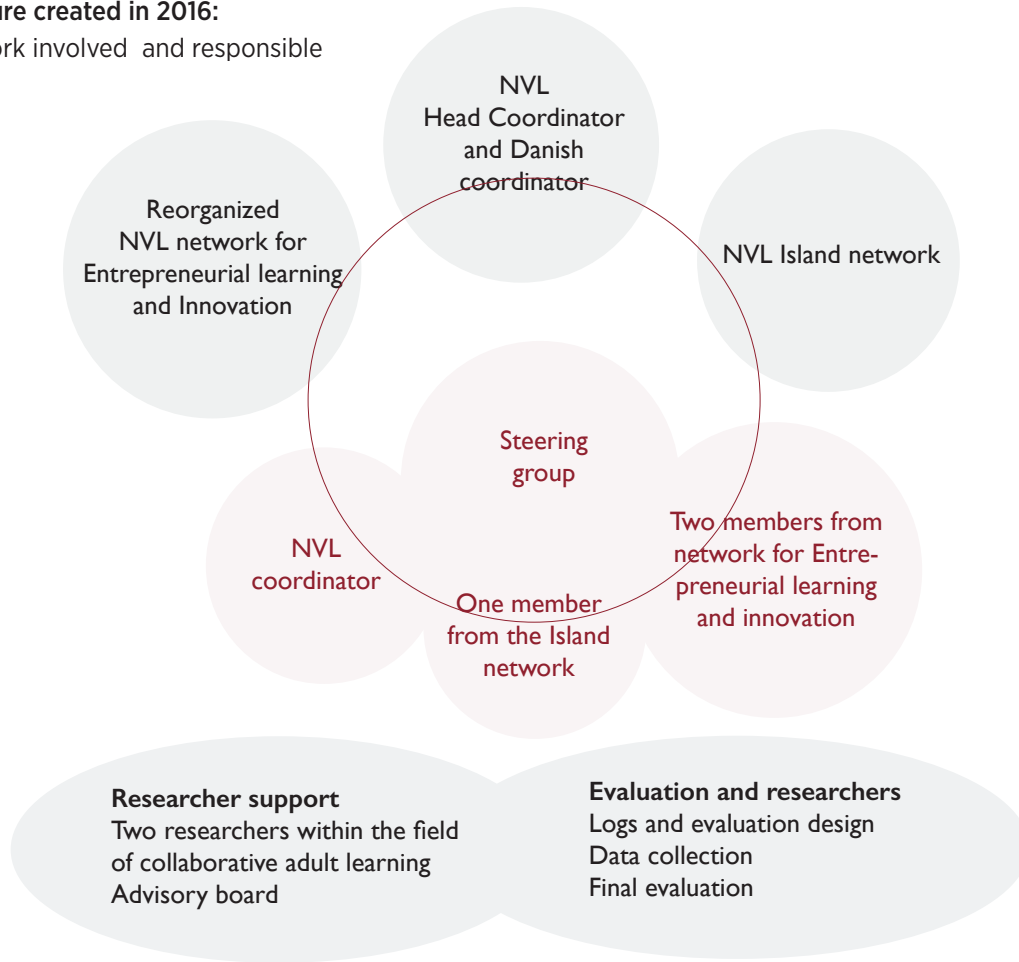
Model of the project

STEERING GROUP

NVL coordinator

Two members from the Island network

Two members from network for Entrepreneurial learning and innovation

THREE NORDIC CIRCLES, DIFFERENT TOPICS

Facilitator in each circle with the task to:
- Choose members and create the circle
- Facilitate the process
- Secure the data collection
- Two facilitators have participated in the network for entrepreneurial learning and innovation. One is new.

Participants in circles
- All work in private or public institutions and organisations
- Different sectors, formal, non-formal and informal learning
- Almost all participants have a national network, group or circle to discuss the Nordic learning and strengthen implementation

Evaluation and evaluators
- Only Nordic circles are evaluated
- Swedish researcher create log design
- Two Swedish researchers introduce learning circles and logs
- A group of Norwegian researchers collect data
- Data comes from: logs, group and individual interviews, observations, survey.
- Three Swedish researcher analyse and write

FACILITATOR, steering group/network member

FACILITATOR, steeringgroup /network member

FACILITATOR, external, steeringgroupmember

N

Entrepreneurial learning and education. 7 participants

N

N   N

N

Entrepreneurial learning and rehabilitation. 10 participants

N   N

N

Island circle. Entrepreneurial learning and integration. 8 participants

N   N

The structure created in 2016:
NVL Network involved and responsible

NVL
Head Coordinator
and Danish
coordinator

Reorganized
NVL network for
Entrepreneurial learning
and Innovation

NVL Island network

Steering
group

NVL
coordinator

Two members from
network for Entre-
preneurial learning
and innovation

One member
from the Island
network

Researcher support
Two researchers within the field
of collaborative adult learning
Advisory board

Evaluation and researchers
Logs and evaluation design
Data collection
Final evaluation

CIRCLE WORK, EVALUATION AND DISSEMINATION, 2017

The project was prolonged to 2017. The last two Nordic meetings were held in the beginning of 2017.

After the last Nordic meeting for all circles, the pilot project as such was finished and the evaluation process started.

The evaluation and the evaluation report was finished in autumn 2017

During 2017, the experiences, perspectives and results from the project were disseminated and discussed at three Nordic conferences and in one national conference.

May: "Adult education in the age of global mobility" The 7th Nordic conference on adult education and learning, Jönköping, Sweden.

**August:** "Innovative adult learning", Nuuk, Greenland

September: "The adult educator and innovation" a Nordic Nordplus / NVL conference, Lund

November: Adult learning and inclusion in working life and civic society" Norwegian chairmanship conference, Bergen

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Transformative learning circles: Key concepts for the planning, organisation and working methods of the project

– Pirjo Lahdenperä –
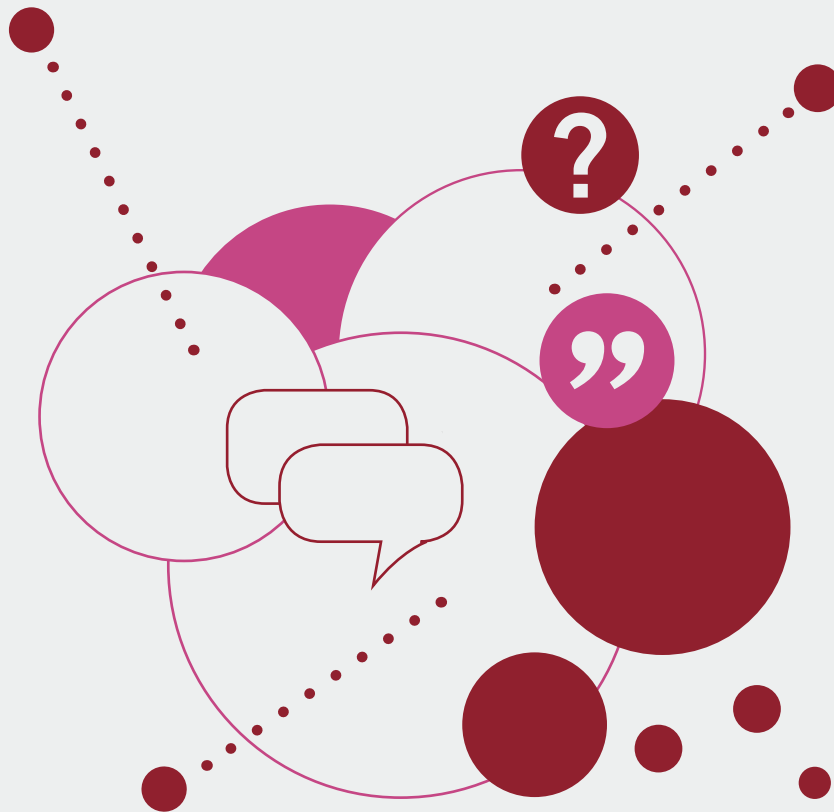
TRANSFORMATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP[7]

The starting point of this project is the assumption that both the future and the multicultural society of today require new ways of thinking and acting. What is called for is something that could be termed an entrepreneurial mindset. Beyond engagement in starting new enterprises, the entrepreneurial mindset refers to a range of abilities as well as willingness to seek, identify, and realize potential in any context.

In this project, a transformative entrepreneur is someone who aims at, and is capable of -bringing about changes in his/her own life, in the organisation the individual is serving, and contributing towards global societal changes that involve the emergence of a new qualitative dimension of possibilities and conditions. What constitutes a transformative change is usually open to discussion and consensual agreement. To give some indicative real life examples, a change in an individual's life from a state in which the individual feels like a victim of life circumstances to one in which the individual sees her/himself as a master of his/her own life. This represents a transformative change. So, while entrepreneurship always implies initiating something new, transformative entrepreneurship is about engaging in actions that involve movements and creations in an entirely new dimension. Transformative Learning Circles (TLC) is a model that attempts to respond to this need.

TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING CIRCLES

The TLC model is based on participatory and action learning processes where developmental potential and challenges are identified by participants in their daily, real life situations, and then addressed by the circle collectively. Thus, learning is not objectified or theoretically decontextualized, but grounded in the praxis of the participants. All instances and issues that are taken up for discussion in TLCs are current and real situations with unrealized potential within an organisation or in its environment.

A basic assumption is that the TLCs operate best when the participants represent different cultures, knowledge contexts, professional categories, etc. In the pilot project this evaluation report covers, the TLCs have included practitioners of various backgrounds, both ethnically and professionally. The rationale for this setup has been to make it possible for various kinds of knowledge and experiences to enrich and challenge each other, thus

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7   Following documents or publications are used for the compilation of different key concepts:
   • *Namdar, K. (2016). Fostering Transformative Entrepreneurship through Transformative Learning Circles: Experimenting a New Adult Learning Model [Position paper presented at the NVL Conference on Transformative Learning Circles]. Västerås, Sweden, 10 March 2016.*
   • *Namdar, K. (2015). Evaluation Design and Evaluation Tool Kit for Transformative Learning Circles [Materials presented at the NVL meeting on entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial mindset and learning]. Oslo, Norway, 8 September 2015.*
   • *Aakjær, M. K., Rezaei, S.(2015). Analyses of Co-creating Learning, Aarhus university DPU/, Copenhagen*

enhancing the possibilities of transformative developments. Persons with knowledge and experience of a certain field of activity can look at the potential existing and ways of realizing it, in another field of activity, in a way that detects more possibilities than those who are accustomed to the field often manage to do. Similarly, persons with different cultural backgrounds can make each other aware of perspectives that a particular worldview does not readily make accessible.

Furthermore, TLCs strive to walk the talk in the sense that the internal works of the TLCs follow the same processes and dynamics as are expected of the circle members as they go out to their organisational environments to carry out entrepreneurial acts of transformation. Especially important is the engagement and active participation of TLC members during the circle sessions. This principle of parallel processes is extended to the evaluation of the TLC model. Evaluation is seen as an integral part of the learning process, rather than something that the learning process is subjected to after it is over. The TLC model is thereby based on the spiral dynamics of reflection, planning, action and critical reflection.

CO-CREATION

Co-creation is one of the fundamental frameworks of the TLC. Co-creation is a relatively new term in education and learning. In general it can be stated that co-creation is an approach, which involves the fundamental ideas: 1) all human beings are creative and 2) can participate in shaping future solutions, given the right circumstances, tools and settings. In some – but not all – fields working with co-creation the approach is based on a democratic idea of access and possibility

for participation. Co-creation calls for organisations to be mindful of lived experiences, to build platforms for engagement, to enable creative collaboration and strategies that enhance wealth, welfare, and well-being. Co-creation is an approach that includes mind-set and practice.

Hence, co-creation is "understood as a process of interpersonal interaction, involving relations, communication and leadership, aiming at innovation, i.e. at creating new value." (Darsø, 2014). A central idea is to engage 'users' ideas, expertise and capacity to increase loyalty and engagement throughout the development phases and ultimately throughout the 'life' of a service, activity or product. Such definition of co-creation can be understood as the active involvement of end-users in various stages of the production process.

Bovill (2014) emphasises increased engagement and motivation, awareness of meta-cognitive perspectives and enhanced learning experiences as some of the qualities of a co-creational approach to learning and teaching. Co-creation as collaborative innovation with participants adds a new perspective to how products or services are created, in which production and consumption are more complex and often take place at the same time, which needs facilitators – not teachers, of learning processes. In a co-creation approach, participants are addressed not as receivers of information, but as shapers of knowledge. A co-creation approach perceives all participants as experts in each of their domains and values diversity.

In the NVL pilot project, it is relevant to define co-creation as an approach to collaboration and innovation, which seeks to bring together people

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There are three grades of involvement towards the group you are facilitating.

with diverse backgrounds in co-creation of sustainable and meaningful solutions for new learning experiences or environments for learning.

FACILITATION

Facilitators play a central role in developing the work of the group with the transformative, innovative and entrepreneurial goals set in the project. Especially with regard to the creation of co-creation and transnational aspects of the group's work and learning, the facilitators' role and competence is crucial.

Facilitation is not to be seen as a one special discipline, however it draws on several disciplines and perspectives such as psychology, group-psychology, pedagogy and learning theories and organization and leadership theories. This eclectic approach has contributed to seeing facilitation as a practice and a skill, more than a scientific approach to learning and knowledge exchange in groups.

Some of the competences that are useful for for creating transformative and cooperative learning in the group are 1) Clarifying objectives and seeking information, 2) design and facilitate group-processes, 3) create and develop cooperative relations, 4) create and maintain a supportive climate, 5) guide the group to learning, critical reflection and risk taking, 4) and guide the group to the results for the project in question.

According to Heron (1999) there are three approaches to facilitation, or more precisely, three grades of involvement towards the group you are facilitating. A *hierarchic approach* means that the facilitator is in charge, has control, makes decisions and manage the relational issues. A *cooperative approach* advocates for the sharing of power with the participants, and the invitation of participants to design the processes. The third approach is a *democratic style* that seeks to develop the independence of the participants. The group is given responsibility for both planning of the agenda, the process and the summing up. The facilitator can either use one of the approaches, or a combination of the three. During a pass, all of these different directions may be useful.

Factors that influence which style to use depends on several factors, such as the competence and maturity of the group, the competence and personality of the facilitator, the problem at stake, goals for the groups learning and the context.

Working Methods, Critical Incidents and Logs

In order for transformative change to even be possible, individuals and groups engaged in bringing it about need to critically reflect on their ways of thinking and acting. Transformations are usually facilitated or caused by critical incidents.

REFERENCES:

Bovill, C. (2014). An investigation of co-created curricula within higher education in the UK, Ireland and the USA. *Innovation in Education and Teaching International*, 51(1), 15–25.

Darsø, L. (2014). Setting the Context for Transformation toward Authentic Leadership and Co *the Field*, (pp. 97–113): IGI Global.

Heron, J. (1999). *Group facilitation: Theories and models for practice*. London: Kogan Page Limited.

These are experiences or events that become turning points by providing new insights or new ways of perceiving reality, leading to new ways of thinking and acting. A system of logs, pertaining to both individual and collective learning in the TLCs, is a central methodological aspect of the TLC model. These logs are meant to help individuals and circles plan, reflect upon, and learn from their attempts at transformative entrepreneurship. The assumption is that there are several important aspects to focus on in the logs. The first is that transformative action is derived from a guiding principle (see page X). The second, the transformative quality of the action taken can be verified by an indicator of transformation. Finally, the critical incidents associated with actions taken and leading to transformative learning are identified.

The Log System – supporting the TLC

The logs were designed as an integral part of the TLC model based on the following three considerations. They would:

1. help give a dynamic structure, a sort of flowchart, for the work of the Circles (See Appendix 1).
2. support and guide the learning process, with its focus on transformative entrepreneurship.
3. facilitate the project evaluation by providing narratives of how, Circle participants individually and Circles collectively, went through the learning experience.

The log constitutes a critical part of the TLC model helping to give a dynamic model. Facilitators and participants were expected to keep log books between meetings. The log system is outlined in a document entitled "Evaluation Design for the NVL Project: Fostering Transformative Entrepreneurship through Trans-

FIGURE 4 ILLUSTRATES THE LOGGING PROCESS:

General Individual Log ····▶ Critical Incidence Log ····▶ Individual Learning Log

····▶ Circle Meetings ····▶ Meeting Learning Evaluation Log
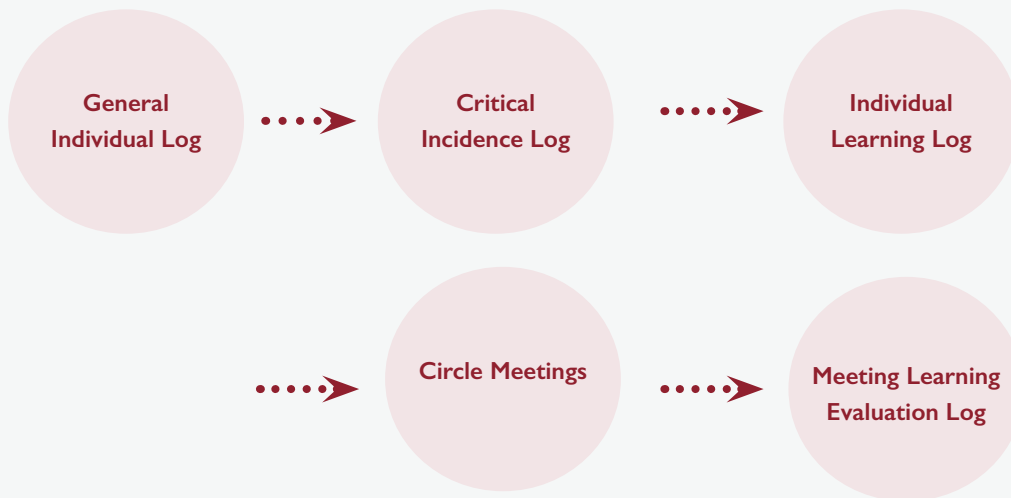
Figure 4. The logging process

formative Learning Circle" (Namdar, 2016). The Guidelines and Forms for Evaluation Document outline the following categories of interlinked logs:

a. The General Individual log
b. The Critical Incidence log
c. Individual Learning log
d. Meeting Learning Evaluation log

The logs are set up in a matrix system between the meetings. Participants are expected to keep a general individual log book, from which they would extrapolate a critical incident log and from this formulate an individual learning log. At the start of the meetings, participants should have an individual learning log. By the end, a meeting learning evaluation log is expected. The individual learning logs are accompanied by a set of prede-

fined guiding principles, key questions and transformation indicators.

The Critical Incidence log requires participants to describe a critical incidence pertaining to personal or organisational transformation. A critical incident is defined as "an incidence that has had a decisive impact on a transformative process or itself has embodied a transformative event". The individual learning log documents what the participant wants to share with the circle in the next meeting. The participant is expected to choose one (critical) incident or process from the personal log book and give his/her own analysis of what they and their working place have learned. In the meeting evaluation log each participant takes up one aspect of the learning process carried out during the meeting that (s)he thinks was particularly successful and requires further development.

3

Evaluation report

– Kjell Staffas –
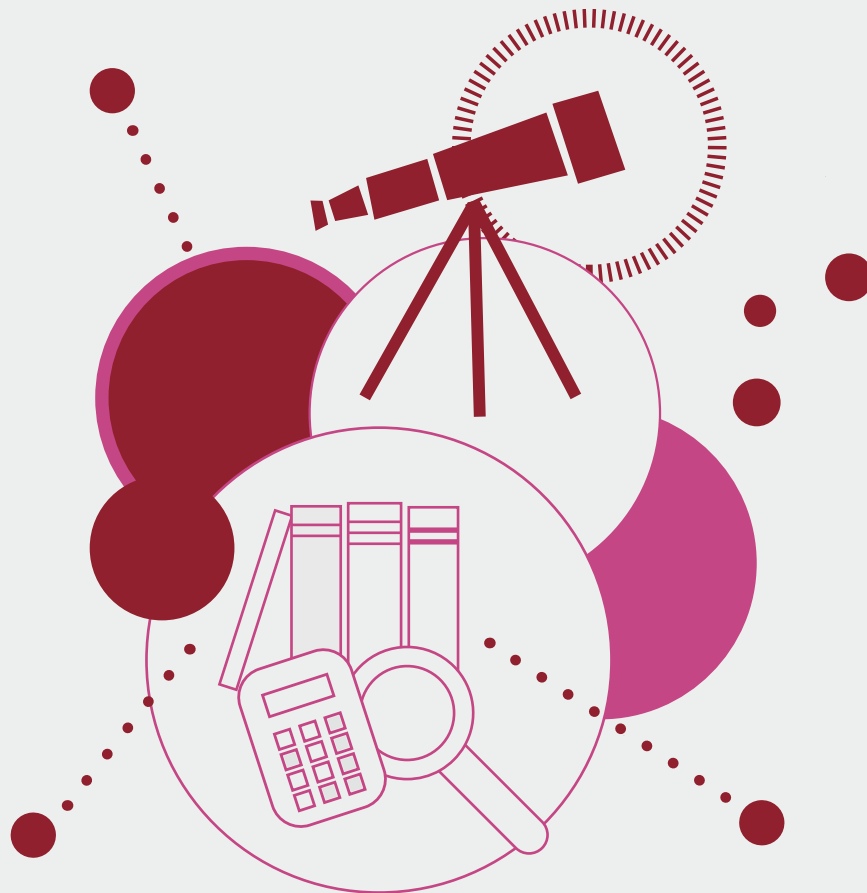
This evaluation is presented in the form of a reflective narrative based on formal documentation as well as the the author's experience from the Transformative Learning Circles (TLC) project.

The underpinning documentation consists of five focus group interviews and eleven interviews with participants and facilitators, all lasting around one hour, all recorded and transcribed, as well as the participants learning logs. In addition, we received 12 answers to a questionnaire that was sent out to participants and facilitators after the end of the project. Furthermore, direct observation of TLC meetings and stories from facilitators and participants are part of this evaluation. The emphasis is put on the practical outcomes of using the model, what consequences it had, whether it seems to make a viable contribution to entrepreneurial learning and in which ways it can be improved or to what extent and what ground it deserves to be further explored and developed. The method for performing the evaluation is best described as a direct interpretation of the empirical material and a moving back and forth between empirical observations and more generalizing reflections, in dialogue between the authors, their interpretations, and the material.

Evaluating a learning activity is **solely about focusing on what makes it different**, and hopefully better, than the usual or normal practice. The TLC project can be seen as a real-life un-controlled and open-ended quasi-experiment realized with the purpose of operationalizing NVL's ambitions to foster entrepreneurial learning. Taken literally, the notion of entrepreneur stems from the French expression of *s'entreprendre quelque chose* – to undertake something – and as such the notion of entrepreneurial learning makes **an immediate coupling between the learning and doing**.

What is different about TLC is that it is not just the actual meetings and subjects discussed and processed that stand in focus. TLC has an intended function. TLC stands for a transformation of your mind and therefore **influences the whole you in your practice afterwards**. The prefix 'trans-' implies going across and beyond, into another state or place, surpassing the established. '*Form*' indicates the visible shape or configurations of something, or a particular way in which something exists or appears. T**his evaluation will explore whether the experience of being part of TLC had such consequences – i.e. whether it caused entrepreneurial changes in your life.** This could be new activities at your work, new products, services, business proposals, or just a better ability to tackle everyday problems.

In the following, the interpretation of the experiences of the documentation process – the logs; the facilitation of the learning circles; the learning practices in the circles are presented. The conclusions include a sum up of the view on the outcome and future potential of the TLC.

A main feature of the TLC is the framework the participants had to adapt to and the role of the group leader, the facilitator. There was a clear documentation process the TLC participants had to follow – the logs, which are presented below.

General Individual Log

Entry date: ....

Effort	Guiding principle	Transformation indicator	Learning
(P=personal O=organizational) *Here you describe what you have done to bring about a change in yourself or in your organization. Tag it with "P" or "O"*	*Here you explain which guiding principle you have applied and how.*	*Here you describe the transformation you think has taken place and the indicator(s) thereof.*	*Here you describe what you and your organization have learned, what has facilitated that learning, and how the learning has brought you closer to the realization of your vision.*

These are entered based on discussions at the previous Circle meeting

(See Core Agenda point "Route Planning")

Critical Incidence Log

Entry date: ....

Critical incidence	Guiding principle	Learning
Here you describe a critical incidence pertaining to personal or organizational transformation. A critical incidence is an incidence that has had a decisive impact on a transformative process or itself has embodied a transformative event.	*Here you explain what guiding principle the critical incidence has been an enactment of.*	*Here you describe the transformation that took place as a result of the incidence and what you and your organization have learned from the incidence.*

Individual Learning Log

A Process/An Incidence	Learning Gained
Choose one (critical) incidence or process from your personal log book that you feel has been particularly successful and that you want to share with the your Circle at your next meeting. *Write a description of what was done and what happaned as a result.*	*Give your own analysis of what you/your organization have/has learned about enacting and applying principles and the common goal state vision.*

Meeting Learning Evaluation Log

1. Each participant takes up one aspect of the learning process carried out during the meeting that (s)he thinks was particularly successful and, if (s)he so feels, one aspect that (s)he thinks requires specially further development. The aspects are to be presented in form of pictures that are then commented upon.

2. With the help of the facilitator, these views are summarized (closely related points categorized), leading to 1–3 points (in pictorial form) to be discussed.

3. The points are discussed by the Circle with the purpose or arriving at a unified understanding and decision(s), presented in pictorial form, as to:

a) what currently are some of the Circle´s learning strengths and how the Circle can build on these in the future.

b) what currently are some of the Circle's learning needs and how these can be addressed in the future.

   In stating and discussing learning needs, it is important that each participant voice her/his ecperiences and interpretations without accusing anyone. The purpose is to find a collective way forward, if possible based on the identified strengths.

4. The evaluation part is closed with the facilitator recapping the identified learning strengts (showing the pictures depicting these).

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After a while it turned into a tool for reflection that was very good for me."

The issue, problem or assignment is written down as an Effort or Critical Incident where the participant describes the matter at hand, and what is done to bring about a change. To help processing the effort/critical incident there are five (5) Guiding principles that help to identifying and solving the problem. It is up to the participant to find the applied Guiding principle(s). Then the participant describes what changed during the process, and on what indicators they based their opinion. The participant describes what they or the organisation has learned from the process. As illustrated above, this description is a slight simplification, but it is what came out from the observations and the interviews with the participants.

From the questionnaire it is clear that many struggled through the process of getting into the system on writing logs on the website. Thus, the problem become two parted, partly from finding the forum on the website troublesome, and partly from not understanding how to formulate the problem as a critical incident and connect it to guiding principles.

"I had tremendous difficulties with it – I was under much pressure at the time – and it was hard to get it done during the already busy working week."

"In the beginning, it was tricky and felt like a burden. After a while it turned into a tool for reflection that was very good for me."

"I have learned a lot from it and it has a great potential. The times I used it, it really made sense, but the lacking user-friendliness and a too complicated logic behind the documents made it too much of a threshold to start using it. But I have set my mind on looking for a better log. So a further development – perhaps by people that are good at user-friendliness and design – would have been welcome."

Besides the experienced difficulties, the logs became useful when they got a grasp of it. However it was evident that many participants needed a more extensive introduction to both the templates and the framework underpinning its logic.

"I started with the interesting templates introduced to me at the first meeting in Denmark and showed how I should write my logbooks. With help of the experts, I got it even more fleshed out and could start writing the logs and all went well in the end."

For some, it became an important tool for transformation of their professional practice, sometimes expressed as a way of sharpening the focus and analysis of efforts and events in the home organisation. In some cases, the thinking behind the logs was more important than the actual logs, to visualize sequences of critical incidents and their consequences. In other cases, filling out the logs also meant drawing parallels to everyday work situations:

"The log-writing has been a good experience for me, especially in two ways: In my everyday work I work with students' writing processes as a part of the documentation of their learning. I have really learnt a lot from myself being a writer in a learning process that I have been 'exposed to' ... The other perspective I want to emphasize is, that I, through the log writing realized the relation between different activities that I am involved with than I had realized before. Log writing opens up for new recognitions and in the descriptions of critical incidents, one gets a view of the many different meanings and consequences a given experience can give for the further work."

A common denominator for comments and reflections about the documentation system, i.e. the logs and the framework underpinning it, was that it meant a considerable treshold im-

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plying a need for a more extensive introduction. Furthermore, the concrete practice of filling out the logs should at least initially be given time during or after the meetings in order to establish the practice.

"The log is a good tool for reflection and when I got it done, it gave many good considerations and made me aware of new knowledge and input. We rarely had time to work with the logs in the seminars and when one came back home one got busy again. That meant that the work with the logs was delayed and thereby many details were forgotten. In the future, the evaluation logs should be made immediately after the seminars."

Despite the fact that most of the participants found the physical meetings most significant. However, the preparations and after-meeting work make the difference in relation to the purpose of entrepreneurial learning by knitting together learning and doing. Therefore, it becomes apparent that the introduction itself must present the task ahead of them (the course, or the circle) as a Critical incident with sub critical incidents more accurately describing what will happen and what will be learnt. Then the different matters can easily be connected to the guiding principles to describe the process about to happen. In this way, the foundation for the logs is done right from the start.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES	KEY QUESTIONS	INDICATORS
NR 1. Entrepreneurship regarded as an organisational or collective function.	*How can I collaborate with others to bring about a change in our organisation's way of operating?*	New pattern of collaboration initiated with one or more colleagues with the aim of bringing about a change in the organisation's way of operating.
NR. 2 Entrepreneurial actions derived from ethical principles of global social responsibility, solidarity, and sustainability.	*How will the actions I plan to engage in, in the first instance, enable our organisation to better contribute towards a more humane and sustainable society?*	One or more aspects of a society conducive to human flourishing in a global perspective identified. One or more connections between the organisation's way of operating and the above aspects identified. Initiative(s) taken that could change the organisation's way of operating in order to achieve the goals identified above.
NR. 3 Entrepreneurship aimed, in the first instance, at helping a collective (an organisation, a community, the global society) realize their best potentialities.	*What potentials have not been (sufficiently) observed and realized in our organisation?*	One or more potentials or unrealized possibilities in the organisation's operations, in keeping with the above, identified. Measures undertaken to realize these potentials.
NR. 4 Entrepreneurial innovation seeking primarily to transform the culture (the prevalent values, the quality of relationships, the meaningfulness of processes) of an organisation.	*How will my engagement in a given area bring fundamental changes in the way our organisation operates?*	Specific needs for changes in the values and ethical principles underlying the organisation's way of operating towards a greater degree of human flourishing and sustainability identified. Practical ways of bringing about one or more of the above identified and undertaken.
NR. 5. Personal growth and development regarded valuable as a necessary requirement for being able to better serve the wellbeing of a collective (an organisation, a community, the global society)	*How do I need to change myself in order to be able to better serve my organisation and the global society?*	Needs for personal development identified in the light of increased capability to serve the organisation and society at large in their development towards a higher level of humaneness and sustainability. One or more practical measures for personal development in keeping with the above identified and pursued.

The learning logs stood out most clearly as the distinguishing feature of this approach to learning by trying to make a clear connection between the concrete experience in everyday life and more general principles of entrepreneurial learning. However, the novelty of the TLC did not lie in its parts, but in its unique combinations in which facilitation was also a part.

To further analyse the (mostly initial) difficulties with the documentation (the logs) participants explained that the meetings and the documentation made there became more important. This could be considered as the Meeting evaluation log with a twist, since maybe, some of the documentation process during meetings replaced the initial thought with the Critical incidents and Guiding principles:

"I think the verbal meetings we had, gave a lot. I felt that it was hard for many participants to use the logbooks, but when we talked, it became easier. Unfortunately, there were so many technical problems that our hang-out meetings weren't of any higher quality. The participants educational and IT-background also varied which influenced the process BUT for the content, it was very good that we in the group were so different. It gave an entirely different dimension to the work."

"All meetings were documented, both in images and in writing. I think this was an important factor for people to experience more value in the conversation. Without the documentation, the conversation is forgotten and in the end completely disappears. When it is written down, you can go back and see what it really was we were talking about that time."

Summing up the experience of the documentation system of logs with its underpinning framework, the most striking aspect is the relatively high threshold to get into the practical procedure of filling out the forms and to understand the logic of the underlying framework. In consequence, in order to make the logs a more rewarding experience for more participants a more extensive introduction is needed.

THE FACILITATION

While not uniquely designed for the TLC concept, the facilitation of interactions in the TLCs also stood out as a crucial component of the model.

Any of the facilitation styles (Heron, see ch. 2) is fit for the whole learning process. The group leader has to adapt to each situation and either master all three of them or mix them. A facilitator can adapt to just one of the approaches, but the dynamic of the group risks to be hindered. It is clear from the physical meetings that the approaches differed in the three circles. In the entrepreneurship learning and education, the participants quickly adapted to the model and facilitation approach making the facilitator part of the group. In the inclusion of newcomers, the participants had language issues and were not familiar to the learning environment. They also had difficulties to adapt to the facilitation process, which in consequence became more hierarchical, nevertheless it had also cooperative attempts. In the Inclusion of working life group the facilitator switched between hierarchic to cooperative and the group managed

to take the facilitation burden themselves during a meeting were the facilitator was not present. It worked well probably because the participants were used to cope with situations by their own and come up with decisions and solutions.

Facilitators are responsible of creating the frames for the work. This includes pushing the processes in the group forward. Of great importance is to manage the diversity of the group, which led to the facilitator acting sometins like a juggler, balancing the different inputs and stages during the different processes. This means also empowering the participants making them able to share what is on their mind at all times. The questionnaire addressed how the frames for and the content of the meetings were decided, with answers ranging from radically democratic to more mixed approaches with decisions more or less made by the facilitator, i.e. a top-down approach:

"Collectively in the introduction of each meeting."

"We developed the frame for the work in the circle together – every participant brought their practice challenge and we used the guiding principles in the logs as far as possible to structure our meetings."

"The group in the start of each meeting decided them. The facilitator had good ideas about the facilitation itself, the group decided about frames and content."

"We tried a few ways but the facilitator normally had a suggestion that we could comment upon."

"Good process management by the facilitator

but at the same time plenty of room for the needs and wishes of the group."

"We had a main structure that we followed, with room for bringing up the group's own topics."

"Typically, the facilitator's suggestion was discussed, where after the frames and content were collectively decided upon."

Several of the participants listed the dialogue and the process in their TLC group as the most important elements or aspects in the participant's own learning:

"Learning dialogues, where others in the group gave feedback on a dilemma – that lead to new insights."

"Many good brainstorming sessions with skilled people with new perspectives. Informal but serious tone with a lot of humour."

"To get time to reflect with the group, to put words on the knowledge that we own together."

"Our pedagogical dialogues and reflections."

"Dialogue and relations are to me the two words that are tightly related to the success of the work in the groups."

"I learnt many new facilitation methods and to see new ways of getting constructive feedback."

"For me, the belief and knowledge that the group collectively owns the answers has become clearer. To dare to rely on that the

knowledge is there among the members of the group."

"My most important learning was to dare to 'let go'. To not having a given goal in focus, but rely on that the process will guide us in the right direction."

"That new knowledge arises in dialogue."

"Dynamic teamwork that challenged my general understanding and often led to new ideas and transformative solutions."

"I feel that the circle members have been supportive and come up with good ideas and inspired me."

"That the knowledge developed in a TLC process is based on interpersonal interaction, including relations, communication and facilitated process."

DIVERSITY IN AND BETWEEN THE LEARNING CIRCLES

The very notion of 'transformative' does create expectations. One reason the TLC project met such good critique is that the participants knew from the beginning that they were privileged to enter a whole new concept of learning. Therefore the motivation and expectation level was high right from the start.

Not surprisingly, the climate in the investigated circles was good and many felt very satisfied with the (physical) meetings, and mentioned them as fruitful and nurturing to their exposed matter they shared with the group. But even though this of course is satisfying and a feath-

er in the cap for the organizers, what really counts is what happened in between meetings and afterwards. In some cases, the meetings were seemingly too nice and too affirmative of common views to the extent that nothing was put at risk – and nothing really happened between the meetings either. The challenges or the diversity of the group were not big enough. It is sometimes argued that the encounter with novelty and otherness only becomes real when your own knowledge is put at risk. Certainly, that was not always the case.

In all these respects, there were differences both within and between the groups. The three groups were significantly different from each other and it is therefore tempting to describe the groups forming the TLC experience in terms of generalizing caricatures. The differences partly came from the fact that the facilitators were the ones selecting members for each group, but also because of the participants' professional background. One group was educational or pedagogic experts, the second consisted of social workers and daycare personnel working with newcomers and the inclusion of them in the Danish and Swedish society. The third group was composed by consultants, academics and public servants, all working with innovation and networks. These differences in group compositions were specifically apparent in how the work proceeded and the formal documentation in the learning logs went on.

While demands on documentation for purposes of reflection were strict, an important notion of TLC is the non-standardization of its direction. Different circles were intended to de-

*During the process, it was not clear from the participants
how to relate the learning log to a relevant Guiding principle.*

velop in different directions according to the needs and emergent practices of the groups. In consequence, TLC may be described through its documentation routines and frames of reference for facilitation, but this will never fully define what TLC is, as it cannot be fully defined without its practice in a specific group. This aspect of TLC was obvious in the experience of the project.

Inclusion of newcomers

The activity started in June 2016 with a meeting and presentation to get an initial understanding of the concept. The next meeting in August focused on the participants' development tasks and to convey the structure for the learning circle and its future work. The participants had not yet started writing their logs because the work on their development tasks just begun. The underlying theme of the development tasks was *"What change do you/I want to work with, and what do you/I/we know better?"* The evaluation structure and examples on logs was presented by the secretary of the group. The participants from Gotland worked in a joint project, while the Bornholm party's projects were individual. The primary target group for the learning circle is the parents to children in kindergarten, elementary school and asylum center, besides the development

of the group members themselves. The "task" for the next meeting in October was to start using the logs in their daily work to prevent the task to be something that was filled in just before the meeting just to completing the task. Besides the facilitator there were seven participants and the secretary filled in the log as a continuous diary on the work and progress, while only two others wrote something, although not entirely as planned: they did not pay attention to the fact that the log should reflect the continuous process, or maybe they simply did not notify something worth recording. During the process, it was not clear from the participants how to relate the learning log to a relevant Guiding principle. Most of the individual learning logs Guiding principles were left blank. Some of them used the learning log as sort of a diary at least, although few Critical incidents were reported. So, apparently, for the participants it was not clear the continuous chain between using the General individual log to identify Critical incidents and from there draw conclusions posted in the Individual learning log.

After the meeting in Hamar in November, the work with the logs was more organized, but they were used more like a diary and conclusions were posted without reflecting on how to identify the actual problem and its charac-

ter via Guiding principles. The process of understanding how to identify Critical incidents was also far from clear; they struggled with the concept on finding the critical core of the process. However, several of them started to use the logs as intended via the homepage so one step further in the process, although it was not as expected and desired. The culture is though becoming solution based and the progress of the projects and processes are well described.

At the end of the circle there is a clearer pattern between the logs and the outcome (the learning). Still they did not connect Guiding principles to what they identifyied as learning processes. Since there are only two persons that have shown their logs, it is hard to draw any general conclusions on the consensus of development of the circle members in general from the NVL platform.

It is obvious that an introduction of using the learning log and the critical incident log should be done by presenting the introductory material in the format of the log documentation. By doing so, the logs get a more relevant introduction on how to use them. More data was collected from the Questionnaire and interviews.

Inclusion in working life

Ten participants attended the first meeting in Västerås. At the beginning, the participants filled in their Individual learning log and determined their development tasks and "Proof

of concept". Their task also included to understand the meaning of co-creation and co-production in the learning model of TLCs. A Meeting Learning Evaluation log was completed later via e-mail. The diversity among the participants was mentioned as one of the strengths of the circle, which was expected to be a contributing factor in the future works.

After the second meeting in Elverum only two Learning logs were recorded out of all the participants. None of these two handles more than one event, from where one was properly handled with identification of Critical incident and Individual learning log. Only four participants were present, one of them new. The agenda for the meeting clearly focused on the work with Critical incidents and its connection to Guiding principles and the evaluation logs and "development tasks". Instructions on how to start their own circles or projects were provided. The Meeting Learning Evaluation log showed some diversity between the inspired work in the group and the work "at home". Also, a missing connection between the learning in the circle and the documentation of Individual Learning logs. Therefore some confusion about the learning focus of the circle was mentioned.

The next meeting was on Skype and was attended by five people. It was decided to work in pairs to complete the logs before the next meeting in Hamar. There was another Skype meeting where the progress with the devel-

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opment tasks was discussed before Hamar. After the Hamar meeting, they experienced struggling with the essential part of writing the logs. Since the facilitation process is supported by a strong and "in charge" facilitator you can suspect that the concept of TLC depends on the personal agenda of the facilitator supported by the participants and their experience of learning environments. The conclusion of what to bring up on the meetings from the Individual learning logs is laking. Participants have learned that it is very important to have a good structure when writing the logs, however some did not complete the Individual Learning log. Since the Critical incidents are still there, perhaps this is due to a problem with the web-based platform. Their own circles seem to have started with themselves as facilitators. The documentation is not by any mean different from the quality of the Island circle so far. The recorded development tasks were two.

The focus of the third and fourth online meetings was on how to develop facilitation skills so that less energy is spent on sorting out the difficulties related to using the documentation system (the logs). The fifth online meeting was scheduled for the 3rdof January, besides the original meeting in Uppsala. No documentation is to be found in these matters.

Entrepreneurship and education

The third circle was somewhat special because two of the developers of the concept of a new Nordic learning model were among the participants, and the facilitator was also in the same project group. It was a clear focus on the Learning model and the Guiding principles, and the importance of deciding on a development task is apparent. The development tasks are projects on developing Upper Secondary school learning in Finland, introducing action learning on Greenland, developing companies to become more productive through the creation of a more sustainable and joyful working culture, and developing further a coaching campus for teachers in higher education in team coaching methodology.

Besides one late participator all filled in their Learning logs with Critical incidents and produced an Individual learning log from the first meeting. They held two Skype meetings for preparation for the physical meetings and a Meeting evaluation log was done. After their first meeting (there were two) no documentation on the NVL platform is to be found. They found the logs useful as tools for personal reflection, but not so easy to use. Instead of discarding the logs or using them in its original form they decided to develop a new documentation tool that better served their purposes, an app that could be used on their mobile phones. This is of course a clear example on the entrepreneurial mindset the TLC is about to create.

They used the Skype meetings for reflection on the physical gatherings; how they were conducted, what was achieved and how they could develop the best possible environment to promote transformative learning processes. This is in itself another example on how the reflection part generates alternative activities of reflection and development besides using

the logs explicitly. The perspective for the circle was clearly systemic in its structure to establish new knowledge and experiences in their common studies.

Commonalities and differences across the TLC groups' experience

The comparison between the groups shows the radical differences in their development in relation to the core activity of the TLC; the logs. The first group had a slow start, but increased their ambition. The second group had an ambitious start but later searched for social solutions to the documentation problem i.e. working in pairs to complete the logs. The third group worked in a structured way, but responded to the dissatisfaction with the technical platform by innovating a documentation app for smartphones. The groups were also different in composition, the last group to a large extent being pedagogical professionals, the middle one being consultants, academics and civil servants, and the first one having the greatest ethnical diversity and least experience in using this kind of tools. This shows that background and composition of the groups did matter, but did by no means predict the outcome. However, not only diversity mattered, but so did also dimensions of practice-near learning, user involvement, transformative learning and co-creation of knowledge.

How did diversity matter?

It may be argued that the diversity within two of the groups could have been greater. However, the recruitment of the groups, made by the facilitators, as well as the topics of the groups probably contributed to the differences. The most diverse

The need to handle diversity was perhaps more obvious in the inclusion of newcomers' group, in which it was discovered that there was no common language for everybody, as not everybody spoke English. This created even greater demands on efforts to bring everybody on board in the process:

"I think I have become better at listening to others and I am no longer so focused on reaching my goals. I have become more aware about the importance of everybody's contribution to the process and that the end goal gets better when everybody is involved."

group was the one concerned with inclusion of newcomers and several of the group members were of non-Nordic background. Diversity was generally valued, even as the most important factor for the learning experience:

> *"The most important to my own learning exchange of experience across nations and institutional differences."*

> *"I want to emphasize that it has been very valuable in every sense to meet across contexts, background, languages and Nordic borders."*

How the practice-near user involvement happened

The proximity to practice is a cornerstone of TLCs, and indeed the motivation for the ambitious documentation process. This proximity was also evident in examples of activities triggered by the TLC experience, and how the new gained knowledge was used in practice:

"By establishing circle meetings at my workplace."

"We arranged a conference with 120 participants from 20 countries, which was a great success. I would like to continue doing such a big project again."

"I have a good collaboration with my managers and also use the logs and other valuable ideas I got from the TLC meetings."

"I have brought the very work method with me in relation to e.g. team development."

"By creating a development, programme for managing financial coordination locally and regionally in a region in Sweden."

Several participants also listed the coupling to practice and the logs as the most important aspect for their individual learning:

"Definitely the time to reflect. To sit down and think about why things became the way they did and how my acts influenced the process. Filling out the logs was important for establishing this deep reflection."

"That I had to make my own reflection work both before and after each meeting. Even though it was not so user-friendly."

> *"My most important learning is that a long-term, structured and systematic process of reflection opens new perspectives on one's own access to problem-solving capacity in one's own practice."*
>
> *"I got something I can use in my everyday life and got new perspectives."*

"The most important was the importance of systematic and facilitated reflection for driving change. The learning circle gave me a structure in which I could reflect."

"My most important learning was that, besides inspiration and feedback from others in the group, I got new tools to develop new projects."

How the transformative learning occurred

The critical point of the experience is of course whether or not transformative learning occurred in practice. With the insistence on the tight coupling between learning and acting, and the importance of the time dimensions, especially the questionnaire shed light on what kind of consequences

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the TLCs had in practice. One example of such changes of the form of interaction at the local workplace was the application of the TLCs in specific situations at the home organisation:

"I have used the approach in team dialogues with my employees."

"I would like to say that the reflective dialogues that I with a person in my group meant using my new knowledge. In addition, I gave the learning log to the participants in my innovation project. Especially one of them became very interested and has used it ever since."

Another example of new practices that goes beyond established thinking and ambitions is the initiation of projects, resulting from a reversed thinking about entrepreneurial possibilities:

"We are applying for funding for a project, seeing refugees as 'bridge builders' for newcomers, inspired by the TLC participants from Gotland. That is a direct consequence of the TLC work. The example came from a meeting where we asked ourselves "Can we do it anyhow?" which gave the energy and courage to work with this project."

A number of participant also listed the transformative learning aspects as the most important learning from the project:

"The circle has been a catalyst for the innovation- and development work I am doing."

"The transformative learning process has meant a change of our work identity."

"The uniqueness in the knowledge and learning created both for the individual and for the group – comparing TLCs is like comparing apples and pears."

"I have rediscovered and re-learnt my problem-solving routines."

"The most important factor has been the common knowledge-creation about the specific challenges any specific group member has brought in, and the ongoing reflection about the group's capacity to learn to learn, i.e. a search for transformative potentials."

"The work in the circle has influenced my values and I think that I have another understanding for and curiosity about other people. I am not so fast at labelling them.

The discussions in the group have changed our way of working. Today, we have an entirely new attitude towards our clients."

"We have worked a lot with co-creation at my work. Through the TLC we have experimented with, adjusted and thought about new ways of promoting co-creation – concretely through a multicultural network across our departments and voluntary organisations. We have over 100 participants and it has been a great success. The departments have not collaborated before, but we are using the same openness and ideas of co-creation as in TLC and it has been a good thing for everybody involved."

"My own work process became more focused and distinct in my communication of the solutions I saw in relation to the challenge I presented in the circle."

How co-creation of knowledge was manifested

The participants were asked to provide examples on how the TLC group helped to process, learn and develop the work. Many pointed at the quality of the interaction and co-creation in the group.

"The group as a social and learning community created a trust-based work frame which made it possible to be challenged about own assumptions and behavioural patterns."

"I have been able to create new development arenas to promote collaboration and development of the welfare system both locally and on a national level."

"Feedback on the design of a conference and the budget. Good advice on facilitation."

"Time for reflection and a method for it."

"When you presented a dilemma and the other participants asked profound questions, there was a learning process in terms of the reflections that arose."

"The common reflections were important to realize how differently we can perceive things and unknown competences surfaced among the participants in an entirely new way."

"Very concretely, the reflections from a TLC meeting made me realize that my innovation project was going into a new phase where ownership, roles and tasks were about to change. Without that insight there would easily could have been misunderstandings, ambiguities and barriers for progression."

The output from the project could also take the form of an ongoing co-creation with local actors in the home-organisation, not only applying TLC or specific principles, but also letting them develop and adapt to better serve the local organisation:

"It is a mix of dissemination and involvement of colleagues. I have discussed with my boss about the possibilities to draw on the knowledge from this project and two colleagues have therefore participated in a one-week conference on entrepreneurial mindsets in teaching and a discussion forum organized by the TLC project respectively."

"I have a group of colleagues with whom I have shared my knowledge. This has led to several co-creation initiatives such as multicultural networks and activities for young people wanting to establish themselves in working life."

CONCLUSIONS

As argued in the introduction, the evaluation of a new learning model should solely focus on what makes it different. This is why the assessment in relation to the purpose of TLC has to be more critical than the impression from the participants may seem.

First, the utmost important conclusion to make from the TLC is the documentary system, i.e. the logs and solving problems, based on agreed Guiding principles. They are the key instrument that, to my knowledge, separates TLC from any other learning circle or forum. This is also obvious from the comments, actions, and reactions from the facilitators. The logs are a clear requirement for the transformative learning to occur. For very experienced students (experienced in terms of familiar in the profession of teaching, leading or guiding others) the logs can be transformed and developed for the actual purpose of the circle during the process, but the analysis from the Guiding principles can never be neglected. They have to relate to all stages of the process in the circle.

> ”
> *For very experienced students the logs can be transformed and developed for the actual purpose of the circle during the process.*

Second, there was a clear underestimation of the challenge of introducing participants to the principal framework and technical work of filling out the logs. The TLC experience is a story of both expectations of and resistance to the task of formalizing the learning process. The expectations surely created motivation, in many cases making it possible to overcome the threshold of working with the logs – also for the ones having least experience in technology and analytical work. On the other hand, the documentation system was frequently not used very much or even not at all – even by the ones perhaps having the best background for doing it. For some participants virtually nothing happened except for meeting in the circles and doing the ordinary things, not putting one's own knowledge at stake in real meetings with otherness and uncertainty. Hence, the degree to which the learning was practice-near and constituted true user-involvement varied significantly.

Third, while the differences between the practices in the TLC groups were evident and to some extent discussed, this evaluation is not capable of answering what kind of facilitation or what mode of co-creation worked better than the other in the respective groups. As relevant as that issue might be, it should be noted that the notion of TLCs also assumed different practices to develop in different groups, given their backgrounds, needs and the dynamics that develop in the groups over time. To explore how

these aspects interact with e.g. different facilitation practices and styles would be an interesting question for further exploration.

Fourth, one cannot take the different aspects for granted in the composition of the groups and background of participants. Diversity has many aspects among which the experience of intellectualize through abstract thinking and verbalization is a decisive one for working in with TLC. In this respect, there were significant differences between the groups. However, these differences interestingly did not predict the use of the TLC model and the logs – it simply defined the magnitude of the challenge. Furthermore, these challenges also to some extent correlated with the languages spoken in the groups. It was a harsh awakening to realize that English is not a de-facto lingua franca in all groups.

Fifth, the concept of transformative learning showed to work. TLCs did have consequences that were indeed useful and really shaped the form of practice in many cases. The method, process and outcomes were seen as the most important learnings for the participants. The logs, the dialogue, the facilitation, the diversity and the coupling to practice were the most important learnings in the project. The reflection and transformation based on new understanding and concrete initiatives were characteristic for how the TLCs worked. The learning logs were rewarding for those who invested enough to get over the threshold and used it actively in their reflection process. In general, the TLCs supported entrepreneurial learning, were found useful, and their specific features had a function with consequences in everyday working life.

In the further development of TLCs, it is of great importance to lower these thresholds, or perhaps also to be very clear about what it takes to get something out of the TLCs. Logs must be thoroughly briefed right from the beginning so it does not become too much of an issue. An ambitious introduction of the conceptual structure, more user-friendly interfaces for the logs, an insistence on the preparation and use of documentation of the participants, mandatory diversity in the composition of groups, quality-assured platforms for online meetings, and assessment of facilitation skills are examples of things that would improve the TLCs experience. The TLC is a path worth further exploration because they do not over-simplify learning and therefore have a chance to make a real impact in society.

The pilot project is implemented on three circles with different backgrounds and areas. It is therefore relevant to investigate how the different groups act on their premises. The education professionals obtained a better instrument they immediately could apply, since they were experienced intructors/tutors. The group of "inclusion in working life" was composed by professionals with great experience in leading projects. Problem solving is a natural part of their daily service. The group "inclusion of newcomers" has experience in teaching and learning, but coming from different backgrounds resulted in language issues. The inclusion of immigrants in the Swedish and Danish society is a complex problem. Refugee families and unaccompanied refugee children are a topic that would fit into the new concept of TLC. In this context, futureTLCs projects could focus on mapping the participants' experiences and backgrounds to survey the development of each individual, also to get data on how diversity inside the circles affects the process, progress and learning results.

To develop the concept of TLC and its use, some key features can be identified:

First, the facilitation process can be investigated from the framework presented in this report, and how different approaches affect the work in the circles. Since the participants are supposed to start and implement their own projects, their facilitation skills will be on target. Therefore, it is appropriate to focus on the development and knowledge on facilitation skills in the groups. Second, the different modes of co-creation that occur in the groups should be investigated.

The logs need to be more user-friendly. As mentioned above it would probably be beneficial to present the circle's purpose and planning as a Critical incident and introducing the Guiding principles when describing the process of the goal (-s) for the learning. Explaining the structure of TLCs does not just explain the core content of the learning circle, but also puts a focus on that effective and reflective learning can make a real impact on society and its development. History provides us with great storytellers and scientists, but perhaps TLCs can contribute with a new dimension on how we act in life as facilitators creating and inspiring learning environments.

4

Stories of experience and local impact of the Nordic TLC work

Story of Experience

Dorthea Funder Kaas, Assistant Professor
UCC – Bornholm University College, Denmark

In the TLC island circle, where our common theme has been inclusion and integration of newcomers, the transformative learning process has lead to a change of our (work) identity. It has been about the meetings we have with citizens, especially those who are new to our community, but also other professional stakeholders, such as our colleagues, that we share knowledge with. I've had a two-sided view at my personal learning process in the circle work. As a facilitator, I have gained insight into and worked to support the other participants' learning processes through the elaboration of logs. As a participant, I have kept logs myself and have worked with a local network of stakeholders in connection with newcomers in schools and day care centers on Bornholm. Below, I elaborate on these two roles with an example:

THE FACILITATOR ROLE

At one of our physical meetings, I had prepared a dialogic presentation on "asking good questions". Here we discussed Theory U and how we, by using different types of questions to each other at different times in a process, can dig deeper into the learning and change processes. How questions can be absolutely crucial to the direction a learning process takes. Subsequently, we worked with the group logs. One participant spoke about the challenges of getting a financial decision through local politics, so that she could implement a change in the school's transition classes (modtagerklassser). After talking for a while in the group about the challenge of political and economic decisions that are not always taken quickly enough, another participant said, "Do you think you could do it anyway?". That question turned the conversation upside down and we began considering future scenarios in which the school would create opportunities for change now and here, instead of waiting for economic possibilities and political will.

I found this meeting instructive and valuable to all participants – a critical incident on the way to a determining transformation, where inclusion becomes part of the way we act, professionally and humanly, rather than being dependent on a number of conditions

that must be in place before we can include newcomers. These reflections can be linked to changes related to the 4th guiding principle in the evaluation design: How can the initiatives I plan to engage in fundamentally change how our organisation works?

THE PARTICIPANT ROLE

During the course of the process, I have been coordinator of a local network for stakeholders from schools and day-care institutions on Bornholm, where we work to find opportunities and to qualify the work with a group of newly arrived asylum seekers, especially parents of children in school and in day care. This local network has been my "task" in the TLC project. In our TLC, I have been very inspired by Gotland's holistic and gender-promoting work with families and parents as well as a project about "culture guides" on Gotland. In collaboration with Hans-Jacob as leader and the local network, I have written a project, which we call "Bornholm Cultural Ambassadors", which we are currently seeking funding for. As mentioned above, the project of upgrading local refugees and immigrants to being "bridge builders" at parents' meetings has been developed on the basis of inspira-

tion and material from the Gotland TLC participants. It can therefore be described as a direct outcome of the work of TLC – but not necessarily as transformative learning. How can transformative learning become part of our local outcome on Bornholm? As described in my log of February 9th 2017, the meeting with newly arrived families is being problematized to a relatively high degree among local school and institutional actors. It is a big task to include children and parents in the institutional culture. The project about local culture ambassadors was very well received, and the meetings were characterized by highly critical reflection and attention to context. The many individual experiences have gained value and importance – a process that is not about "owning" the project but about taking ownership. There is therefore a hope that the local project can activate the professionals' desire to think in opportunities and perhaps thus create a basis for that meetings with newcomers can bring about greater value and change in the community. The transformative learning processes are not always short term, but work in the long term and can in part be pursued by attentively facilitating and managing the processes.

Entrepreneurial Mindset
– Thinking about the Transformative Learning Circle process

Sami Lehto, team-coach, Proakatemia,
TAMK – Tampere University of Applied Sciences, Finland

Being part of the Entrepreneurial mindset TLC was one of the highlights of my few years professional career in higher education. There are many reasons, and not all of them are directly related to my development challenge that I formed for working in the circle. In a way, the biggest part of my actual *transformative* learning happened in unexpected way.

One of the most important learning and understanding that developed to me personally during this process was that I'm capable to work with international professional education group, and that my current knowhow can be applied in multicultural environments with other professional fellow colleagues and people who work with education. I see this as critical part of my developing professional identity.

I feel that without our group and TLC as a format, this development would have taken much more time to happen – or it could be possible that I would have never taken the step forward with starting to cooperate with this depth with multicultural groups. After experiencing TLC, I have had the courage to mentor and coach multi-cultural groups in my university of applied sciences, I will take responsibility to create new six-month entrepreneurship side subject for multicultural student group in Tampere University of Applied Sciences, and I actively search new opportunities to collaborate with new partners in different countries.

This is something I feel is the most valuable thing that I got out of the NVL Learning Circles. There is something for me personally, but also to the organisation I work.

For the personal development challenge. I have had many changes to evaluate my work with the company I´ve been working to improve their culture and working conditions. We have not been able to transfer all the things into action we discussed about in Learning Circle, but there has been major developments. Dialogue and feedback are nowadays more integrated to daily routines of the company, and few practical improvements have been made, that employees said will never be achieved when we started working together.

My personal story

– Malene Kongpetsak Pedersen
School Inspector, Atuarfik Samuel Kleinschmidt, (ASK), Nuuk

My personal story as a participant in the NVL project started in March 2016, where I as a newly arrived in Greenland participated in an introductory course to Greenlandic culture. The teacher was Inaluk Brandt and after the meeting, I decided that I would meet Inaluk Brandt again, and that I would work with her in some way to develop the primary school I had just become an inspector of. Therefore, I gave her my email address.

After a while, Inaluk contacted me to invite me to join the NVL project. We agreed to do a pilot project based on the action learning model at ASK, my school. Together we designed a project aimed at creating learning processes among school staff and thus develop the school through organisational learning. Inaluk and I were both very focused on the idea, that for students to learn more and become more successful, the teachers themselves must be interested in learning – and preferably from one another.

Before I met Inaluk, I had an idea of how to lead the development process at the school with organisational learning as the focal point, but I lacked some sparring in terms of e.g. a model or a design for the process. Therefore, Inaluk and the project arrived at the very right time, and precisely the action learning model became a good starting point for the design of the project – we had the framework for the project.

When I attended my first meeting of the network in Hamar, I met the other participants. It was very instructive and inspiring. What I especially learned from listening to others and from receiving good questions from the others was to see my project from the outside, and I was challenged to see it from other perspectives. In particular, it made an impression to meet other people, who were actually complete strangers, and that I, after a few minutes, was telling open-heartedly about my biggest challenges as a leader and who were sincerely preoccupied by creating learning dialogues that could really move something forward.

I returned to Nuuk with a completely new perspective on our pilot project – and in fact, it was when I listened to the others' dilemmas and challenges, that I was most inspired to see my own situation in a new perspective. Daring to change my own ideas for another mind set also often led to suddenly being able to see new solutions. Being part of the network with subsequent Skype meetings meant that I got the courage to maintain the idea of organisational learning as being the most important part of the development of the school. This actually became the start of a major cultural change in relation to cooperation and dialogue among the school staff and their view on learning.

The pilot project resulted in an exciting progress that led to much more organisational learning than I had hoped for – and we only just started...

Transformative processes with newcomers

Latifa Rachidy,
Integration Assistant, Region Gotland, Sweden

From each experience we learn something new. By participating in the transformative learning circle about "Integration" we have learned at the Integration Unit, Region Gotland, how we want to meet the newcomers in our activities. We have gone from only making demands on them to instead making demands on ourselves as well. We have learned that we must first open ourselves to them and be responsive so that we can then support the individuals to reach independence. We have found that integrating them into our Swedish society requires that we first integrate into their society.

Through our learnings we have created a new way of working at the Integration Unit. In the past, we did not spend time creating security and trust between staff and individuals. We are doing this now, and the results have become so much better. Now we have very satisfied participants who feel a great deal of trust for the staff. When confidence is established, it creates the opportunity for the staff to make demands on the individual, and a personal development of the individual can then take place.

Below, the process is described in some brief steps.

STEP 1:

Create security and trust
By accepting and respecting others, one builds a bridge called security and trust with the newcomers. We show that we accept and respect our newcomers by meeting the individuals with an open heart, sitting down with them, drinking coffee, letting them talk, listening to their stories, involving them and letting them know they are an important part of society.

STEP 2:

Receiving information
Once we have established trust and security, the individual is receptive to information. At the beginning we provide oral information and we do the most of the work that needs to be done, for example, various applications for compensation, etc.

How long time this process takes is of course different depending on the individual. Therefore, it is important to make an individual adjustment based on needs. If you do not know the individual, you can not make these adjustments, which means that it is time-efficient to spend more time at the beginning on getting to know the individual. Then you can shorten the process for some and extend it for others more needy, not a big deal really. We have the framework and methods, but are flexible within these.

STEP 3:

Routines

In the next step, we support the individuals to do everyday routines themselves, such as paying bills. It is very important that our newcomers do not live in a constant dependence on others. Being able to control their own lives is a human right that we must help to create conditions for. Knowing how to do, and why, is important for our newly arrived adults, especially from a parent perspective.

STEP 4:

Demands

Now we start a training period where we make demands on the individual. Now we clearly show that we believe that the individuals have the capacity to solve tasks and problems themselves. By making demands, we also show that we have high expectations, which often leads to a faster development in the individual.

STEP 5:

Independence

Now the individual is completely independent and is able to manage on her or his own. The goal of the Integration Unit's work has been achieved.

Building an infrastructure for stimulating entrepreneurial mindset, at IBA Erhvervsakademi Kolding

Hans Mikkelsen, Development manager at
International Business Academy, IBA Kolding

The Transformative Learning Circle "Entrepreneurship and education" had, as an overall learning objective, focus on how entrepreneurial mindset could be integrated as part of teachers and consultants work – and how entrepreneurial mindset could be integrated as an embedded cultural element in the study environment.

My local project, the individual learning case I brought into the TLC, was how to design a kind of ecosystem supporting and stimulating entrepreneurial mindset amongst students.

From my very first presentation at the first circle meetings spring 2016, to one of the last activities in the project, a discussion forum held in June 2017, I gained new insights, knowledge and inspiration from the co-creation processes we went through in the TLC.

Due to the meta-reflection processes, which occurred at the circle meetings, I even had to change my own approach how to design and implement the solutions I developed in my local project.

Basically co-creations processes were depending on interpersonal interaction between the circle members in a trust building atmosphere, which helped and stimulated the loops of reflections I experienced.

At the first meeting, I presented my local project and the feedback taught me to base my reflections on logs – mainly critical incidents logs.

At the next meeting, I did a presentation on how I had analyzed the critical incidents logs and found some patterns that I would like to discuss with the circle members. The following discussion and reflection made me aware that I needed to change perspective on how to handle the tasks in my local project. To much focus on internal issues and to little focus on external issues – or put in another way, I needed to change focus from inside-out to outside-in. Some members in the TLC came from Tampere University of Applied Sciences and their concept had inspired me.

During psychical and virtual meeting in the TLC my ideas was further developed, and I began to wrap it up.

This new insight made me look for concepts supporting and stimulating entrepreneurial mindset. Concepts that had proofed their value. The learning philosophy from Proakatemia, in Tampere University of Ap-

plied Sciences, how to learn through entrepreneurial action, pushed me in direction of other European concepts and I found complementary ideas at EU Science Hub.

A year-long trip based on own reflections and intense discussions and challenging questions from the circle members, resulted in a change in my own perspective on things, and brought me to a solution, which will be implemented in the coming years.

With the experiences, I have made from the TLC work, I will continue with adopting this way of transformative learning into other IBA educational elements.

Short about the Norwegian circle

Marianne Sempler, AiR – National Centre for occupational rehabilitation (NK-ARR), Norge

AiR – National Centre for occupational rehabilitation (NK-ARR), Norway, has been representing Norway in the Nordic network and in the Nordic learning circle (one person as participant and one as facilitator). NK-ARR use open arenas and learning networks as driving forces for workplace innovation. The largest event is the annual 2-days "Work and Health Open Arena". The purpose with the co-creation arena is to support local/ regional development work by facilitating co-creation between researchers/academics, service providers, service users and civil servants. A challenge for NK-ARR has been to support the development groups in their innovative work AFTER the co-creation in Open arena AND prepare them for the co-creation sessions BEFORE the Open arena. NK-ARR decided to try out a Norwegian transformative learning circle parallel with the Nordic learning circle "Inclusion in working life".

NK-ARR invited the facilitators and owners of the 10 development groups from Open arena 2016 to participate in the Norwegian learning circle with their development tasks. Facilitators from six of the groups started with a meeting in May 2016, and facilitators from two new groups joined later. The facilitators have had the possibility to meet (physical- and net meetings) in the Norwegian transformative learning circle altogether six times during 2016 and 2017. The focus has been to support entrepreneurial learning

for the participating facilitators and to support them in their local/ regional/ national development work. Two of the participants and the facilitator were also participants in the Nordic circle.

STORY A FROM WOMAN, 50, PARTICIPANT IN BOTH NORDIC AND NORWEGIAN CIRCLE

My connection to the Nordic circle is two-fold. I participated both in the Nordic circle as representative from the Norwegian circle and facilitated a locally founded projects in the Norwegian circle. This story is about how both the Nordic and the national circle work has provided structure and reflection space leading to change, transformative behavior and innovation.

Reflection Space:

Both the Nordic and the National circle has provided a reflection space among peers. In evaluation rounds I noticed that people highlight the importance of such space when engaged in developmental work. This is also the case for me. In a hectic working environment, I find it difficult to schedule time for reflection and if I do, it is hard to stick with it. In addition to the meetings, the learning log also provided a reflection space, but again it was difficult to take the time to sit down and do it.

**SHORT ABOUT
THE PARTICIPANTS
IN THE NORWEGIAN CIRCLE:**

12 facilitators/ co-facilitators have participated in the Norwegian learning circle. 8 women and 4 men, between 30 and 60 years old. 3 work at university/ competence-centre with formal education/ research, 3 are in public authority administration, 1 is private consultant, 4 work in public workplace (rehabilitation institutions or Hospital) 1 is a representative for service users. The participants cover big parts of Norway – from Oslo and up to the very northern Norway.

The Facilitator has been the same person as in the Nordic circle, assisted by a colleague who has also been participant in both the Nordic and the Norwegian learning circles.

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A local project has proved to be both transformative and innovative.

Entrepreneurial support:

A second experience from work in the circles was that of support. In the Nordic circle I met with peers, engaged in different aspects of transformative learning, co-creation and facilitation. These are all knowledge areas still very much in the making and meeting peers outside the organisation is rewarding. Reflections on the Nordic model delivered ideas and perspectives I brought back to the national group. In the national circle, I experienced the same kind of enthusiasm about getting support in the entrepreneurial task. Most of the people attending the circle have few or no one else to include in the process. Entrepreneurial work is very much a task, which involves understanding, sensing, providing energy to and sometimes provoking resistance from the organisation around me. To navigate through these obstacles and possible fall pits can be a lonely task and the circle provided a place where I could share or listen to successes or failures, provide or get advice or other perspectives to the situation. It became a community creating a safe space to share experiences. In addition, it provided a space where the group could access knowledge about the entrepreneurial process.

Transformative learning leading to transformative behavior:

A local project has proved to be both transformative and innovative. Transformative, much due to participation in the learning circle. Innovative much because of the design process used to develop it, but overcoming implementation issues in the learning circle. Through the year, they have developed a tool, engaging employer in a Return-to-work program. The reflection space has provided specific ideas and important input to the process of implementation, among other things how best to involve CEO, awareness of shifting roles in the project and specifics concerning the tool. Transformative because the reflections has led to a fundamental change on how the involved persons from the clinic perceive the employers place in the rehabilitation process.

Story B started in the fall of 2016 at a professional seminar. J. attended it, was introduced to Open arena and the national learning circle. Since November, she has attended 4 net meetings. At her workplace they had just started talking about developing a new return to work service for patients with brain injury.

Boosting entrepreneurial activity

In the learning circle she was introduced to other professionals with entrepreneurial tasks. The decision to join the circle seemed to pave the way for an emerging project. This included work around leadership engagement, project participation, clarifying objectives and seeking information. The learning circle provided input, support and promoted progress in between meetings. The learning circle was used to plan for a co-creational event early 2017. Reflections in the group challenged the traditional way of thinking about ownership to the challenge, composition of a co-creational group and methods used. Participation helped structure and shape the project and at the same time gave her support to take on the task.

Reflecting, challenge and plan for diversity

A diverse group were to be gathered at Open arena. A user participant, a physiotherapist, a civil servant from health, leader of occupational rehabilitation, a researcher in RTW and a clinician from hospital for brain injury were to be handled, guided and challenged at the arena. The learning circle actively supported the process of planning it, giving input on tools and methods and reflection space as basis for better decisions. At the arena, this planning process resulted in a better understanding of the task, ideas for further steps and a broad spectre of a very relevant network. The work continues at the clinic.

5

Implications and recommendations for further Nordic work

– Pirjo Lahdenperä/Maria Marquard –
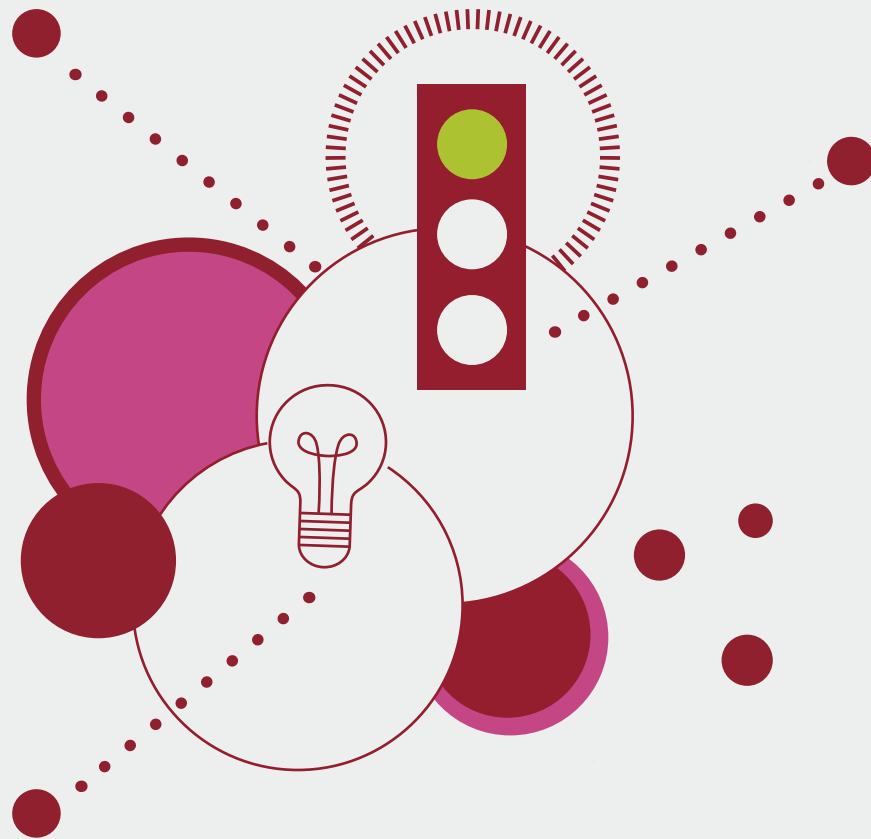
This report outlines the final results from the implementation of the NVL network on "Entrepreneurial learning and innovation"

The evaluation of the pilot project on Transformative learning circles highlights several possible outcomes related to promoting entrepreneurial and innovative competences which lead to "transformative" changes. The evaluators point out important areas for further exploration of the TLCs.

TLCs were inspired by a Nordic tradition of co-created learning in study and research circles with a strong emphasis on involvement and responsibility of participants. The Nordic Adult Learning Network is an organised programme on cross national and cross sectoral, co-created learning and cooperation. The network also encourages participant involvement and engagement.

The results of the pilot project indicate that working with participatory, co-creating, collaborative learning and development in circles or networks at a Nordic level might lead to transformative changes in work life and in personal approaches to meet challenges, an ability that might also be useful in an increasing complex and a diverse civic society.

The following focus areas are recommended for further Nordic work:

- For future Nordic projects, the language issue should be discussed in more detail. In language teaching contexts, it has come to be possible to use translanguaging, i.e. it is an advantage that several languages, like different Nordic languages, are used in the learning context, not just English.

- Working methods with log and critical incident occurred as mentioned with verbal and linguistic documentations In view of the continued work with the transformative circles, it would be of great interest to test differernt types of documentations such as video recording, specially of the improvement of the practices. This would allow to broaden the studies by investigating the innovation, creativity and entreprenurial learning as well as the current changes of the practices.

- Method with logs and critical incidents that requires good language skills and habits to reflect, document and draw conclusions seem to be very complicated. The evaluation shows that not all the participants got used to these methods

and some needed longer than others to understand the meaning of writing logs and documenting critical incidents. Obviously, the participants who had previously used these complicated learning methods in their education or in their work had an advantage. In addition, the work was mostly done in English, which of course gave advantage to those who had better English language skills. In view of this, one can conclude that the use of these complicated working methods and using English as dominant language created unequal learning opportunities for participants.

- It should be noted that these evaluation report did not study the facilitators, specially on how they used the differences in the groups for transformative learning. It is assumed that TLCs benefit transformative learning when the participants represent different cultures, knowledge contexts, education backgrounds, proffessional experiences, different organisations, etc. In this context, it would be relevant to further explore how these aspects interact with different facilitation practices and competences.

- Of course, the results of various types of evaluations show that this project has involved a large number of participants in different Nordic countries. All these participants express that they have learned a lot in general and that they have learned a new way of working in particular, ie. transformative learning circles that they have and may continue using in their work.

- In the Nordic context, there is great potential to use and develop work on Transformative Learning Circles for innovation and to find new ways to work broadly with the problems and challenges facing society in change. This project with TLCs has proved to be able to offer new ways of learning of adults and to be engaged in co-production of knowledge development that improves the practice and different activities in society. In view of the development areas identified in the evaluation, it would be worth for the Nordic Council of Ministers to see the benefits of this project and support its further development.

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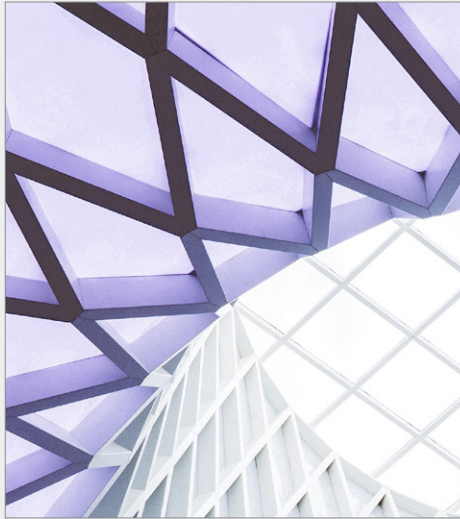
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