

# A sustainable model for change



Nordic Network for  
Adult Learning

## Overview

This model for change is designed to address societal challenges and co-create meaningful solutions towards sustainable change. It is a project methodology that aims to:

- Build networks across sectors and countries around a common Nordic agenda.
- Support joint Nordic collaborations among citizens, organisations and policy makers.
- Involve relevant stakeholders in the whole process of creating and testing solutions.

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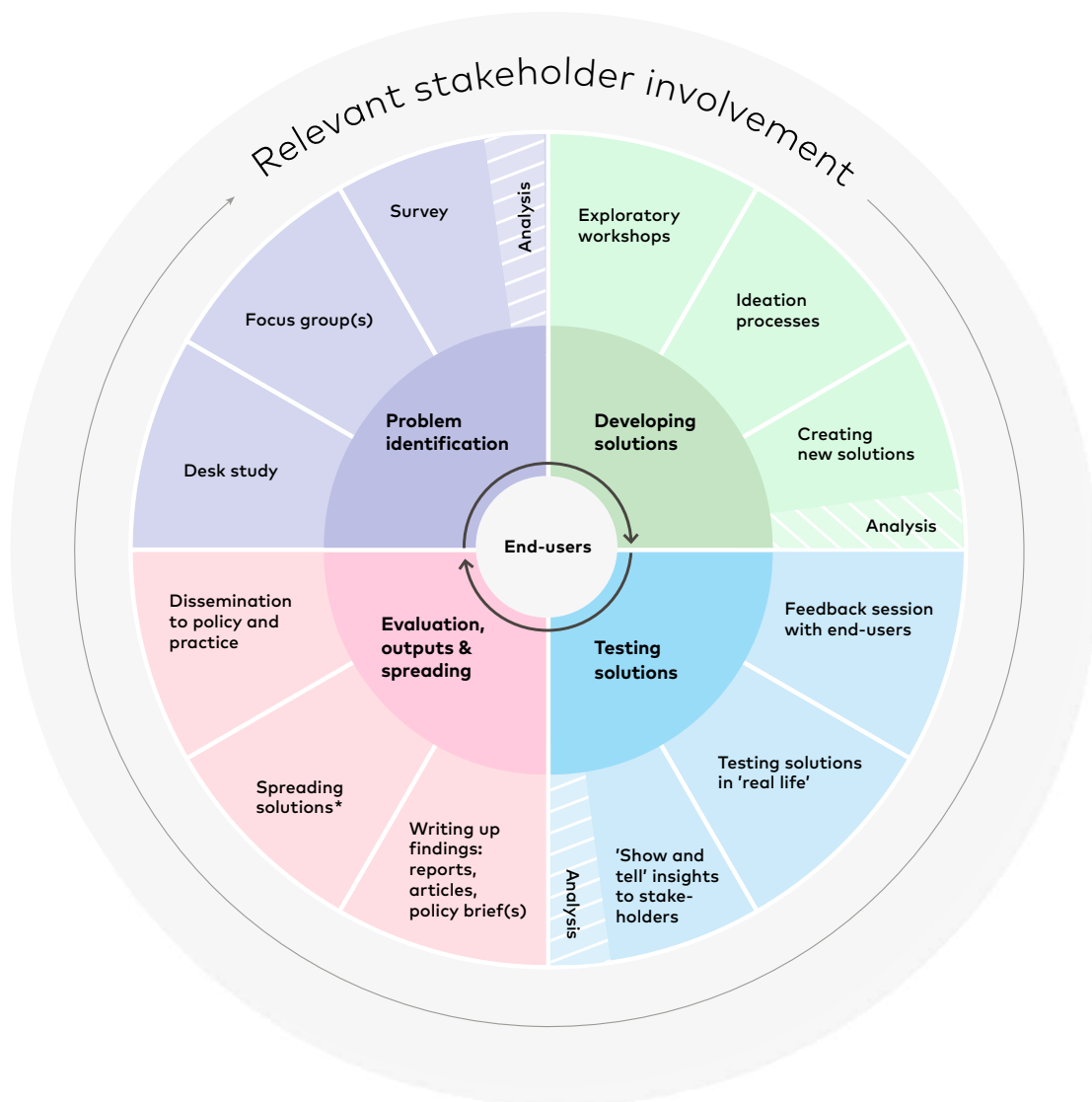
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## At the heart of the model for change:

When working with this methodology, you commit to develop solutions that are informed by the people who use them in their daily (work)life, such as citizens, professionals, experts and policymakers.

This makes the changes more meaningful and sustainable.

The project methodology has four phases (see below) and holds a focus on a selected theme of relevance across the Nordic countries:



Developed with inspiration from Amiel & Reeves, 2008

**Core:** specific target group at the center

**Inner circle:** focus in project phase

**Middle circle:** examples of activities

**Outer circle:** stakeholder involvement – e.g., network group, policy makers, professionals

## What is it?

A sustainable model for change is a systematic project methodology that fosters

- 1) network building across organizations, sectors and country borders,
- 2) participation of relevant stakeholders throughout the entire process and
- 3) exploratory and collaborative *future dreaming* and solution creation relating to a common Nordic agenda.

This can support joint Nordic collaborations, understandings and approaches to cross-Nordic challenges – not only on policy-level but on practice-level as well.

In this project methodology, relevant stakeholders are, for example, citizens, experts, professionals and managers as well as policymakers. The solutions developed, whether they be 'toolkits' or input to policy recommendations, are therefore informed by the people who use them in their daily (work)life. This enhances the development of more meaningful and sustainable changes.

## What are the structure and roles?

A model for sustainable change is organised as a project flow in four phases (see model), and networks are formed around a specific theme that **cuts across the Nordic countries**, for example, issues of immigration or digital inclusion.

The project methodology is anchored around a collaboration between a professional organisation (project leaders) and researchers throughout the entire process in order to facilitate systematic knowledge production and theory building with respect to creating lasting and research-based change.

Thus, a network group is formed comprising a project lead organisation and a collaborating researcher and relevant stakeholders:

- Role of 'project lead': in charge of establishing and identifying a group of relevant stakeholders to form a network, keep

momentum, coordinate events and tasks, including evaluating and spreading the news of the networks' progress and final solutions.

- Role of researcher: in charge of systematic data and knowledge production, analysis, and dissemination, in, for example, scientific journals, trade magazines, news and other media.
- Role of stakeholders: continuous contributions with 'real life' perspectives on the selected theme seen from their particular view, whether they be experts, professionals, citizens, politicians etc.

## How to do it?

The work in this methodology is organised in four phases. These are closely interrelated phases, but each with their own focus and set of activities to be processed and analysed continuously in order to move forward.

The four phases in the model follow each other like pearls on a string and therefore form a linear logic: problem identification, developing solutions, testing and evaluation. **However**, alongside this progression there is also a circular logic present because you most likely will have to return to the different phases throughout the project process as you get more information, new insights or experiences that might change the way you were originally thinking about a problem or an idea for a solution to the problem.

Often returning to phases and adjusting or nuancing what we thought we knew happens after a dialogue or an intervention with relevant stakeholders where they show or tell us that our understanding and solutions might not fit 'the real world'. When working this way, the feedback is considered gold because if we are willing to reflect, listen and potentially alter our ideas to fit the real world, there is greater chance that we will make more meaningful and sustainable solutions for practitioners and recommendations to policymakers.

## The Problem identification phase

Your **outset** is trying to understand *what are the problems?* You therefore include as many relevant perspectives as possible, for example, the voices of practitioners, managers, politicians, citizens, etc., and you dive into existing knowledge of the problem you are working with (for example, research reports, national evaluations, theories, etc.)

Examples of activities: desk study, surveys, individual interviews or focus groups, network meetings.

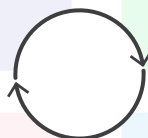
Your **output** is a problem identification which serves as a stepping-stone for the next phase: developing solutions (Lab-phase).

## The Lab-phase (developing solutions)

Your **outset** is *how can we together solve common problems?* Building on the insights from the prior phase, you involve relevant stakeholders (same as the phase before or maybe new ones) and invite them to ideate around solutions for the barriers, challenges and possibilities that make up the problem identification.

Examples of activities: design-thinking exercises, such as building personas and scenarios, mapping user-journeys, brainstorming, prototyping, etc.

Your **output** is solutions addressing the identified problem(s) made ready for testing with a relevant user-group (for example, citizens or politicians).



## The Evaluation-phase

Your **outset** is looking at *what is learned from the intervention?* You are interested in evaluating and reflecting over the output from the intervention phase, but you also take an overall look at the learnings from the following two phases. With your network group, consider whether this project phase prompts you to go back and nuance your problem identification or revisit the Lab-phase in order to re-design your solution based on the feedback from the testing phase.

Examples of activities: make decision to re-design or go back to other phases, summarise, write an analysis or policy recommendations, describe the strengths and weaknesses, consider how to spread and scale up or down your solution, knowledge dissemination (media, articles, reports at the workplace, etc.).

Your **output** is an evaluation of the solutions' strengths and weaknesses and a plan for spreading the solutions and the news of them.

## The Testing-phase (intervention)

Your **outset** is investigating *how does our solutions meet practice?* By activating your network of relevant stakeholders (for example, the participants in the Lab-phase), you arrange to have the solutions developed in the Lab-phase tested in everyday life (for example, by citizens) or in work situations or through formal events (see examples of activities). The aim is to explore the feasibility of the solutions.

Examples of interventions/testing: workshops and hearings integrated in everyday work.

Your **output** is a form of feasibility statement – are the solutions relevant or in need of a re-design?

Do you want to use the model in your next project to co-create meaningful and sustainable solutions? Begin by identifying relevant stakeholders as a network group and planning activities in the different phases. Use the model below to structure your journey!



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