

Developing a democratic organisation

Target group

The participants' own organisation

Purpose

1. identify democratic shortcomings inside the organisation
2. outline a plan of action for dealing with them

A *Dialogue conference* (see Method Bank) consists of three rounds of discussion between 5–6 people at each of an appropriate number of tables. Each table has a host. After each round, everyone except the hosts moves to a new table. The table host:

- ensures that a discussion gets going and helps participants with the instructions
- appoints a time-keeper, who announces when 5 minutes are left and when the time is up
- summarises results of the previous round at the beginning of rounds 2 and 3

First round (base groups):

Organization demometer

- The participants complete the *Organization Demometer* and sum the points. **10 min**
- Combine each table's results on the form *Demometer results*. What can be changed? Which phase of the process do you want to work on? **15 min**
- The participants go through the *Democratic check-list* together.
 1. Are there formal institutions in the organisation that rule out one or more of the criteria for democracy?
 2. Consider in particular the third question: does the organization have clear criteria for membership?
 - Does the question make sense for your organization?
 - If so, what are the criteria and are they sufficiently clear? **20 min**

Second round (cross-section):

Inventory of resources and obstacles

30 min

- The table host summarises the results of the Democracy barometer and presents the phase of the process the base group has chosen to work on.
- SWOT analysis (see Method Bank).
 1. Here, leaders and those who are active in the organisation count as the inner circle. Other members and outsiders count as the external world.
 2. At least 3 factors in each rectangle.

Inner strengths	Inner weaknesses
External opportunities	External threats

Third round (base groups):

Outline of a plan of action

30 min

- The table host presents the cross-section's inventory of factors that could aid or obstruct the desired change. Participants are given an opportunity of making additions. Brief discussion: How can we take advantage of the positive factors? How can we deal with the negative factors?
- The participants formulate the desired change as a specific goal and draw up a plan of action in three steps:

Goal:
Step 1:
Step 2:
Step 3:

Joint presentation and discussion

- All the base groups' SWOT analyses are posted around the walls of the room and next to them their plans of action
- All the participants walk round the room and take in the analyses and plans
- Each participant independently attaches 'Markers' (see Method Bank) to the items she finds particularly interesting
- Questions and discussion

Line (see Method Bank)

- Has the conference been stimulating?
- Have you got some new ideas?

