

Ocean Rise

How to design a scenario workshop on local management of ocean rises and flooding for local actors?

Section E: Design Programme of a Scenario Workshop No. 18: Workshop Methods

Workshops are a method of involving people who are directly affected by a technology or a technological problem. Such persons may be members of the public, users or people who assess technology. The Danish Board of Technology employs 4 kinds of workshop methods: Future workshops, Perspective workshops, Scenario workshops and Future Search conferences.

The following method presentation begins with a general description of the features of workshop methods. Following this, each workshop method is presented individually together with the special features of each method, including their particular aims, suitability and specific processes.

The purpose of the workshop method

The general aim of the workshop method is to prepare an action proposal. As previously mentioned, the aim is to enter into a dialogue with those directly affected by the technology or the technological problem. It is these people who are to play a part in the technological assessment and the preparation of action proposals, and, with the help of these players, the workshop method seeks to carry out a closer study of reality and expose barriers.

Who participates in the various roles

Project management

The Danish Board of Technology secretariat appoints a project management team consisting of a project manager – with overall responsibility – and a project assistant. The project management team is charged with planning and conducting the workshop. In addition, a secretary is assigned to the project together with an information project manager who handles press relations.

The planning group

An external planning group is always assigned to help with arranging the workshop process. The planning group comprises a number of people with specialist knowledge of the workshop topic, i.e. research workers, interested parties or people who work in the area on a daily basis. It is the task of the planning group to qualify the technical content during the workshop planning phase.

Process consultant

A process consultant is present at the actual workshop to act as a kind of workshop leader. The process consultant is responsible for guiding the participants through the different workshop phases, introducing the rules, organising group work and ensuring that participants observe deadlines and prepare reports. The process consultant does not consider the technical content of discussions, but collates results along the way. The process consultant also acts as moderator in plenum sessions and as whip during group work.

Participants

Between 15 and 50 people participate in a workshop. Participants are carefully selected depending on the nature of the workshop topic and the questions that require answering. Workshop participants will primarily consist of members of the public, technology users, workers or managers, but experts, interested parties and politicians typically participate in workshops as well. Participants are personally invited to participate through networks.

General workshop process

A workshop comprises several phases. The number of phases and the content of each individual phase varies from workshop to workshop, but generally workshops start with a critical analysis phase based on people's own experiences of the subject. Following this phase, participants are asked to be visionary in seeking possible solutions to the problems. The final phase involves the preparation of an action proposal.

All workshop models alternate between plenum sessions and group work consisting of groups of 4 to 8 people. Following an introductory plenum session, people work in groups on the first phase. Each phase ends with a plenum session at which the latest group results are presented for the other groups. Then the process consultant presents the work of the next phase. It is also possible to include a work form whereby people can vote on what to continue working on.

Direct results

The results of the workshop lead to a number of more or less concrete action proposals. It is the aim of some workshop models to equip participants to carry out the action proposals themselves but this is not a feature of all workshop models.

Indirect results

A workshop creates debate and dialogue, and this dialogue will often continue beyond the framework of the Board. New ties are forged and this can lead to further action on the part of participants through their respective networks.

Presentation of results

Workshop results are always published in a Danish Board of Technology report in which additional aspects of the project can also be included.

The different kinds of workshops

Below is a presentation of the different workshop models used by the Danish Board of Technology, focusing on their individual characteristics.

The first presentation features the future workshop which is the "original" workshop model. This is followed by the scenario workshop, the perspective workshop and finally the Future Search conference.

The Future Workshop

The future workshop is the classic workshop model, and as such, the prototype for the other workshop models.

Purpose of the method

The purpose of the future workshop method is to formulate concrete solutions and action proposals based on the participants' own experiences so that they can put these into practice. These proposals will usually be in relation to a local issue or challenge or in connection with the planning of local action concerning a particular development.

Participants

A future workshop works best with 15-25 participants who are selected from among those directly affected by the problem and who are in a position to remedy it. The future workshop is a local initiative, arranged at local level with local participation.

Procedure description

The future workshop incorporates a 3-phase work process beginning with a critical analysis of the current situation (the critical analysis phase). This analysis is then used to focus on future visions (the visionary phase) which are subjected to a reality check and then finally transformed into action proposals (the implementation phase). A future workshop can last a few hours or take place over several days. The most common model, however, is the 1-day workshop, where the morning is devoted to the critical analysis phase, the first part of the afternoon to the visionary phase and the last part of the afternoon to the implementation phase.

Prior to the actual work of the future workshop, an oral presentation can be held outlining the workshop's problems for participants. After this, the workshop follows the 3 phases:

- **Critical analysis**
Focus is given to critical analysis of the current technological situation. This criticism is written down on paper. The most important points are selected and given themes.
- **Visionary phase**
The critical analysis in phase 1 forms the basis of a brainstorming session. Suggestions and ideas are noted down on large poster boards as draft action proposals, and these are given themes.
- **Implementation phase**
This phase focuses on a critical evaluation of the draft action proposals. The possibility for action is assessed and the action proposals are developed further, with emphasis on more concrete steps towards action or the implementation of a project.

Suitability and results

The future workshop is particularly well suited to assessing technological issues at local level. These may take the form of local implementation of a technology, assessment of the local applicability of a given technology, etc.

The results from a future workshop, which are written down and may be included in a report, must first and foremost result in action and/or the creation of new interest groups. The aim is to work towards action proposals that participants can implement themselves.

Price

DKK 50,000

The price is only a guideline and does not include the salaries of the project management team.

Examples of the method within the framework of the Danish Board of Technology

Technological solutions for small communities (2002)

The Scenario Workshop

The scenario workshop developed by the Danish Board of Technology is a further development of the future workshop, and as such, it follows the same 3 basic phases; the critical analysis phase, the visionary phase and the implementation phase. The scenario workshop, however, is based on scenarios of the future technological development in the area. These scenarios are formulated in advance. Participants' own experiences and criticism of these scenarios form the basis for future visions and action plans.

The purpose of the method

In line with the future workshop, the aim of the scenario workshop is to create a basis for local action. In addition, the workshop is used to gather knowledge about barriers and participants' experiences and visions of the topic as well as their attitudes towards the defined scenarios and the basis for these.

Participants

Participants consist of 25-30 people with different roles in the local community, for example:

- Politicians, civil servants
- Technical experts
- Investors, businessmen
- Citizens and local associations

Procedure description

The scenario workshop is a particular kind of meeting that follows certain rules. During the course of the workshop there will be time for brainstorming, debate, presentation and voting. The work alternates between plenum sessions and group work. The scenario workshop form and rules are there to ensure that everyone is heard, that all ideas are included in the debate and that participants work towards formulating an action plan.

Typically, the workshop lasts 2 days and comprises 3 phases:

- **Critical analysis phase**
The task of the critical analysis phase is to criticise the scenarios – to provide both positive and negative criticism based on the views, knowledge and experiences of the participants. The scenarios represent different possible scenarios of the future. They are not predictions and the task does not involve choosing a preferred scenario or assessing which is the most probable. The scenarios are there to inspire criticism which can lead to new visions and action proposals.
- **Visionary phase**
Using the knowledge gained from the critical analysis phase, the visionary phase focuses on developing personal visions for future development. Participants are allowed to select

which elements and parts of the scenarios they want to include in their own future vision and combine these with other elements. The work takes place in theme groups so people can focus on their theme and formulate a number of visions.

- **Implementation phase**

When transforming visions into reality, a number of barriers become apparent which are important to identify. These barriers may be economic, cultural, social, organisational, political or technical. The theme groups' suggestions for implementing their visions are discussed in plenum in an effort to clarify and prioritise the implementation phase.

Following this, action proposals are prepared for the final action plan. The final action plan describes the prioritised suggestions and focuses on those who are charged with their implementation.

The scenario workshop can be held as a stand-alone event, but the Danish Board of Technology recommends conducting several scenario workshops in the same project process.

This can either take the form of independent workshops about the same topic but featuring different scenarios. This approach is highly suited to dealing with very local problems, which abound – e.g. the project “New Climate – New Life” (2004).

It can also take the form of several workshops in which the scenarios are gradually developed based on the work of the participants and where the same participants take part in several workshops – e.g. the project “City Ecology” (1993).

Suitability and results

The scope of the topic must not be too narrow and should focus on the assessment of and choice between different types of technology. It is also important that the topic affords participants the possibility for action, i.e. that they can bring their influence to bear and that all the decisions have not already been taken. It must be a topic of social relevance and where there is a lack of consensus about the need for local action. The exchange of technical insight and user experience must lead to the creation of new knowledge.

Price

DKK 400,000 (approx. € 55.000)

This price is only a guideline and does not include the salaries of the Danish Board of Technology project management team.

Examples of the method within the framework of the Danish Board of Technology

New Climate - New Life? (2004)

Education of the Future (2001)

The Library of the Future (1994)

City Ecology (1993)

International - Fleximodo

The development of the Danish Board of Technology's scenario workshop method has resulted in international interest and demand. The Board has participated in a European consortium called Fleximodo, which has focused on making the method more flexible and user-friendly. Find out more about Fleximodo here ([link to report](#)).

The Perspective Workshop

The perspective workshop has been developed by the Danish Board of Technology. The method focuses on strengths, weaknesses, possibilities and threats of a given technology or technological development. The perspective workshop is also a suitable tool for testing myths. Using the perspectives that emphasise both positive and negative aspects of a technology or technological development, technological myths are brought into focus and are discussed at the perspective workshop.

The perspective workshop is a kind of meeting where participants working in groups assess precise tasks and where group results are presented on wall newspapers and orally in plenum. The workshop works to a tight, 1½-day schedule.

The idea behind the workshop is that it employs a set programme and set tasks. The end result of the workshop, however, is completely open. It is the different attitudes and experiences of the participants that determine the content of the discussions and the perspectives which are finally presented. Through their contributions, openness to one another's ideas and active participation, the participants must ensure the workshop process ends with a concrete result.

Purpose of the method

In other workshop models used by the Danish Board of Technology the aim is to work towards an action proposal which can be implemented by participants themselves – either jointly or through their respective organisations. In the scenario workshop, for example, suggestions focus on local action. Naturally, when the method focus is so narrow, it sets boundaries for relevant topics and the types of visions and action proposals that can be worked on. The perspective workshop crosses this local boundary. Participants' perspectives must be oriented towards all levels. The purpose is for participants to consider attitudes and values, policies and legislation in Parliament, global questions – or actions that participants can implement themselves. The mandate can also include testing myths surrounding the particular technology in focus.

Participants

The perspective workshop comprises 36-48 participants, divided into 6 groups. Before the workshop begins, participants receive a programme, a participant's folder (consisting of 12 articles – the perspectives) and home assignments. Participants are carefully selected according to the specific workshop topic and the questions to be answered. Participants receive personal invitations or are invited to participate through networks. Participants primarily consist of members of the public, users, workers or managers, but may also include experts, interested parties and politicians.

Procedure description

A perspective workshop normally lasts 1½ days but can also be held in the course of a single day.

The workload is spread across 4 rounds:

- Present situation
Based on their own experiences, participants describe the current situation and problems posed by the topic. This round is based on a home assignment which they have received

in advance. The description of the present situation may contain both positive and negative aspects.

- **Consequences**
The following rounds focus on the possible positive and negative consequences of the current picture painted in the first round. This consequence analysis is carried out on the basis of the 12 articles which the participants received before the start of the workshop. The articles contain both positive and negative perspectives and in this phase participants are given the opportunity of assessing the perspectives. In this way, myths can be dispelled and the perspectives brought together to create a common point of departure for the further work of the workshop.
- **The Future scenario**
The third round challenges the imagination of the participants as it requires them to paint possible future scenarios. Participants produce positive and negative future scenarios which constitute the basis for round four. The future scenarios are then presented for the other participants in the form of wall newspapers. Future scenarios are then divided into themes and the groups are reformed according to interest areas. Thus, in the final round, participants work on the theme they find most interesting.
- **Perspectives**
In the fourth and final round, participants work on their own perspectives for moving from the current situation to the desired future one. Participants discuss the perspectives for future action necessary to achieve the desired development, and focus is also given to whether participants can make a concrete contribution to the desired development.

From the outset, participants are divided into groups of 6-8 people who work together throughout all 4 phases. At the end of each phase, group results are presented to the other groups.

Suitability and results

As with other types of workshop methods, the perspective workshop is extremely action oriented, although its focus is not at local level. The method is therefore particularly well suited to slightly broader technological issues and problems. The method is based on the assumption that the introductory material and home assignments create a common point of departure for participants, which is why the perspective workshop can be used for issues on which there is no such prior consensus.

As a follow-up to the perspective workshop, the Danish Board of Technology publishes a report which, among other things, contains a description of the workshop and its results. Such a report will often be a useful source of material for creating debate in connection with technological dilemmas.

Price

DKK 200,000-300,000

The price is a guideline only and does not include the salaries of the Danish Board of Technology project management team.

Examples of the method within the framework of the Danish Board of Technology

IT and working conditions (2001)

The Information Society (1998)

The Future Search Conference

The Future Search Conference (also known as the community workshop) focuses on breaking down borders and creating understanding about common desires for the future. The method thus focuses on agreement rather than problems and conflicts. An important aspect of the method is that disagreements are “set aside” and energy is instead focused on those aspects participants can agree on. The organiser has no influence on which conclusions and action plans the participants agree on. It is the participants themselves who listen to one another and decide the world trends that affect and should affect their decisions. They determine their own actions.

The purpose of the method

The purpose of the future search conference is to encourage participants to think about a technological problem in a new way. Participants must abandon their usual rhetoric and open their minds to new ideas and action proposals which can gain wide support. The aim of the conference is to find a common basis which all the participants can endorse. Participants do not seek to solve their disagreements. These are “set aside” so that the time can be spent on constructive and insightful debate.

Participants

The ideal workshop model comprises 64 participants divided into 8 groups. Part of the idea is that the groups can constantly alternate between interest groups and mixed groups – with 8 people in each group. In terms of the workshop topic, it is important that all relevant players are represented to ensure the basis for subsequent action.

Interested parties fall into 3 main categories: people with knowledge and information, people with authority and the ability to act, and people who have/will be affected by the workshop and its results. It is also important that “the right” people are present; not so highly placed that they cannot listen – and not so far down in the system that they cannot exert influence. Participants are invited to join the conference by personal invitation and are not bound by diverse mandates – they are not invited as speakers but actively involved in the workshop process.

Procedure description

The future search conference lasts for 3 days. The conference starts on the afternoon of the first day, continues the whole of the next day and ends on the third day at noon. A feature of the conference is that 2 days’ work is fitted into 3 days. Participants are literally meant to sleep on things.

The workshop programme comprises 5 phases, each with its own separate task:

- **Recalling the past**
In the first workshop phase, participants establish their own relationship with the topic and at the same time think about the most important local and global milestones in relation to the workshop topic. The aim of the discussions and subsequent milestone reviews is to give participants a common experience of the past while simultaneously creating the basis for the next phase.
- **Examining the present**
In the second phase, participants take part in a mind mapping session to which everyone

contributes. The idea is to map out current trends affecting the workshop topic. Each participant indicates which 7 trends they deem most important in relation to the workshop topic. In this way, participants consider the trends and make choices as to how they should be prioritised. By the close of the second day, all participants have thus collaborated to produce a collective reality regarding the workshop topic.

- Create ideal future scenarios
The groups must be realistic and not indulge in wishful thinking or concern themselves with trends about which they disagree. Participants then discuss the positive aspects of current behaviour – as well as areas that need to be improved.
- Identify common visions or projects people have jointly agreed to work on.
The next step is for mixed groups of participants to consider a desired future scenario in relation to the workshop topic. The groups have to imagine they can see 10 years into the future and agree about the future scenario. The task involves imagining which remedies to use to create the perfect future scenario as well as imagining the barriers and challenges that must be overcome to reach this future goal. The groups continue working on their visions and may convert them into common projects.
- Prepare action plans
On the third and last day, participants are asked to note down which of the suggestions from the previous day they wish to continue working on. Participants must differentiate between short- and long-term initiatives. Participants jointly discuss possible initiatives. They can support possible action plans and indicate whether they will return home after the conference and continue working for the cause.

Suitability and results

The method is suitable for defining common goals and possible courses of action for society or a particular issue. It is particularly suited to controversial and conflict-ridden topics where disagreements are “set aside” in order to focus on other aspects of the topic.

Using a carefully orchestrated process, the workshop results are written down on flipcharts, timelines and mind maps. The workshop ends with each group presenting 1 or 2 proposals for a common platform, which is then discussed in plenum. The common features and common understanding of the plenum represent the workshop result.

Price

DKK 250,000

The price is a guideline only and does not include the salaries of the Danish Board of Technology project management team.

Examples of the method within the framework of the Danish Board of Technology

E-commerce in Danish Society (1998)

Traffic in the Major Cities (1998)

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