

The Project as an Interface between Organizations

Step 1a: Mapping of Organizations (30 minutes)

Start with your own A2 paper. Divide it into a top and a bottom part. The top represents the formal reality of your organization. The bottom represents its informal reality.

a) Structure & Actors

- *On top*: Sketch an organizational chart showing the formal functions of your organization (director / programme and project staff / administrative and support functions...).
- *On the bottom*: Visualize the Social Network of your organization. Write the names of all relevant persons inside and around your organization on small post-its and arrange them as a cloud of relationships around a power-center. Mark your own position in this network.

b) Aims & Strategies

- *On top*: Summarize the mission statement and current strategic objectives of your organization in 3 bullet points
- *On the bottom*: List your associations to the following questions:
 - around which *polarities* do you experience (positive or negative) tension in your organization (e.g. local vs. global approach, cultural vs. political agenda, high end vs. off-culture commitment...?).
 - what is a current *internal development objective* of your team? (e.g. take on new task, reduce stress, stabilize the workflow, expand network, find new leadership balance...?)
 - what makes a project a *"good project"* in your organization? (e.g. high visibility of our name, contribution to overhead costs, social innovation, involve everyone, do it alone and bother no one...?)

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Step 1b: Presentation to the Tandem partner (2 times 15 minutes)

Present your organizational map to you partner. Illustrate it with stories to relay a rich impression of your organization. As the listening partner tune into the “strange points” of the presentation and stories: Ask questions to drill into these points for deeper understanding of your partner’s working context.

Short Break

Step 2: Project Frame Development (60 minutes)

Take up the third A2 paper and position it between your two organizational maps. Think of the cooperation project as a joint venture, as an adapter / an interface between the two organizations and their logic. Start discussion the following questions:

- What are possible points of interest your organizations could have in the cooperation project? Which open and hidden agendas do you need to consider?
- Who are the most important internal project stakeholders in/around each organization? Who do you need to involve in your project for optimal support? Who should be consulted in the development process?
- How can you connect the project with the organizational “thinking”? (how can we adapt to our organizations?)
- How can you make the project a laboratory for new approaches for the organizations? (how can we change and challenge our organizations?)
- Where do we need more information and research to answer these questions? Where can we use an outside perspective from our Tandem colleagues?

Note the important points on the central paper. Sketch the outlines of the formal and informal reality of your project in its best case.