



Dialogical-work: Our journey into dialogical approach





Dialogical-work

Dialogic approach to integrate multi-professional work in educational, health and social sectors. Training of governance groups and tutors.

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introduction



The objective of the manual is to provide guidance on the opportunity to bring a dialogical approach into people's way of working and into organisations' way of working.

Dialogical approach allows people to think together and find new solutions and possibilities to act in worrying situations: dealing with a **WORRY**, that may be complex and difficult to define, is the point of departure for a dialogue.

In this context, the term worry describes the subjective or personal view generated in a professional relationship and felt by the professional (Eriksson & Arnkil, 2009, 21).

Worries are very concrete things as they arise at the subjective junction of cognitive, emotional and moral aspect.

Dialogical approach can then make a difference for those professionals whose worries come through close and purposeful relationships, for example in the area of social and health care, educational services or in processes of organisational development and wellbeing.

Dialogical approach can in fact promote cooperation among people, increase trust and cohesion within a group and trigger individual resources like motivation and sense of responsibility.

Throughout our Erasmus+ project *Dialogical-Work* we have learnt how to think and act dialogically, that is how to listen to our own thinking and to that of other people, how to ask questions and how to build on each other's contribution in order to get a new perspective on a specific worry.

These lessons appear fairly simple to learn, not so much to put into practice. That is the reason for which the manual has been written bearing in mind two main intentions.

In the first place, to explore the **WHAT**, the **WHY** and the **HOW** of dialogical approach.

Rather than an instruction pamphlet, we have approached it in such a way as to build common ground, to lay the foundations for a common language, based on theoretical basis and subjective experiences.

A journey into dialogical approach

The underlying purpose of this is to collect the outcomes of our journey as a group and to connect countless reflections and open-ended questions shared all along the way.

The Erasmus+ project has brought together different professionals from different European countries working in the fields of education, health and social care, both in public and private organisations, academia and third sector.

Throughout the project we have, in fact, accomplished many things: learning about dialogical approach by practising it, creating a committed community and diving deep into the potential of dialogical approach to leverage cultural and social change within an organisation.

Since all that is going to have an impact on our personal and professional lives, we have tried to frame it into something that will last beyond the project itself.

Making dialogues accessible

In the second place, this manual wants to make dialogical approach accessible to those who might find it a valuable resource for their own work or workplace.

Questions of where to start and how to engage



one's own organisation or team is of vital importance. Unfortunately, we are not able to provide a straightforward answer to that: what the manual can offer instead, are examples of different ways of introducing dialogical approach into different working contexts.

The message we really want to pass on to the reader is that dialogical approach can be brought into any organisation or relational setting, it is only a matter of identifying the right need (or *worry*) to act on, whether it is a specific task or a project or an organisational practice affecting somebody's work.

The manual is primarily designed for people working in multi-professional environments, who would benefit greatly from the integration of different skills, experiences and sensitivities. Dialogical approach can be of interest to people whose work is person-centred, to those who are directly involved with beneficiaries like social services or healthcare services, or to those involved in organisational change and organisational wellbeing.

Bringing dialogues into organisations

Following these premises, in the second part of the manual, we will take on an organisational perspective and introduce the reader to elements that are fundamental for the grounding of dialogical approach. Organisations constitute indeed complex frameworks of roles, functions and dynamics that can equally promote or prevent innovations. When it comes to dialogical approach, we should consider closely the roles of Governance Group, Facilitators and Tutors as key actors in promoting new perspectives and permanent and generative networks that involve people, intermediate bodies, services and institutions at a peer level.

In a nutshell, this manual is about a journey into dialogical approach which is not yet finished nor the same for every person (or every organisation): starting from the experiences of the partners involved in the project, we will explore the results achieved and the goals for the future, the knowledge acquired and the acknowledgement of a practice which can be truly transformative.



WHAT is DIALOGICAL APPROACH



This chapter will explore what dialogical approach (DA) is about by piecing together subjective experiences and group reflections from our training¹.

The concept of dialogue may seem straightforward, even self-explanatory, but when deepened and declined from the perspective of complex organisations and multiprofessional teams, it can become multifaceted.

We could generally define *DiALOGUE* as:

“A conversation where the participants build on each other’s contribution. In a dialogue, participants are willing to let go of their pre-set ideas and listen to the contribution of others and, thus, are open to ideas generated as a result of this joint interaction which would have otherwise gone unnoticed. In other words, your opinion is not final, but a step towards the ultimate outcome. The aim of dialogue is to gain a new insight, a new understanding of an issue.”

(Eriksson & Arnkil, 2009, 36)

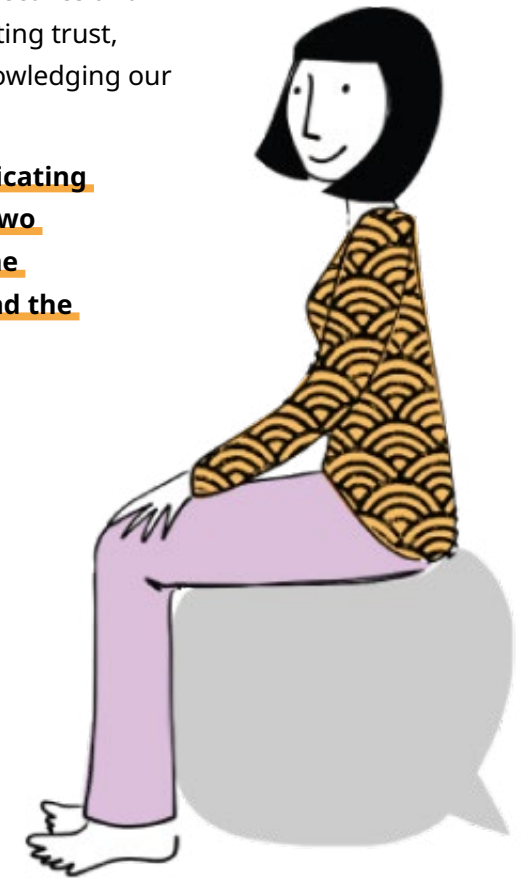
¹ Two training courses have been delivered within the *Dialogical-work* project: an Orientation Course (two modules of two days each for 60 participants) and a Dialogical Tutor Training (four modules of two days each for 55 participants). The training curriculum for dialogical approach Tutors was defined in the Project Result n. 4 of the *Dialogical-work* project, see “bibliography” at pag. 83.

Dialogical approach is a way to handle complex situations openly together: through dialogue different points of view alternate rather than overlap until people involved in it eventually reach an outcome which is new to everyone.

Throughout our DA training, we have discussed extensively what a dialogical *POSTURE* looks like, what enables it and how to train it. Some central principles of being dialogical that we have valued regard listening to other people’s perspectives and respecting their otherness, creating trust, tolerating uncertainty and acknowledging our own actions and reactions.

Dialogue as a way of communicating seems therefore to reconcile two fundamental human needs: the understanding of ourselves and the understanding of others.

That became evident since the very beginning of our training: when asked what they felt they needed DA for, participants’ answers spontaneously formed two main clusters.



Impacts at individual level

The first is about an **INDIVIDUAL LEVEL**, of how dialogical approach can help both on personal and professional grounds:

TO ENGAGE
ONESELF BETTER IN A
SOCIAL INTERACTION

TO BE BETTER
AT COMMUNICATION
AND BUILDING BETTER
RELATIONS WITH A
TEAM

TO BE MORE OPEN
TO OTHERS

TO OBTAIN
PERSONAL SKILLS AS
ACTIVE LISTENING
OR COMMUNICATION
SELF-EFFICACY

TO IMPROVE
ONE'S ATTITUDE IN
TEAMWORK

From an individual angle then, dialogical approach is perceived to have an impact on self-awareness, self-efficacy, individual wellbeing and openness, all key aspects for an effective dialogical posture.

Impacts at collective level

The second cluster deals with a **COLLECTIVE LEVEL**, e.g. the one regarding communication within a team or an organisation, as DA is perceived to:

TO FACILITATE
THE DIALOGUE WITHIN
MULTIDISCIPLINARY
TEAMWORK

TO ACHIEVE A
MORE PRODUCTIVE AND
EASIER COMMUNICATION
IN MY WORK

TO REINFORCE
COLLABORATION BETWEEN
SOCIAL, HEALTHCARE
AND EDUCATIONAL
PROFESSIONALS

TO REINFORCE
THE EFFECTIVENESS
OF MULTILATERAL
INTERVENTIONS AND
PROMOTE COLLABORATION
BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT
AREAS

TO WORK MORE
EFFECTIVELY AND
IMPROVE WELLNESS IN
MY ORGANISATION

TO EASE DIFFICULT
RELATIONSHIPS OR
SITUATIONS

TO STIMULATE
BETTER OUTCOMES IN
MEETINGS

TO ENSURE THAT
EVERYONE IN MY WORK
ENVIRONMENT HAS THE
OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS
HIS OR HER OWN POINT OF
VIEW AND TO LISTEN TO
THAT OF OTHERS

From an organisational perspective too, **dialogical approach is a powerful resource to act on essential values such as respect, equity, responsibility and trust.**

Dialogical approach seems then to be suitable for any person and to be applicable to any context. Throughout our training activities we have often discussed whether this lack of specificity made dialogical approach too intangible, too rooted solely in one's own imagination or vision or even personality. However, from the answers given by participants, we have realised that the apparent lack of specificity is overcome instead by a richness in nuances. **We have, in fact, sensed three different intertwined dimensions at the core of dialogical approach.**

Dialogical approach as a tool

Firstly, dialogical approach can be a **TOOL**:

“A COMMUNICATION TOOL THAT FACILITATES INTERACTION”

“A PATCHWORK OF METHODS ORIENTED TO FACILITATE COMMUNICATION WITHIN A GROUP”

“A COLLABORATIVE AND EMPATHETIC METHODOLOGY TO PROMOTE PARTICIPATION, COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION”.

Words like *method* and *methodology* are recurring among participants as they resonate with the first impressions we all shared at the beginning of our training. Recognizing the instrumental value of dialogical approach is probably the most immediate way into it because it is related to first hand evidence. Throughout our training we have learnt about and practised together different dialogical tools which proved us their potential to make a difference in complex situations.

Seeing dialogical approach as a tool means primarily to recognize its ability to carry out a function: its application at a given time in a given context to serve a specific purpose. **From the tool perspective, in other words, dialogical approach is expected to help accomplish a task and to achieve certain results.**

Dialogical approach as a strategy

Secondly, dialogical approach can be a **STRATEGY** in the sense that it can be:

“AN APPROACH TO LIFE IN AND OUT OF THE OFFICE”

“A MULTI-PROFESSIONAL APPROACH TO FACILITATE THE INTERACTION BETWEEN DIFFERENT ROLES IN COMPLEX ORGANISATIONS”

“AN APPROACH TO RESOLVE PROBLEMS BY TALKING THEM OUT”.

With the word *strategy*, we want to collect those perceptions that point to the potential of dialogical approach in achieving long-term results or overall aims.

Some participants describe dialogical approach also as:

“AN OPPORTUNITY TO FIND TIME TO SPEAK OUT AND START A DIALOGUE WITH ANOTHER PERSON”

“A POSSIBILITY TO FOCUS ON ANOTHER PERSON”.

What all these answers have in common, in our opinion, is that they add a generative power to the instrumental value.

The shift from the tool to the strategy perspective is significant for two main reasons: in the first place, it allows us, the users of dialogical approach, to widen the scope of its application, that is to move from contoured contexts to open-ended situations. In the second place, **it brings into focus one main challenge of dialogical approach, that is learning how to ease impactful, yet unforeseen, outcomes.**



Dialogical approach as a culture

Thirdly, dialogical approach can be a **CULTURE** or, in other words:

“A WAY TO REDESIGN HOW WE WORK TOGETHER”.

What we mean is to outline dialogical approach as:

“AN ATTITUDE TO NAVIGATE THROUGH INTERACTIONS WITH OTHER COLLEAGUES/ PERSONS WITH AN OPEN MIND”, “A MINDSET”

“A HOPE FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A DIALOGUE IN COMMUNICATION – DESPITE SO MANY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PEOPLE, BOTH INDIVIDUAL AND CULTURAL”.

Words like *attitude*, *mindset*, *hope* evoke the inherent complexity that belongs to dialogical approach: working and communicating dialogically is as much about applying tools and adapting strategies as it is about personal and organisational engagement.

In order to be in a dialogue, we tacitly accept to slow down on our own pre-set ideas and emotions to give space to those belonging to others.

In the same way, in order to embrace dialogical approach, organisations ought to open and rediscuss their own culture in light of permanent change.

Dialogical approach represents a cultural shift because it can be transformative for organisations, work groups and for the people involved: it acts at a deeper level, at the core of organisational practices and values, by turning its current state of operating, inwardly and outwardly, deeply dialogical.

These identities - the **TOOL**, the **STRATEGY** and the **CULTURE** - are not mutually exclusive in the sense that they could all be present and consistent with one person's perception of dialogical approach. They may simply represent three different ways of accessing, getting to know or engaging with dialogical approach: from each angle, one person can experiment and experience a different nuance, ranging from the instrumental value to the deep dialogical essence at the base of permanent organisational and individual change.



HOW TO IMPLEMENT DIALOGICAL APPROACH IN MY OWN ORGANISATION



Generally speaking, openness to dialogue is an attitude related to how I deal with other people. In this sense, we can talk about a dialogical approach on an individual level, no matter if it is used at work, with friends or family.

Nevertheless, when dialogical approach is recognized as meaningful and valuable in a working environment, a step forward from individual to collective level is needed so that usefulness can become usability, meaning that dialogical approach can be embedded in a dialogical work.

From the individual to the collective level

By changing the perspective from the individual to the collective level, the main actors for making an organisation more dialogical also change and the focus shifts from the dialogical attitude to the commitment to supporting dialogical work.

In order to do so, an organisation oriented to implement a dialogical posture should identify a **GOVERNANCE GROUP**, Specifically responsible for governing the implementation of dialogical approach and monitoring its progress in the organisation.

Setting up a Governance Group

This implies that a Governance Group can be put in place only in those organisations where a shared knowledge of - or at least a familiarity with - dialogical approach already exists and also there have been evidences of the positive effects of dialogical work, so that top management foresees the benefits of put together a group of people committed to promoting it inside the organisation.

This is what has been put in place in the Emilia-Romagna region in Italy, where several fruitful experiences of dialogical approach over the last decade suggested building a Governance².

The Governance is the steering group, composed of the representatives of the organisations involved in the working process chosen to implement dialogical approach. Their role can be either political or technical. A fundamental aspect is the capacity for decision-making power.

The task of Governance is to represent, chair, direct, monitor and foster the implementation of dialogical approach in all its components. In addition to this, there is the capacity to foster connections with processes in one's own territory that operate with similar conceptual premises and to put in place mechanisms for the maintenance of the entire process (e.g. continuous training). According to a circular and self-reflective process, adherence to dialogical approach inevitably influences the decision-making mechanisms of Governance, which, in line with the choices made, should be oriented in a dialogical manner.



² The Governance description is taken from "L'approccio dialogico in Emilia-Romagna", Direzione generale Cura della persona, salute e welfare, Regione Emilia-Romagna, Aprile 2023. See "bibliography" at pag. 83.

The main activities of the Governance are:

DRAWING UP AN AGREEMENT/COVENANT
BETWEEN ALL ITS CONSTITUENT ACTORS;

PARTICIPATING IN THE TRAINING COURSE
TO INITIATE DIALOGICAL APPROACH;

RECOGNIZING AND FORMALISING THE DIFFERENT ROLES;

LIASING CLOSELY WITH COORDINATORS AND TUTORS;

IDENTIFYING AND ENCOURAGING THE ACTION
OF THE POOL OF FACILITATORS³

What has been done and is still being done in Emilia-Romagna certainly sets a benchmark for many other organisations, but it is the outcome of many years of work.

This is the reason why within *Dialogical-work* Erasmus+ project an attempt has been made to provide some indications to those organisations that are looking at dialogical approach for the first time.

Although it may be challenging to establish precise criteria for forming a Governance Group, it is sensible for the group to align with the organisation's characteristics, including its structure, workflow

³ I Facilitatori/Facilitatrici sono figure esperte di approccio dialogico, e che lo hanno adottato nel proprio lavoro quotidiano. Pianificano e facilitano incontri dialogici con figure professionali e comunità e sostengono i cambiamenti nella cultura organizzativa dei contesti nei quali lavorano.

management, decision-making processes, formal and informal hierarchy, and organisational culture⁴.

After reaching a clear understanding of how the organisation works, it is necessary to figure out which people should be involved in the Governance Group, so as to develop its commitment from internal stakeholders and to support the creation of a dialogical environment.

Once the composition of the Governance Group has been defined, the first tasks should be:

TO RECEIVE TRAINING ABOUT DIALOGICAL WORK AS NECESSARY;

TO DECIDE AND AGREE ON WHERE TO IMPLEMENT
CHANGE THROUGH DIALOGICAL WORK;

TO DEFINE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN THE
ORGANISATION ABOUT DIALOGICAL WORK;

TO CHOOSE WHO TO TRAIN AS DIALOGICAL TUTOR;

TO SUPPORT TUTORS IN THEIR WORK;

TO MONITOR RESULTS AND EXPAND DIALOGICAL
APPROACH IN THE ORGANISATION AS NECESSARY.

⁴ Project Result n. 1 (PR1) of the *Dialogical-work* project provided guidelines on how to set up a Governance Group and its characteristics. See "bibliography" at pag. 83.

The activities of the Governance Group themselves should be carried out dialogically. For this, the members of the Governance Group should be trained, or at least have a clear idea of the approach on a theoretical and methodological level, and then the process can start.

First steps to bring dialogues in

But what happens when the organisation is not familiar with dialogical approach? Which can be the first step to bring dialogue into it?

These are the questions for the trainees of the Orientation Course put in place within *Dialogical-work* Erasmus+ project, changing the perspective from the collective level to the individual one. Each of us is the main actor in our own working environment, whether we are managers or not: dialogical approach is something I feel I want to pursue since it enhances my work wellbeing.

So what can I do to make my ordinary way of working more dialogical? Most suggestions point to starting with small steps, such as bringing dialogical approach into daily activities that we feel confident about, or engaging colleagues who may be more open, or even applying it to processes/projects we feel we can handle and documenting the benefits.

In order to bring dialogical approach into our own working contexts, we ought to be aware of the distinctive organisational aspects that outline the framework within which we have to move. Some common organisational traits emerged throughout our training include:

- shared-leadership, or horizontal decision making vs hierarchical structure, or top down decision making;
- the extent of one's own autonomy in the management of activities;
- multiple levels of power;

- non-governmental vs governmental/bureaucratic structure;
- fragmented units vs integrated units.

Despite the organisational differences, **what we all share is the need to identify the most appropriate level where to introduce dialogical approach.** Whether it is a lower, middle or upper level management, it depends on each working context and on our role within it. Dialogical approach can be introduced as a process in and of itself or as a part of a wider process.

Possible actions to gradually engage with dialogical approach consist in

REINFORCING ORDINARY MEETINGS WITH DIALOGICAL TOOLS;

CONNECTING PEOPLE FAMILIAR AND NOT FAMILIAR WITH DIALOGICAL APPROACH IN ORDER TO CREATE A MULTIPROFESSIONAL NETWORK;

ADAPTING THE GOVERNANCE GROUP IN A WAY THAT CAN BE ENABLING AND SUPPORTIVE;

COMMUNICATING OPENLY WITH THE UPPER MANAGERIAL LEVEL ABOUT BENEFITS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES RELATED TO DIALOGICAL APPROACH;

PROMOTING DIALOGICAL FACILITATORS AND TUTORS TRAINING AND BENEFITTING FROM THEIR ROLE WHEN THE OPPORTUNITY ARISES.

Dialogical roles, competencies and tools

Dialogical Facilitators and Tutors are key roles as they are the bridge between the Governance Group and the multiprofessional team:

they are in fact trained to move from the instrumental to a deeper dialogical level towards a cultural change in ways of working.

Facilitators and Tutors have developed a dialogical posture, the capability of supporting "the thinking together" mode, and they have also learnt to use dialogical tools in order to support Governance Group work and create basis for dialogical work in their own organisations. Their work is therefore closely related to the current and real needs of the organisation: they bring the worries into a dialogical process and supervise its unfolding.

Facilitators and Tutors are suitable in different organisational contexts, they help arrange favourable conditions to work on something that already exists (and it may need change) or to start something that does not yet (unexpressed potential).

As a result of the *Dialogical-work* project, we have outlined a set of five key complementary competencies (innovation driven, demand driven, collaborative working, interactive learning, knowledge creation) that, according to our experience, allow professionals to become dialogical Tutors in an effective, fair, inclusive way⁵. The five competencies are described in detail in the "Appendix" at pag. 63.

With regard to the tools, dialogical Facilitators and Tutors can rely on several techniques such as taking up one's worries, good future dialogues, dialogical spaces and warm-up dialogues⁶.

⁵ Project Result n. 2 (PR2) of the *Dialogical-work* project identified the competency profile for dialogical approach Tutor. See "bibliography" at pag. 83.

⁶ Project Result n. 3 (PR3) of the *Dialogical-work* project provided dialogical approach toolkit for Governance Group and Tutors. See "bibliography" at pag. 83.

Dialogical tools are used to engage participants and, at the same time, to support dialogical Facilitators and Tutors: on the one hand, they help them plan the work and navigate highly variable situations, and on the other, they help them define their role and build confidence in it.

For example, warm-up dialogues are meant to create connection, to tune participants into dialogues and ignite their own thinking. Good future dialogues help participants coordinate joint activities, combine network resources and expand operational possibilities. Dialogical spaces could be used by Facilitators and Tutors to prepare for dialogical practices and to reflect upon them afterwards (Arnkil, 2019, 37–50).



Dialogical spaces consist of:

PHYSICAL SPACE: ARRANGING THE PHYSICAL PLACE
TO MAKE IT APPROPRIATE FOR DIALOGUING;

SPACES IN TIME: MAKING SURE THERE IS ADEQUATE TIME AND
THAT IT IS "DISTRIBUTED" IN A DIALOGUE-FAVOURABLE WAY;

SOCIAL SPACE: INCLUDING THE SIGNIFICANT PERSONS AND
HELPING THEM TO JOIN IN THE SOCIAL SPACE OF PRESENCE;

MENTAL SPACE: ENCOURAGING THE OPEN MENTAL
SPACE FOR RESPECTFUL CURIOSITY AND EMPATHY;

DISCURSIVE SPACE: PRESERVING DIALOGICAL DISCOURSE
JOINTLY WITH THE OTHERS IN THE ENCOUNTERS
AND AVERTING AUTHORITATIVE DISCOURSE.

These tools are designed to prompt dialogical settings and postures: it is the Tutor's (and Facilitator's) job to work in that direction and to make sure that organisations and working groups awake their capability to find good enough solutions within the framework of their resources.

WHY SHOULD I DO DIALOGICAL APPROACH



The final chapter of the manual is dedicated to four case studies from project partners: Santa Casa da Misericórdia da Amadora (Portugal), Emilia-Romagna Region and Forlì-Cesena Mental Health Center and Forlì and Rubicone Mare municipal social services (Italy) and Municipality of Pudasjärvi (Finland).

Up to this point, the manual has focused on the outcomes of our dialogical Tutor training and on our first impressions of dialogical approach. Now we want to present concrete experiences from partners that have applied dialogical approach in professional and community contexts, by focusing on the reasons, the expectations and the results, in terms of both benefits and limitations.

We feel that these stories can feed us back a unique perspective on the transformative potential of dialogical approach.

From Santa Casa da Misericórdia da Amadora (SCMA) case study, we learn that **the dialogical shift in managerial and organisational processes came from the very concrete needs of reinforcing integrated work among different areas and putting users at the centre of service design.** In order to achieve that, SCMA has done a very thorough organisational assessment in order to identify the most suitable level at which introducing dialogical techniques and, consequently, to outline a sustainable and effective roadmap on the basis of their resources and organisational assets.

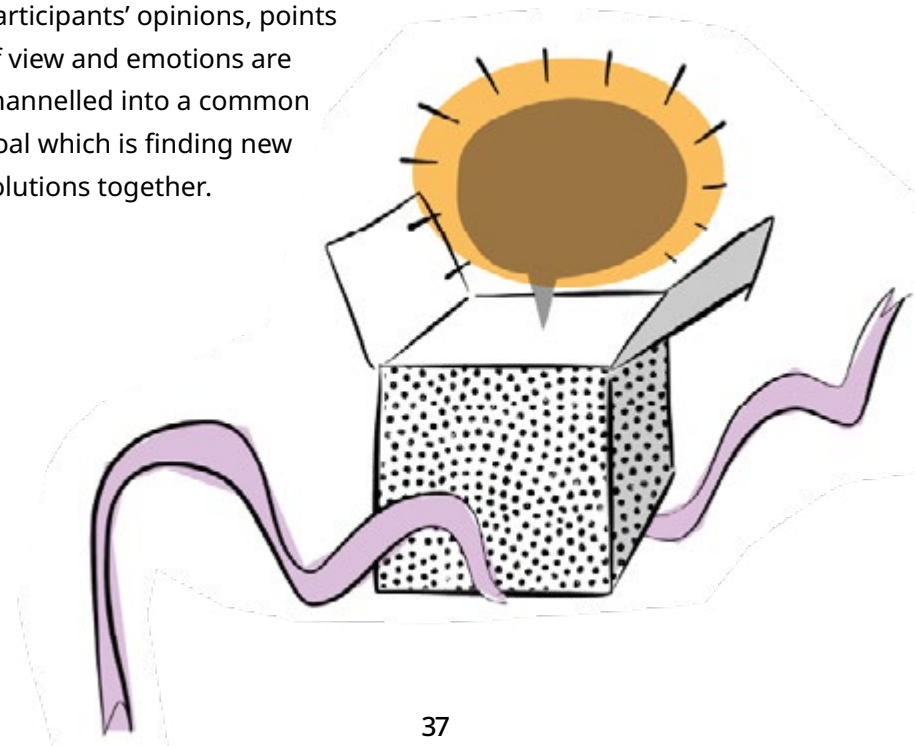
The two case studies from Emilia-Romagna Region show us **the importance of the engagement of professionals, both familiar with or new to the approach, and the effort in connecting them and keeping them connected.** For dialogical approach to start circulating within complex organisations like the public sector, a key aspect is to create networks among different professionals and across different areas of work. When there are enough people and these are connected

then things start to happen: one way of connecting them is through differentiated training opportunities, like Emilia-Romagna Region has been extensively promoting.

Finally, the Municipality of Pudasjärvi case study highlights **the suitability of dialogical approach in dealing with complex situations and the extent to which a dialogue can generate a greater impact than, for example, a panel discussion between experts when dealing with the concerns of a community.**

Firstly, such impact is the result of a different way of managing the process. A dialogical process requires Facilitators (and Tutors) who are able to connect with participants by collecting information from them rather than mediating expert information for them.

Secondly, dialogues can elicit in a community a new kind of responsibility and sense of agency. When invited to actively engage themselves, participants' opinions, points of view and emotions are channelled into a common goal which is finding new solutions together.



The application of dialogical approach to the integrated and person-centred care model (IPCCM) of Santa Casa da Misericórdia da Amadora, Portugal

Authors: Adriano Fernandes, Teresa Neto, Alexandra Andrade, Anabela Val, Pedro Ferreira

In 2016, the Innovation Department of SCMA triggered a collaborative process of putting the areas of social care and healthcare working collaboratively, breaking the previous silos. The main vision was to design and implement an integrated and person-centred care Model (IPCCM). Integrated, due to the close link, from then on, between social care and healthcare services, as well due to the integration of technology on the dematerialization of the information and decentralisation of the intervention; and person-centred due to the focus not only on the needs of the end users but also on their expectations, clearly respecting the limits on the interventions.

That whole internal movement to put the Person in the centre of the Intervention, which involved 25 SCMA's professionals from the social and healthcare areas, has been enabling a very important internal change management process in what concerns the redefinition of the Organisational service process model and, most importantly, in what regards communication between professionals and intersectoral collaboration.

According to the above scope, the main purpose for SCMA's participation in *Dialogical-Work* project, at an intra-node level, was the increasing robustness of the IPCCM as well as the clearness and quality of the process of communication between professionals, leveraged on dialogical techniques and tools that could directly contribute to that

purpose and to its speediness and consistency.

As *Dialogical-Work* project started, the coordination group of the IPCCM decided to enlarge the scope of the Model by inviting the educational area of SCMA to be part of the intersectoral and collaborative work on the implementation of the Model.

The first decision taken in the project was the identification of the Governance Group members, being those the Directors/Coordinators of the social care, healthcare and educational areas plus the Innovation Department of SCMA that was in charge of the project's implementation and that, as mentioned, had a very important role on the launching of the IPCCM. The idea behind this decision was to involve, from the very beginning, the most relevant decision-makers who could be able to make faster decisions and enable the internalisation and embedding of dialogical contents into the IPCCM and into the daily practice of the Organisation.

The Governance Group was composed of 7 members: 3 from the Innovation Department of SCMA, 2 from the social care area, 1 from the educational area and 1 from the healthcare area. The rationale for having an odd number of members was to enable faster decisions, easily achievable by majority of votes in case of not-so-consensual discussions. The 7 members of the Governance Group participated in the overall Orientation Courses, to be familiarised with the *Dialogical-work* methodology, techniques and tools.

The next decision was to identify the most suitable profiles to assume the role of Tutors at SCMA. Once again, consistent with the rationale followed for the Governance Group, the decision relied on SCMA's decision makers that could have functional autonomy and legitimacy to promote change management. As such, the same Directors and Coordinators of the social care areas (2 professionals), educational

area (1 professional) and healthcare areas (1 professional) were identified and selected for the role of Tutors. To have an odd number of participants, the Director of the Innovation Department was added for the decision-making process.

Under the purpose of aligning dialogical approach Tutor's competency profile co-defined in the project with the most suitable ones for SCMA, Tutors, with the support from the Governance Group, co-identified during the DT (Dialogical Tutors) Training sessions the following critical skills distributed by the following layers of challenges/needs and competences:

CHALLENGES	SKILLS		
	Behavioural & relational	Technical	Organisational
Ego/Power	Emotional intelligence/ Flexibility	Leadership	Negotiation skills/Humanism
Communication	Active Listening/ Non-Violent Communication	Conflict management	Negotiation skills
Focus on the problem	Consistency	Problem solving	Negotiation skills
Low digital or tech literacy levels	Resilience/ Availability	Strategic thinking	Orientato all'innovazione
Lack of a participative culture	Resilience/ Availability	Strategic thinking	Participative culture

During the timeframe of the DT Training sessions, the Governance Group along with the DT Group co-defined the roadmap for the internalisation of dialogical approach methodology, techniques and tools into the daily

practice of SCMA, recurring for that purpose to the training contents that were shared during the sessions.

The first decision of the groups was the identification of the dimensions of the IPCCM that could be reinforced by dialogical approach, being those the *Communication between Teams* (at an interprofessional and intersectoral level) and the Relationship with end users and relatives.

Under that scope, it was co-decided to establish a timeframe/calendar for the dialogical sessions/meetings at SCMA that would serve the purpose of spreading dialogical approach internally, through the involvement, firstly, of the Intermediate Leaderships and secondly of the Operational Teams of the social, educational and healthcare areas, being the Intermediate Leaderships also present in the operational teams' sessions/meetings. **The main purpose for this was to create a positive snowball that could really involve all the professionals that work directly with SCMA's clients on those three areas.**

The following critical decision relied on the co-definition of how dialogical approach could contribute to the reinforcement and robustness of those two dimensions of the IPCCM (*Communication between Teams* and Relationship with end users and relatives) and what dialogical techniques and tools could be used for that purpose. Having that in mind, two dialogical exercises were selected to be tested according to the following approach:

- **Communication between Teams** - *The worry of the Teacher*, that was transformed into *The Worry of the Leaderships*;
- **Relationship with end users and relatives** - *The worry of the Others: What challenges are we facing actually?*, that was transformed into *The Worry of the end users and relatives*.

After taking the decision of what dialogical tools to use among those two critical dimensions, the next step would be to test them, firstly with the Leadership Teams and after with the Operational Teams ensuring, for that purpose, a homogeneous horizontal approach between the different categories of staff.

To proceed with the plan, the roadmap co-defined encompassed the following dimensions for all the teams and professionals to be involved in the process, crossed with the dialogical techniques and tools, namely

the Worry of the Leaderships, the Worry of the Users and Relatives in line with a clear respect for the different dialogical spaces:



Communication between Teams

Physical Spaces

Chairs in a circle in the centre of the room, close to each other, so that eye contact can be made.

Mental Spaces

Ensure availability for active listening, respecting each other's time.

Time Spaces

Description of Dialogical exercises and timings for that:

- 20 minutes for group dynamics
- 10 minutes for each part

PART I

- 2 minutes for the Director to raise concerns
- 4 minutes for discussion between Directors, Intermediate Leaderships and Operational Teams
- 4 minutes of plenary discussion

PART II

Role swap with observers taking on previous roles

- 2 minutes for Directors to raise concerns, asking for help
- 4 minutes for discussion between Directors, Intermediate Leaderships and Operational Teams
- 4 minutes of plenary

Social Spaces

All the professionals from the 3 areas are present according to the scope of the meeting and with assigned roles.

Discursive Spaces

Part II and feedback from observers.

Relationship with Users and Relatives

Physical Spaces

Group divided into two or more sub-groups; chairs in a circle in the centre of the room, close to each other, so that eye contact can be made; flipchart paper and pens.

Mental Spaces

Ensure availability for active listening, respecting each person's time; ability to project the thoughts of users.

Time Spaces

40 minutes of dynamics: 15 minutes for Part I and II, and 10 for Part III

PART I

- 2 minutes for each Directors, Intermediate Leaderships and Operational Teams to raise their concerns
- Rapporteur takes note of comments on flipchart paper

PART II

- 2 minutes for the Directors, Intermediate Leaderships and Operational Teams to build an argument based on what has been written previously
- Rapporteur takes note of comments on flipchart paper

PART III

- Sharing of results by rapporteurs, 4 minutes each

Social Spaces

All the professionals from the 3 areas are present according to the scope of the meeting and with assigned roles, projecting users' thoughts.

Discursive Spaces

All the professionals from the 3 areas are present according to the scope of the meeting and with assigned roles, projecting users' thoughts.

Having agreed on the structure of the dialogical sessions, the agenda topics that were defined for the sessions/meetings with the Intermediate Leaderships and Operational Teams accommodate, first the merging between the IPCCM and dialogical approach and then the dialogical tools and techniques, according to the following sequence:

- dialogical approach (DA) relationship with IPCCM: Integration and Personalisation;
- internalisation process of DW- *Communication between Teams and Relationship with users*;
- conceptual Approach of DA;
- validation and testing of Dialogical techniques;
- anticipation of barriers and constraints & Mitigation of egos and installed powers;
- planning upcoming sessions/ meetings.

In every session/meeting, both with the Intermediate leaderships and with the Operational Teams, there is always dedicated staff that take notes of the contributions, comments and suggestions that professionals make to the exercises done as well as a continuous slot dedicated to collect feedback on *How can we improve Communication between teams and the relationship with the users and relatives in SCMA's Integrated and Person Centred Care Model?*

So far, and on the 19th of March 2024, two sessions were already done with the Governance Group and with the Intermediate Leaderships and the other ones with the Operational teams are already scheduled. A consensus meeting that is supposed to gather the Governance Group and the Tutors group will also take place to analyse and validate all the data and information gathered during the sessions/meetings, that could bring more quality and robustness to the two dimensions of the IPCCM

being leveraged: *Communication between teams* and *Relationship with users and relatives*.

Overall, SCMA's participation in this project has been contributing quite significantly to the reinforcement of the personal and professional relationship between professionals from different areas as well as to the collaborative and horizontal governance at SCMA's level and last, but not least, to the promotion of change management at an institutional level concerning a more decentralised and bottom-up approach on decision making processes.

The implementation of dialogical approach in Emilia-Romagna Region

Authors: Tommaso Gradi, Giorgia Pagano, Monica Pedroni, Giulia Rodeschini, Maurizia Rolli, Tatiana Saruis, Maria Teresa Tassinari

For several years the Emilia-Romagna Region has been integrating a dialogical approach into its social, health and educational services and into schools. The beginning of the journey initiated by the Region lies in a fundamental premise: **current intervention practices are not always effective in solving the challenges that services and institutions must face.**

The multi-dimensional nature of ever-evolving phenomena compels organisations to reassess their approaches to meet current challenges effectively. Epidemiological and social changes, the multi-factor nature of social issues and the co-morbidity of emerging pathological frameworks, require orientations and approaches with a strong integrality centred on the territory and thus on the community. Working in a network, building local partnerships, acting as a member of a multidisciplinary team require the availability of tools that allow to operationally manage highly complex relational contexts.

These practices, embedded in public institutions, require cross-sectoral skills and organisational resources that make it possible to guarantee appropriate time for the care of relationships, knowing that these conditions foster wellbeing and organisational innovation. To respond to the system's difficulties, two main objectives have been set at the regional level: on the one hand, to search for organisational-professional solutions aimed at overcoming the sectoralised approach that characterises organisations; on the other, to promote an orientation capable of strengthening integrated and community work to cope with the complexity of the problems to be faced.

To achieve these objectives, **starting from 2015, the Emilia-Romagna Region has launched its first initiatives on dialogical approach:** thanks to a collaboration between the General Directorate for Personal Care Health and Welfare, the Health and Regional Agency (now Innovation in social and health services department), the National Institute for Health and Welfare in Helsinki, the University and the Lapland Regional Council, the first training seminars for managers were promoted. Significant contributions on dialogical approach are also included within the guidelines set out in the Regional Social and Health Plan 2017 - 2019 with reference to operational intervention sheet 34 "Methodologies for innovating organisations and professional practices".

Consistent with the regional guidelines on "Promoting well-being and preventing risk in adolescence: Adolescence Project" (DGR 590/2013), it was felt that the wide world of services for adolescents, as a cross-sectoral world by definition, could represent an interesting area to start an experimental training course using dialogical approach. **The aim was to make the organisation in charge of working with adolescents and for adolescents, able to prepare the conditions to operate by overcoming the boundaries and barriers that often make team work particularly critical.**

In the first training course, which started in May 2018, three "pilot" Districts/Territorial Areas were selected to test dialogical approach in their organisations. More precisely, the three inter-institutional organisational hubs identified by the respective territories involved were:

Lugo (Province of Ravenna)

Coordination of the "welfare area of the union of municipalities": at the launch of the Community Lab path (the process of organisational/institutional change aimed at integrating services was already on its way at that time);

Scandiano (Province of Reggio Emilia)

Ufficio di Piano: there were no systemic organisational-institutional change projects in place, but it had an organisational context conducive to starting the process.

Parma/Fidenza (Province of Parma)

A Programme Agreements project characterised by inter-institutional and inter-professional actions had already been launched.

After completing these pilots, the national seminar "Dialogue for action: experiences and practices in health and social organisations" was organised in October 2019, attended by Finnish experts in dialogical approach from the University of Lapland, the Lapland Regional Council and the National Institute for Health and Welfare in Helsinki.

Afterward, multiple editions of dialogical approach training course were conducted, facilitated by the Department of Innovation in Social and Health Services of the Emilia-Romagna Region. The training programme includes both classroom sessions at regional offices and on-site sessions within the organisational settings of the professionals participating to the training. These sessions initiate experimental pathways, fostering collaborative effort among various services within each district and facilitating the exchange of experiences among districts.

In 2023-2024, the project reached its third edition entitled "The dialogical approach: Tools for Practising Integration in the Service System". It started in September 2023 and will end in September 2024. In its current version, it has been expanded to involve about 270 professionals from

the regional and local care, social, health and educational services system, of whom about 150 are being trained as Facilitators; 25 as supervisors and 80 dedicated to Governance.

Classroom training consists of five modules, each spanning 10 days in total. Additionally, participants engage in on-site training to apply their learning within the local contexts, under the guidance and supervision of trainers.

The territorial cases included in the project are 22 (out of 38) districts in the Region, plus the Metropolitan City of Bologna and the General Directorate for Personal Care, Health and Welfare of the Region. Also in the Region, some Sectors and Areas have selected some officials who are taking part in the training, and dialogical meetings have been held both to improve internal collaboration within the regional authority and to facilitate dialogue with local organisations. The department of the Emilia-Romagna Region in which dialogical approach Facilitators and supervisors have been trained are

- Innovation in social and health services department (which coordinates the regional project);
- Social, Inclusion and Equal Opportunities Policies department;
- Territorial Assistance department;
- Hospital Care Sector - Drug and Medical Devices Government Area.

Moreover, in certain sectors of the Region, after the regional training, initiatives were launched to foster the independent development and dissemination of dialogical approach. These are the Pianura Est District of Bologna, where the District's schools started their own training course; the Lugo District, which involved the local social cooperation in an autonomous journey; the Parma District, where a fruitful collaboration was started between mental health professionals trained in

dialogical approach and those trained in the Open dialogue.

In 2024, additional planning is in progress to reinforce the support provided to services currently implementing the approach. This aims to solidify its integration into their organisational practices and cultures. Moreover, there are ongoing discussions regarding expanding participation in the project, prompted by requests from various territories.

Risultati del piano di valutazione qualitativo-quantitativo

To understand the effects and repercussions of the implementation of dialogical approach, the Emilia-Romagna Region has defined a qualitative-quantitative evaluation plan that started in October 2023 and will end in December 2024. The people trained in dialogical approach, the participants (citizens, families, other operators etc.) involved in dialogical meetings, the Governance referents of the territories where this approach is being applied, are and will be involved in the evaluation through questionnaires, focus groups and the collection of experience narratives.

The data collected so far (October 2023-March 2024), although provisional, shows that:

In general, participants report a good level of appreciation for dialogical meetings: **there is a high level of appreciation for the method** and the communication methods applied, **for their usefulness and for their ability to generate concrete effects in the organisational context**, in professional relations, in the work of the services, in the interventions with the users.

A considerable **flexibility of the approach with respect to possible purposes: it is mainly used for integrated planning and design in and between social and health care areas**, but also in participatory processes and in collaboration with the nonprofit sector and other actors outside the regional welfare system (schools, for example).

There are **potential positive effects on professional and organisational well-being** within the institutions.

Implementation in user involvement has required more demanding and challenging reflection, training and preparation for territorial services, and has therefore started more recently.

The involvement of Governance in the implementation of these innovative practices is considered necessary (work in progress), without which it would be difficult to introduce a change of posture in services that is noticeable compared to the usual.

A multiplier effect of innovation has been triggered, whereby the dissemination of the approach builds a favourable environment for its own application, expanding its perimeter within services and activating a virtuous cycle in which local institutions have begun to promote autonomous pathways, going beyond regional programs, resources, and mandates.

The joint experience of Forlì-Cesena Mental Health Center and Forlì and Rubicone Mare municipal social services, Italy.

Authors: Anna Lucia Carretta, Annalisa Vigherani e Barbara Calderone

dialogical approach, developed in Finland and other Northern European countries, has supported organisational changes in some municipalities, allowing a cultural shift in terms of sectoralisation of contexts and introducing a democratic perspective on the professional-citizen relationship. Since 2018, the Emilia Romagna Region has been promoting training courses on dialogical approach in social-health services, at the level of both local and regional organisations and units. dialogical approach is based on the dialogic principle and on the assumption that professionals are not meant to provide solutions, but rather to promote reflexivity among all people involved in the situation, thus generating responses themselves.

How to turn the fear for it to not be possible, into confidence that it is the path to venture on.



“YOU ARE ALL HERE FOR ME? THANK YOU!”

The quote comes from a lady who has been a patient of the Forlì-Cesena Mental Health Center for many years. The professionals of the Center were very worried about her health status, to the extent that they were considering a residential facility for the patient. We shared this worry with our colleagues from social services to explore it together and, jointly, we then decided to invite the lady and her son to a dialogue.

There was the concern that it would not be possible to dialogue and persuade the lady to partake in a meeting with 10 different professionals (psychiatrist, nurse, social worker, community educator from the Day Center and social services), two Facilitators and three observers. It has been a two-hour dialogue. The outcome was a shared project, in which everyone could add something in terms of commitment and resources: more time at the Day Centre, social care at home, the patient's responsibility to carry out check-ups and balance her diet and self-care with the help of her son. After two months we scheduled a follow up meeting to check on the terms of our agreement and everyone had kept their commitments and there was no longer any worry that the lady would not be able to live in her own home. **At the end of the second meeting the patient's son said: "we have accomplished more in these two months together than in the previous 10 years! We have eliminated the bureaucracy!"**

Recounting this moment allows us to introduce the story of a three-year experience of training, experimentation and rooting of dialogical approach in a specific territory of Emilia Romagna Region.

The Forlì-Cesena Mental Health Center and the municipal social services of Forlì, Rubicone Mare and initially also Valle del Savio, which refer to the three Social-health Districts of Forlì, Rubicone and Cesena Valle del Savio, joined a dialogical approach training from November 2020 to November 2022.

The Mental Health Center of Forlì-Cesena and the municipal social services of Rubicone Mare joined a following training launched by Emilia Romagna Region in September 2023 (end date September 2024); the municipal social services of Forlì did not while those of Valle del Savio, who had not concluded the 2020-2022 training, asked to join back. Changes in the managerial roles and in the professionals initially involved account for these shifts.

The goals of the training and experimentation are numerous:

- to learn and to use dialogical tools in order to share good practices in one's own working context, by improving relationships among colleagues and roles;
- to facilitate dialogical meetings within the service system, in the relationship with recipients and with the local community;
- to disseminate and train other professionals in dialogical practices;
- to spread dialogical approach across other organisational units (discussion of complex cases, multiprofessional meetings, local teams).

Professionals from social services and the Mental Health Centre were directly involved in experimenting dialogical approach: psychiatrists, nurses, social workers and community educators have been trained as Facilitators and are currently training as supervisors of dialogical practice in the context, alongside colleagues who are now training as Facilitators.

At the same time, directors of the organisational units involved participate in the Governance group.

The connection between the dialogical approach training course and the Erasmus Plus Project was activated through the participation of a psychiatrist from Forlì and a psychiatrist from Cesena.

Various actions have been carried out in local units. From January 2022 at the Mental Health Center of Forlì, after having experimented facilitation in complex cases, it was introduced a "dialogical practice" calendar for the micro-teams, in which to bring critical situations regarding the relationship with a recipient or with other services. In many of these meetings, different worries were addressed through dialogues, which involved recipients and their families. The calendar gathers professionals who are available for the role of Facilitator and can then be contacted

upon request from colleagues. In the Mental Health service of Cesena, the contact person for dialogical experimentation collects requests from the micro-teams that are available to use dialogical tools.

In Rubicone Mare we proceeded with the adoption of dialogical meetings for the UVM (Multidimensional Evaluation Units) and for the informal definition of Health Budgets. In this phase, we are aiming at the formalisation of Health Budgets through the drafting of Individualised Rehabilitation Agreements (PARI) Projects.

In Rubicone Mare social services, it has recently been defined that all social service areas (minors, adults, persons with disabilities, elderly) can use dialogical tools by engaging trained and training colleagues. This organisational acknowledgment was possible thanks to the current social service director who had been himself a dialogical trainee when he was coordinator and now, as part of the Governance level, he is supporting the use of dialogical practice.

Such good practices have allowed trained professionals to acquire a set of skills in facilitating contexts and in the use of dialogical tools; at the same time it was possible to circulate dialogical approach among colleagues not directly involved in the training course and to promote dialogical tools also among colleagues from other units. Specifically, in order to discuss complex cases, it is encouraged the use of the 'taking up one's worry' and the 'good future dialogue' tools, with both professionals and recipients. Dissemination was also encouraged through the invitation of professionals not directly involved in the cases to participate in the dialogues as observers. At the same time, two large meetings were organised to promote dialogical approach, one during the 2020-2022 training and one in February 2024, presenting the principles of dialogical approach and the main tools, through direct experience of dialogues in the meetings.

Strengths of dialogical practices

Improvement of communication within the group and with other organisational units; involvement of recipients and their network, by focusing on their requests and the future that they see possible for themselves; involvement and support to other professionals who started their training in 2023. For example, support actions have been designed in close connection with colleagues from social services (Adult and Persons with disabilities area) and from the department of Mental Health and Addictions of Rimini and Riccione.

Critical aspects

The experimentation in the local context requires continuity in planning and managing meetings, but the necessary time and awareness are resources not always guaranteed by professionals who are still in the training course; it is essential to have access to support in terms of constant supervision over time in order to allow the learning and the consolidation of facilitation tools, without which there is a high risk that facilitation methods and dialogical tools become "personalised" and do not guarantee the actual construction and creation of dialogical spaces.

Case study Municipality of Pudasjärvi, Finland

Authors: Heikki Ervast e Jukka Antero Hakola

Need for dialogues

Summer 2023 the economic situation in the municipality of Pudasjärvi got worse than expected. Pudasjärvi is a small town in Pohjois-Pohjanmaa region, in the northern Finland. The city council decided to start operations to balance the economic situation. They also decided that with this process they also want to renew their service producing system in welfare and educational services. This new service production model should bring about 900.000 euros savings.

The city council started a tendering process and Dialogues and Design Ltd took part in the process and got the contract with the municipality.

The request from Pudasjärvi to Dialogues & Design Ltd

In the service delivery renewal and design process to Dialogues & Design Ltd it was defined these tasks:

- a concrete presentation of the service delivery model;
- consult and involve stakeholders (citizens and staff groups) in the preparation of the report;
- provide value and experience information (in addition to financial and statistical information) to help decide on the service delivery model;
- facilitating dialogue between municipal decision-makers;
- documenting the whole process to support decision-making;
- preparation of a final report including a proposal for a service delivery model.

How the hearings and participatory process were done?

In Finland, there is a statutory consultation procedure for situations of importance to local residents. The events were carefully prepared from both the organiser's and the participant's point of view. The approach was dialogical from the outset. The dialogue in Pudasjärvi consisted of:

- 1) active verbal and written interaction between the client and the service-providing organisation;
- 2) a series of discussions between the client's decision-making organisation and the service-providing organisation;
- 3) formal consultations with welfare and education staff;
- 4) open consultations with service users;
- 5) discussions between residents, officials and decision-makers at the above-mentioned meetings and
- 6) other opportunities to be heard.

The process consisted of 20 dialogical meetings, which were face to face dialogues, except the last meeting with politicians, which was online.

The body of the dialogical hearings followed the following order:

- 1) What were the ideas that emerged from the stocktaking?
- 2) What is important to talk about together on this issue?
- 3) What are all the issues related to the topic chosen as a common theme and what message would you like to convey to the decision-makers? and
- 4) The final dialogue.

The structure, dialogical tools and facilitation in the process

The dialogical hearings started with the participants' own ideas, asking what they thought was important and topical to talk about at the event. This was not an easy situation, because, based on experience, expectations were directed towards listening to the experts. However, the information package was deliberately limited, presenting only a reduced set of basic information and recapitulating the terms of reference received from the client.

The methods used for the consultation were based on an anticipation dialogue framework and varied according to the situation. In small configurations, there was a common discourse throughout, and in larger groups, there was first a discussion in groups and then a sharing of ideas.

Dialogues & Design Ltd used – as dialogical tools – a modified version of the Good Future -dialogue, Puimala -dialogue and Learning café.

All the speech heard together was recorded electronically on the Sway platform, the website used in the process, and the outputs of the small groups were photographed. The original images and recording documents have been available throughout the process on this platform, accessible via the website of the Municipality of Pudasjärvi.

Social and print media were actively used to communicate the progress and results of the process. Due to the importance of the overall situation in the municipality and the high impact on the citizens, it was important that everyone had the opportunity to begin to form their understanding and relationship with the ongoing process. This understanding is formed through the processes of internal dialogue within each individual, but others are also needed for this understanding.

The documentation of the process is available on this *Sway* page:

<https://sway.cloud.microsoft/ayltBElh2zarjilg>

The process started on the 29th of August 2023 and ended on the 14th of November 2023.



APPENDIX



Key competencies for Dialogical Tutors

Weerheijm, R. (2023), *Final Assessment Honors Instructions for Portfolio*.
Internal publication, Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences

1. INNOVATION DRIVEN

2. DEMAND DRIVEN

3. COLLABORATIVE WORKING

4. INTERACTIVE LEARNING

5. KNOWLEDGE CREATION



1. INNOVATION DRIVEN

Role: Innovator

Domain: Professional practice

Specification: Innovation and research

Competence

In contributing to the development of an innovative professional product, the Tutor shows an inquiring attitude and identifies and exploits opportunities to introduce innovations into professional practice.

Context

In working life, we come up against stubborn problems, problems for which there are no ready-made solutions. There can be various reasons for this: the complexity of the issue, a lack of sufficient, wide-ranging and up-to-date expertise, and sometimes simply the speed at which developments take place. In such situations, innovative capacity is needed to produce creative solutions.

As an innovator, you recognize this complexity and experience it as an opportunity, as a challenge to reflect on and discuss potential solutions with professional colleagues from your own and other disciplines. You dare to put your neck on the line and share your ideas with others. You know how important a solution is and that it is no good trying to avoid difficult situations. You investigate the problem using your own expertise, always looking for ways to uncover new insights, for example by combining existing concepts to create new solutions. You are bold and decisive and as an innovator you are enterprising and pro-active. You actively look for opportunities, know how to turn them into effective actions, and experiment with new methods and scenarios – always working from a well informed and well thought-through vision. Your insight, attitude and work are valued. You are increasingly

involved in innovation. You notice that you can be an equal and critical discussion partner.

To

Contribute to innovation

You must

1. be pro-active and resourceful in complex professional situations;
2. investigate problems and potential solutions;
3. be bold and dare to experiment;
4. be creative when looking at both the issue and the solution
5. Use the dialogical approach Toolbox if appropriate

So that

Your innovation-driven approach leads to the development of innovative professional products.

Behavioural indicators and descriptions

Being able to act in an enterprising way in complex professional situations:

- You think and act proactively. You show initiative and do not wait for others; you go and investigate. You come up with possible innovative ideas and solutions of your own accord.
- You are decisive. You familiarize yourself with the situation and take quick, well-considered and reasoned decisions about which steps are necessary.
- You can convert opportunities into targeted actions. You can identify effective routes to achieve goals.

Exploring the problem and possible solution strategies:

- You prefer to explore other ideas as well as traditional methods because there is evidence that the traditional methods no longer suffice.
- You come up with new perspectives on problems.
- You translate developments and trends in your own area of expertise into future scenarios.
- You make responsible use of relevant practical research methods and techniques.

Demonstrating daring and courage to experiment:

- You experiment.
- You act, even if the outcome is uncertain.
- You dare to stick your neck out; you don't avoid risks.

Looking creatively at both the problem and the solution:

- You demonstrate the ability to depart from the existing conceptual framework.
- You demonstrate that you can make use of approaches from other disciplines to come up with new findings and combinations of solution strategies.
- You show that you can think out-of-the-box.
- You demonstrate originality, "playfulness" and ingenuity.
- You come up with new scenarios if circumstances change.
- You are able to think of several solutions, approaches or perspectives for a problem that are unexpected and that bring solutions closer.

2. DEMAND DRIVEN

Role: Critical observer

Domain: Professional practice

Specification: Awareness of the environment

Competence

In working innovatively, the Tutor demonstrates an awareness of the professional environment in which he or she operates and identifies opportunities to introduce innovations into professional practice.

Context

As a developing professional you will learn as much as you can about working practice. You will follow developments in your field. You are interested in why certain developments take place and what forces drive them, enabling you to place trends and developments in practice within a broader context. You notice that this allows you to identify cause and effect of relationships more easily. You also see that certainties are fast disappearing. You realize that change is sometimes so rapid it makes tasks more complex, raising the bar for professionals.

At the same time, you see great potential in this dynamic environment and actively seek opportunities to contribute, with others, to making a difference. You want to make a worthwhile contribution to a social issue. You explore the possibilities and discuss these with relevant stakeholders and other groups, but without jumping straight to the solution. You show your worth as a well-informed and equal discussion partner. Your preparation has given you a thorough grounding in the dynamics of the situation and you can explain and justify why you think the situation is promising. At the same time, you listen closely to what your discussion partners say. You maintain a dialogue and make sure the problem is clearly defined by asking critical questions of the client and other

stakeholders, equipping you to assess the context in even greater depth. You know this exploratory phase is essential if you are going to help deliver feasible solutions or, if necessary, come up with good arguments for abandoning them.

To

Cultivate an awareness of what is going on around you, both generally and in innovative professional practice in particular,

You must

1. be aware of your environment;
2. identify and describe issues relevant to professional practice;
3. be able to translate theory into practical action;
4. use the dialogical approach Toolbox if appropriate.

So that

Your analysis of the situation leads to the identification of issues recognized as important to professional practice, and practical steps can be taken towards solving them.

Behavioural indicators and descriptions

Demonstrating awareness of surroundings – social context:

- You know or explore the trends and developments in a wider context than your own area of expertise and you can connect their significance to the problems you are working on.
- You can look further than your nose; you foresee changes (earlier than others) and anticipate them.
- You look actively for practical situations that might provide new evidence and you make use of them in discussions.
- You see opportunities / chances and make use of them.

- You recognize that external factors affect or may affect the problems you are working on.
- You demonstrate social engagement, and you can account for your professional actions.

Being able to identify and specify questions relevant to the profession:

- You investigate the problem at hand in dialogue with the client and other relevant stakeholders.
- You delve more deeply into the definition of the problem outlined; is this really the problem, is more preliminary research needed, will that lead to a different definition of the problem?
- You explore what is already known about the problem; you are able to edit it and
- present it.
- You can make the question explicit and adjust it.
- You demonstrate knowledge of the social climate that plays a role in finding and accepting solutions.

The ability to convert solutions into practical applications:

- You come up with unexpected and feasible solutions.
- You can convert solutions discovered through a combination of knowledge and experience of various areas of expertise into practical results.

3. COLLABORATIVE WORKING

Role: Team player

Domain: Innovative professional practice

Specification: Communication and collaborative working

Competence

In participating in innovative processes, the Tutor becomes a team player who can draw on communicative, collaborative and networking skills to work effectively and efficiently with other professionals to achieve results.

Context

Working effectively in a team on solutions to real problems demands a broad range of competences. In effect, they are tools that enable you to understand the innovative context and make you an equal discussion partner. Innovative professionals are real team players; they learn from each other and share ideas.

Learning and working in real-life situations is a social process in which cooperating and networking with others is essential. Not only does it spread knowledge and experience, but it gets people more involved. As a team player you know how important collaborative working is. You are not out to 'steal the limelight'. The real value of collaborative working is that you can fill in each other's ideas, 'spar' with each other, discuss your ideas and suggestions for strategies and solutions, and scrutinise them critically – to say nothing of the added value of being open to possibilities for giving and receiving feedback. Effective professional communication prevents any unnecessary 'noise' from clouding the collaborative working process.

To

Work effectively with others on improvements, new developments and innovations

You must

1. be willing to work with others and let shared goals take precedence over individual ones;
2. contribute to developing a network of experts and make strategic use of this network;
3. make correct and well-timed use of a variety of communication skills;
4. use the dialogical approach Toolbox if appropriate.

In questo modo

Gli attori del team con competenze personali e professionali complementari possano lavorare insieme e comunicare tra loro durante un processo di sviluppo o di innovazione.

Behavioural indicators and descriptions**Being prepared to collaborate and have general goals prevail over individual goals:**

- You align yourself with the common goals that arise through looking for new answers to problems at hand.
- You acknowledge that co-creation from professional disciplines contributes to arriving at innovative solutions.
- You look for opportunities and ways to work cooperatively on answers to problems.
- You are able to work in an interdisciplinary/trans-disciplinary context; i.e. you work closely with people from other areas of expertise by making constructive contributions and gaining recognition for your own area of expertise.

- You contribute to the best possible alignment between contributing your own knowledge, experience and qualities and that of team members.
- You put the interests of the team above your own personal interests, and you hold your fellow team members accountable for their behavior and responsibility. You are also accountable yourself.
- You can make concessions in order to arrive at a common goal or result. You can substantiate these concessions.

Being able to contribute to the development of a network of experts and able to consult this network in a targeted fashion:

- You build up a functional network.
- You use networks in a targeted fashion.

Being able to make use of a variety of communication skills in the right way and at the right moment:

- You kindle enthusiasm and stimulate others.
- You have effective and efficient discussions.
- You share your work with others.
- You contribute constructively to the collaboration.

4. INTERACTIVE LEARNING

Role: Learning

Domain: Communities of practice in innovative professional practice

Specification: Interactive learning

Competence

In guiding his or her further professional development, the Tutor acknowledges the need for lifelong learning and works to gain the necessary learning skills.

Context

The world of work is changing rapidly. Many different demands will be made of you, and you run the risk of not keeping pace with events. Education faces the same problem. Despite doing our best to keep your vocational course as up to date as possible, it is not always possible to cover the latest developments. This means you must prepare yourself for work in a rapidly changing professional environment. You will not just be expected to solve problems you have prepared for in your degree and which you know well enough to be able to implement real solutions; you will also encounter problems that are new to you, problems that cannot be solved using current know-how. These new problems may require new knowledge, knowledge yet to be acquired and new contexts within which existing knowledge has to be used in different ways.

You will also increasingly collaborate with people qualified in other subjects. In such a working and learning setting you will be challenged to learn with and from each other, actively, effectively and focused on getting results. As you work jointly in this innovative process, your desire to learn will often come from within – you come across problems you really want to solve. This makes you the one with a desire to learn ‘something’, or even to ‘unlearn’ something.

The complexity of the situation does not scare you. You see a challenge, and you take it up. You throw yourself into it, and don't give up. You know you will regularly hit a wall and have to pick yourself up again – but you will soon discover that you are learning more than you thought possible, that what at first seemed a confusing jumble now makes sense. You are much more capable of seeing the big picture.

To

Learn from and with each other

You must

1. show self-directed learning ability;
2. be willing to learn in varied and challenging settings;
3. be able to reflect on the effectiveness of your learning goal, method and result;
4. Use the Dialogical approach Toolbox if appropriate.

Behavioural indicators and descriptions

Demonstrating self-directing learning ability:

- You give your own learning process substance and direction; in other words, you can set yourself developmental and learning goals and act accordingly.

Readiness and a will to learn in various challenging settings:

- You reflect on your own actions and naturally ask others for feedback; you weigh up tips for improving them and then apply them immediately and effectively.
- You are aware of how your personal standards and values affect your actions and you demonstrate a willingness to discuss them.
- You can be held to account for your actions.
- You are prepared to change your ways.
- You surrender obsolete knowledge if there are good arguments for doing so.

- You have the courage to push back your own boundaries in order to develop personally and professionally.

The ability to reflect on the effectiveness of your

professional actions:

- You demonstrate the ability to reflect, and you can analyse your own actions in terms of:
 - content;
 - approach;
 - group dynamics – this might include the actions of all those involved;
 - social and ethical considerations when coming up with new solutions;
 - your own development regarding the points above.
- You have learned what your strengths and weaknesses are (or gained a better understanding of them) and you are able to make improvements to both.

5. KNOWLEDGE CREATION

Role: Knowledge producer

Domain: Innovative professional practice

Specifics: Knowledge creation

Competence

In continually improving his or her knowledge and keeping up to date, the Tutor not only learns within a formal context (like school), but also expands his or her expertise by learning in a workplace setting.

Context

With the rapid development of new information technologies, knowledge is expanding at an increasing rate and is available virtually on demand, and new knowledge can be disseminated just as fast. It is no longer enough to know your facts and know how to apply them. The knowledge you need most in an innovation setting is often called 'broad knowledge'. It is all about knowing the causes of many different phenomena, how things work, and understanding principles and processes (knowing who can provide ideas or specific know-how). This is particularly important because factual knowledge can become outdated (especially concrete findings), whereas knowledge of first principles (underlying these findings) does not date so quickly.

You are expected to develop a 'what if...' approach to learning. This means that you dare to ask critical questions about cause and effect. You learn to comprehend the connections and patterns in what happens in professional practice, but also to have a critical, enquiring and learning attitude. You want to uncover these cause-effect relationships and are a critical user of knowledge. Above all, you measure the value of a theory by its usefulness in solving problems you encounter in your work. You do not blindly follow any set of ideas. You find out, working with and

in dialogue with other professionals, whether something will work and how it works in practice. In the process, you learn how to combine your knowledge and experience with those of others and discover what works, creating new knowledge which can be used in professional practice. In addition, you can critically assess what the 'active ingredients' are, discovering the value of the chosen approach and the driving principles (which determine how it works). You quickly learn to play with your knowledge. You discover that theories and ideas from other disciplines can also be useful or made suitable for another context. You will also discover that knowledge you acquired for another purpose can also be of practical use in your work. In short, you discover, experiment, apply your knowledge, test how it works, and so generate new knowledge. This is officially called 'productive learning' and 'far transfer'.

You realize how important it is to share knowledge with others. You are also aware that others have knowledge you can benefit from. And so, you look for effective and efficient ways to find the knowledge and experience others are willing to share or exchange. You already know how ICT quickly and easily opens doors to a rich knowledge environment. Social media such as Web 2.0 will become an increasingly useful platform for staying informed and sharing recently acquired new knowledge.

To

Continually work on growing your knowledge within an innovative learning environment

You must

1. ability to share and access knowledge and be able to learn within an application context;
2. be able to use knowledge and skills at various levels of application and contexts;
3. can share and access knowledge;
4. use the dialogical approach Toolbox if appropriate.

So that

You can make a real contribution to furthering knowledge.

Behavioural indicators and descriptions**Being able to develop knowledge within an application context:**

- You can make use of other people's knowledge and practical experience to strengthen your own so that you develop new knowledge that takes professional practice further; you innovate.
- You are open to the contribution of other people's expertise, and you actively invite them to contribute.
- You build on existing knowledge and can connect the newly developed knowledge to the 'old'.

Being able to apply knowledge and skills at various levels and in various contexts:

- You make use of knowledge from different areas of expertise in order to discover patterns in problems.
- You apply the knowledge and information thus acquired to develop or design new solutions.

- You demonstrate awareness of the effect of social, economic, technical, ethical and/or psychological factors that could help to find the answers to problems you are working on.

The ability to share and access knowledge:

- You actively share the knowledge and experience you have gained in practice with other people.
- You actively look for new knowledge and for effective ways of accessing and sharing new knowledge. You do this in a way that is appropriate for your professional practice, and you can substantiate your choices in this matter.
- You look for connections that go beyond the shared knowledge and experience of team members and help them to understand these connections.

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The project results produced during *Dialogical-Work* can be downloaded here: <https://assr.regione.emilia-romagna.it/attivita-internazionali/dialogical-work/en/intro>

PR1: Guidelines for creating and supporting governance towards a dialogic approach

<https://assr.regione.emilia-romagna.it/attivita-internazionali/dialogical-work/pdf/pr1-english.pdf/@download/file/PR1%20English.pdf>

PR2: Skills profile for dialogue approach tutors

<https://assr.regione.emilia-romagna.it/attivita-internazionali/dialogical-work/pdf/pr2-english.pdf/@download/file/PR2%20English.pdf>

PR3: Toolkit for the dialogic approach

<https://assr.regione.emilia-romagna.it/attivita-internazionali/dialogical-work/pdf/pr3-english.pdf/@download/file/PR3%20English.pdf>

PR4: Dialogic approach tutor training curriculum



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