ORGANISE A SALT TRAINING
GUIDELINES
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I - INTRODUCTION

You are an enthusiastic practitioner of SALT and CLCP seeking support to transfer the approach to a group of people in the shape of a training event! This guide was designed just for you :) )

Since 2005, Constellation facilitators the world over have been putting together training events (often called ‘learning events’) in different contexts, and people of different backgrounds, ages and professions have been exposed to the approach thanks to them.

More and more newly-trained facilitators and budding teams are coming to local support teams or to the GST asking for support on this particular aspect of transfer - how to organise a training event that is relevant to the group at hand, transfers the essence of SALT, and builds on the accumulated experiential knowledge of practitioners the world over in the past decade or so?

These guidelines are an attempt at answering these questions based on the current (June 2018) experience-based understanding of the approach.

DISCLAIMER: as you read these lines, please be advised that this document is a living document! The Constellation strives to continuously learn from action and adapt accordingly - so please enter these guidelines with this in mind: nothing is ‘cast in stone’ and this document (including the set of tools) will continue to evolve, as will our approach and the different ways in which we transfer it. In fact, we very much look forward to hearing about your own experience facilitating trainings, and your view on what the next stage of evolution is!
Feel free to contact us through Laurie: laurie@communitylifecompetence.org

That said, we wish you a pleasant journey through this co-creative document, and look forward to hearing back from you soon!

Autry, Laurie and Célicia
on behalf of the Constellation’s Global Support Team
II - THE ESSENCE OF A SALT TRAINING

A SALT training is above all a physical and temporal space where you can offer participants the opportunity to experience/experiment with SALT and perceive its impact for working with groups/communities.

A SALT training is not about informing, giving tools or convincing that the SALT approach is the solution the participants need, but a place where everyone brings their own experience of community work, play with different tools of collective intelligence and begin a process of transforming their outlook on the groups they accompany.

Whether it is an introduction to SALT, a three-day initiation or a longer training, or even long-term support (facilitation of the online programme or continuous training of a group of facilitators), what we’ve learned from our experience since 2005 in conveying the approach and facilitation of the cycle to new groups is that everything happens through experiencing and experimenting.

As Jean-Louis Lamboray says: “You do not learn to ride a bike in a book. To learn to ride a bike, you have to get on the bike”.

By organising a training, you offer training participants the opportunity to experience facilitation with SALT lenses.

This is why many courses have been renamed "action training" or "practical training".

A. WHAT DO WE WANT TO TRANSFER IN A SALT TRAINING?

When we organise a training around SALT and CLCP, it’s because we believe in the potential of this approach and we dream to spread it around us in order to inspire others (individuals, local organisations and staff members within a company) to use this way of working to fulfill their dream.

The transfer of the SALT approach through a training event is a way to offer a unique experience to individuals, professionals and representatives of organisations about an innovative process and way of thinking. It’s an inspirational moment where participants can quickly grasp the potential of such an approach in their life and work to stimulate and accompany a change.

The past experiences of SALT trainers around the world show that the focus for trainers is on the transformative aspect. Giving space and time to allow participants to reflect and question their usual way of working and experience another one. The focus is therefore more on the SALT posture and the facilitator’s role in the community development and mobilisation.

The CLC process comes later in the training process as it is important for participants to understand and embody the posture before going into the steps of the process.

B. WHAT IS THE ESSENCE OF SALT FOR PRACTITIONERS AROUND THE WORLD?

The following video is a compilation coming from interviews¹ of Constellation facilitators all over the world which reflects what they find most valuable about SALT. We thought to include it here as a way for all of us to reconnect to the essence of SALT, which is what we seek to transfer during a SALT training. Click on the following link, or if you’re reading a paper version of this, copy it into your search bar :) :

http://y2u.be/SPCpkPFmMM8.

¹ Done by Anu Sieberk, thank you Anu! Access the full list of interviews here.
In the Constellation, we have experimented with many training formats adapted to different needs. What we learned from our experiences is that it takes more than three days in a meeting room to make the SALT philosophy one’s own and be able to adapt it to our own life and to accompany groups of people. We learned from participants of 3-day trainings that it takes time and experience to understand the approach deeply and to be able to adapt and adjust it to one’s own context. Most of the participants of 3-day trainings felt enthusiastic and motivated, but disempowered when it came to applying and taking on the role of a facilitator of local responses. Where to start, how, with whom?

There are four types of training possibilities:

- **The SALT Initiation** - for a short time period (2-3 days);
- **The Practical or Active Training** (5 to 7 days) - to understand the keys and tools to facilitate local responses;
- **The Online SALT Programme** - for a continuing support to become agile and confident in facilitating with communities by sharing and learning from peers’ experiences with the support of an experienced facilitator.
- **And/or a combination** of any of the three options above - for those who would like to go deeper and fully integrate the approach.

Take a look at the diagram for a summary of the training format that could suit different participant profiles.
A. THE SALT INITIATION

Constellation offers a short introduction to better understand the concepts, principles and tools to facilitate local responses through the SALT approach. The aim of this type of format is to offer participants an experience of the mindset shift from a problem-solving approach to one based on authentic human connection and appreciating strengths to mobilise community. Experience has shown us that such short initiations often do not provide participants with enough practical knowledge and confidence to be able to then consider themselves “SALT facilitators”. There are, however, several steps after such an initiation to accompany those interested so that they may become fully confident and experienced facilitators of local responses.

In this specific context of training, the trainers focus on SALT “as a different Way of Thinking influencing a different Way of Working”. The idea here is that when we consistently think along a certain path, it influences our action / behaviour. It offers an experience of authentic human connection and stimulation through a set of exercises that allow for a step-by-step understanding of the power of such a strengths-based approach in a context of social change and community/group action.

B. ACTIVE TRAINING

The active training, sometimes called “practical training”, takes place over a period of 5 to 7 days.

The aim of this type of training is to train a set of facilitators to become competent, enabling them to facilitate the CLC process with the SALT posture in their own context and area. It goes a step further than the initiation step.

This training offers the opportunity to alternate between exercises and reflections together with the CLC Process, in the meeting room within the context of how the approach can be adapted to implementation with a community.

During this type of training, facilitators guide the participants through the process and the mindset shift by applying it directly with one or more communities which they get to interact with during the course of the 5-7-day training. At the end of such training the participants have embodied the SALT posture and have experienced for themselves the potential and challenges of the use of such an approach. What makes this training special is that it truly gives space to participants to share their doubts, their questions, hesitations and discomfort while actively facilitating in a real-life situation. It also creates space for participants to gain confidence in their facilitation skills by sharing and learning from one another during the moments of collective reflection and the visits to communities.

C. THE ONLINE SALT PROGRAMME

The Online SALT Programme takes the practical training one step further. It is spread over a period of about 12 weeks of in-depth learning in action, or by doing. Three participants as a triad are accompanied by a Constellation Coach / competent facilitator. Triad members are generally from different countries, cultures, time-zones and contexts but are connected in a way to deepen their understanding and practice of the approach, step by step. It is a programme designed to help participants receive support while experimenting the implementation of the CLC Process and SALT posture with an actual community.

In the triad, participants support each other as peers. This programme creates a community of practice where at each moment of the process there is feedback, ideas / experience sharing, reflections and stimulation to become competent SALT facilitators.

Find the Online SALT programme presentation in Appendix 1.
IV - FROM DREAM TO TRAINING - MAKING IT HAPPEN

A. COMMUNICATE ABOUT THE EVENT

This communication is key at two specific moments in your plan to organise a training, and each moment has a different objective. Here are the two objectives:

• Inspiring and sharing about SALT and its impact
• Making noise around the training event in order to get the attention of potential participants.

INSPIRE AND SHARE ABOUT SALT AND ITS IMPACT

Being SALTy yourself is the best way to stimulate curiosity around SALT. Showing your enthusiasm about this approach is bound to stimulate curiosity.

Start with your own network of colleagues, family and friends, and then stimulate the interest of potential participants in the niches you know best (health workers, changemakers, professional coaches, community activists...). Constellation and SALT practitioners have developed different communication tools to help you share about SALT and the trainings. You will find links to diverse invitation examples in Appendix 2.


This book, written by one of the co-founders of the Constellation, tells the story of a shared dream which led to the creation of the SALT approach and CLCP. It can be an entry point to share and discuss the approach with neighbours, colleagues or like-minded acquaintances. If you’d like to organise a book presentation event, please contact Anu Sieberk - anu@communitylifecompetence.org, as she coordinated Jean-Louis’ book tour in 2017 and will be able to provide you with many resources.

As You Open Your Eyes Documentary Series

http://asyouopenyoureyes.com

The Constellation is in the process of developing a 6-episode documentary series about local response. This is a beautiful way to share about local responses and stimulate curiosity and discussion around SALT and the facilitation of local responses. To get support to organise a screening event and get access to one of the episodes, contact Marlou De Rouw - marlou@communitylifecompetence.org

The Constellation Website

http://www.communitylifecompetence.org/

The Constellation website is a useful tool to help you find ways to communicate around what we do and the possibilities offered for the implementation of the SALT and CLCP process. You will get more information on the variety of experiences and implementation issues of SALT/CLCP on the "Our experience" page.

The Constellation Booklet

The "Constellation Who are we?" document, available in PDF format (in Appendix 3), is a 7 pages document presenting the story of the Constellation and its experiences, its work and approach and its relevance. You may want to use it when you plan a presentation, or even after a talk with a particular person, to summarise what you already shared. This document is now available in French and English. If you wish to translate it in your own language, please contact Marie Lamboray - marie@communitylifecompetence.org
MAKE NOISE AROUND YOUR EVENT

Now that you have managed to stimulate the curiosity of your network around the SALT approach, it is time to communicate around the event that you want to organise.

Find a date
Find a date that will suit most your network. You may have to sense if your public will be more likely to allocate time during the week or during the weekend.
If the audience you are targeting are social workers and this training can be recognised as useful by the organisation they work with, a training during weekdays could be better.
If your audience is mostly composed of individual participants looking for new skills for their own personal development, you may find it easier to get more attendance during a weekend.

Also watch out for public holidays! Depending on the country you are in, you may find it best to avoid public holidays altogether.
Finding a date that will suit the majority of people in your network is always a gamble, it may or may not be perfect timing.
If not many people are available, it may be useful to ask yourself what is the minimum number of participants required for you to maintain the training event. A general rule of thumb is that 8/10 participants is a minimum. If that number is not reached by the registration deadline, the team can cancel the event and plan for another date.
But this limit is up to you and also depends on the financial aspect linked to the cost of the event (room rental, fees of the facilitation team involved…).

Send the invitation
When you decide on a date for your event you can start to think about inviting your network.
Depending on the type of training, you may have to send out invitations to future participants. The text may vary depending on the intended audience. But in general, trainers suggest to keep it simple and avoid words that carry strong connotations.
Explain quickly the objectives and the content as well as practical information and include a link to the Constellation website or your own local website for those who wish to dig deeper.
You can add the short video presentation of the essence of SALT.

Go to Appendix 2 to get various examples of training invitations.
Regardless of the type of invitation you choose to craft, don’t hesitate to inform rihu@communitylifecompetence.org, in order to get support from her to communicate on the Constellation’s sharing platforms.

Teams have found it useful to include a sign-up sheet in the invitation, which participants fill out and return to the team to express their interest. This sheet would include background questions to find out more about the person (name, where they live, their areas of interest/work, communities/groups they interact with etc.) as well as very practical questions (will they need a place to stay, do they need to be picked up from somewhere, are they willing to carpool, etc.).
Again, the golden rule with all of this previous contact work is to make every contact friendly, open and warm. You’re organising this because you really want to share something that motivates you in life, so as Marie-Christine Swennen of Belcompetence would say, “make sure it shows”!
Phone calls with potential participants prior to the training are one great way to establish that friendly contact.
B. GATHER NEEDED RESOURCES

To prepare your training event you will need to gather different type of resources, from finding a venue, to soliciting communities around you to organise a SALT visit, to harnessing the necessary financial resources to make your event a success.

THE VENUE OF YOUR EVENT

Depending on the group of participants and the type of training you are organising, you may find it useful to remember one basic SALT principle: start with your own resources! This may mean that between the facilitation team and participants, you collectively find practical ways to organise the training: the space, meals, equipment etc.

And if there is one overarching requirement it is this: the space needs to feel welcoming, homey and informal so participants can relax into showing up as their most authentic selves.

Another practical note is that the space should always be spacious enough to accommodate a circle of chairs which allows everyone to see both the flipchart stand and all the other participants. Note that if you plan on making people move around a lot for icebreakers and other animations, you will probably require more space (count +- 3m² per person).

If the training is for a team of coworkers, it is best to work outside of their usual workplace. This makes it easier to encourage everyone’s involvement and ensure an enjoyable and pleasant atmosphere.

THE FACILITATION TEAM

To prepare your event we recommend you to get support from nearby facilitators. Facilitating a training is highly energy consuming (and energy-giving also of course!), and you will need support to hold the space, think through the programme and help on logistical issues, as well as to think up new creative ways to facilitate a training.

Trainers worldwide have found that the ideal ratio is 8 to 18 participants for 2 to 3 facilitators.

Three seasoned facilitators is the optimal number, as there are three main tasks that can rotate: facilitator, note-taker, and time keeper.

Two or three "facilitators-in-training" or "co-facilitators" may also join. We have found that "shadowing" a trained facilitator is a great way for newly-trained facilitators to gain confidence in facilitating themselves. If that is the case, each co-facilitator/facilitator-in-training is supported in their activities by a "senior" trainer.

With this team we recommend you to discuss the conditions of their participation as teammates beforehand to avoid any misunderstanding, including on the issue of whether this participation is paid or not.

Inform the GST to get your invitation spread through the Constellation network

To get more participants you may want to spread the information out beyond your own network by informing the global network to further stimulate people near you to join your event.

Create a public event on social media

While preparing your invitation you can also create a Facebook event or a Ning event (The Constellation’s online community of practice: http://aidscompetence.ning.com) and add the link to the event on the email you send.

To create a Facebook event, you can choose to create it in your own name, or in the name of the group you belong to. This social media event will allow you to share the opportunity to all types of groups you are following or involved in. It also allows your contacts to share the information with their own network.

Regarding visuals and pictures for your event, you can choose to take your own picture of group discussion or you can also access some pictures on the Constellation website or Ning, or use visuals of the As You Open Your Eyes documentary series.

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With this team we recommend you to discuss the conditions of their participation as teammates beforehand to avoid any misunderstanding, including on the issue of whether this participation is paid or not.
Budget your event

Before preparing the budget of your event and defining the participation fee accordingly, you may want to ask yourself and your team these questions:

Who is my audience?
- Health workers? Social workers?
- Asylum seekers?
- Company employees?
- Community activists?
- Citizens looking to transform their own communities?

What are the needs of the facilitation team (done by each facilitator and revised together)?
- Is the facilitation of trainings and other SALT events part of the way I make a living?
- Do I choose not to get paid for this, as I’m happy to do it on a voluntary basis?

Is the venue free of charge?
- Yes
- No - How much is the venue rental?

What kind of equipment/materials do I need to facilitate this event?
- Do we have some of those at home?
- Do we need to buy some/most?

What kind of refreshments and food do I want to provide for this event?
- I want to support a local caterer
- I want to prepare food myself
- I want to organise potluck style meals

The responses to these questions will influence the budget you will need to gather.

Dreaming big is always a good start, but don’t forget to count first on your own resources and those of the community. This simple principle will avoid you a lot of stress for the logistical aspects. Depending on your audience the same participation fee can feel repulsive or attractive.

Experiences show that if you are targeting professional coaches or companies, a high participation fee can be seen as a guarantee of quality. For individuals, asylum seekers or volunteers, on the other hand, such a high fee can prevent them from being able to attend altogether.

The example of the Belcompetence team may be useful here. They organise trainings in three languages, and each team has different needs, target audiences and types of venue. But one overarching principle everyone has agreed to is to always offer possibilities for diversity within the group of participants. With that in mind, no matter the price proposed, there is always the possibility for people who can’t afford to attend this event regardless of their financial constraints. This is manageable because when budgeting and communicating on the participation fee, Belcompetence offers the possibility for participants to contribute consciously with what they can on top of the baseline fee in order to create solidarity between the ones who can afford and the ones who cannot.

Another possibility to consider when organising the training event is to find a partner or sponsor willing to fund the event. There have been cases in the past, for instance, where an organisation decided to provide the necessary funding for their whole staff to be trained, and to open the door to external participants as well (with or without participation fees). If you wish to find out more about such experiences, contact Luc: luc@communitylifecompetence.org
Mobilise Communities for the SALT Visit

SALT visits are an essential part of any SALT training, and should therefore be considered early in the process of crafting the event. The aim here is twofold: [1] practicing the SALT posture (experiment listening and asking questions to appreciate, stimulate, learn and transfer) and [2] being inspired by local response (in the best-case scenario, local responses stimulated and supported by SALT/CLCP)!

From experience, facilitators share that getting this “taste of SALT” is important quite early on in the training process, right from Day 1 or Day 2.

One great way to achieve this is by organising, ahead of time, for SALT visits to be embedded in the training. This of course requires quite a bit of logistics, and may be difficult to fit into shorter time-frames like the 2 or 3-day trainings. Though impossible is nothing: France Competence for instance has included a SALT visit in every 3-day training! To Marlou De Rouw, seasoned facilitator, trainer and member of the Global Support Team, SALT visits are a non-negotiable, and there is always a way of integrating them.

It is clearly a non-negotiable for longer trainings, and does not have to be complicated to organise. It becomes much easier if we are aware of what is happening in our neighborhood or community, such as a neighborhood cleaning group, a women’s shelter, a local initiative for underprivileged youth, a veggie garden? These are all local responses to learn from, and great occasions to practice the SALT posture!

Inquire with them about their willingness to host a group of enthusiastic participants who wish to listen to them and learn from their wonderful actions! The most beneficial SALT visits, of course, are SALT visits to groups who have actually been engaged in a SALT process in one way or another, and who can therefore help participants build that bridge from the “theory and classroom experience” they are getting during the training and real-life application of the process.

The purpose and nature of a SALT visit, should be clear between the trainer team and the hosting community. While preparing, make sure the hosts feel comfortable and at ease with the idea and the process, go through the logistics and thank them for being host.

In the shorter trainings where it proves difficult to organise a SALT visit, find another way to bring in people who have an interesting story of collective action to share. It can be great, for instance, to call in someone (or even better, a group of people) who has/have been through the SALT and CLCP experience and can share their story of transformation.

You could also organise a collective ‘field trip’ with your group to a local market or public space and simply ask your participants to observe and listen to their environment with “SALTy lenses”: noticing the abundance rather than the scarcity, and interacting with people in a way that stimulates them to reconnect to their inherent strengths.
V - FACILITATION OF THE TRAINING

A. GET PREPARED

Facilitating a training requires a lot of preparation. Thinking through the most appropriate format to offer, preparing the facilitation process outline, the visuals, the tools and all the material and support needed to work easily during the time you have with the participants, as well as going through all of this as a facilitation team to make sure you all "dance" well together takes time and effort.

It is this preparation which creates the confidence needed for you to feel free to adapt the programme and the facilitation according to the emerging situation and the energy of the participants. As someone once said "you have to hold something firmly in your hands before you can drop it".

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

In order to prepare your process outline in a way that meets the expectations and needs of your audience, make sure you investigate the needs and profiles of the participants who are registered for your training event. Yumilah Govinden from Mauritius notes that "knowing your audience beforehand contributes to creating the all-inclusive environment we want during a SALT training. This is something I learned here in the field, that culture is not something homogeneous to a whole country, but small communities within a country or even a village develop their own ways and norms which are very specific to them. Due to this, I believe it's important to know, or at least be aware of "who they are" and the do's and don'ts so as to avoid any barriers to communication and make the SALT training as effective as possible."

DEVELOPING THE PROCESS OUTLINE AND FACILITATION ROLES

Good team preparation is important. By no means do we mean to come up with a rigid programme, but it is useful to craft a process outline that allows for a harmonious flow of activities and easy adaptation to changing circumstances.

Different strategies can be adopted by the team to come up with this flow. Either one member of the team volunteers to craft a draft process outline (inspired by the many examples which you will find in the appendices) and submits to the facilitation team prior to their first team preparation meeting, or the group decides to craft it together during this first meeting. Either way, one should strive for an outline that is both complete and concise, and easy to work with "in action". For each step, specify the starting time, the allotted time, the objective, the means implemented, the necessary equipment and the person responsible for the step (usually defined together during the preparation meeting). Remember to include breaks for food/refreshments and to stretch your legs, as well as animations and ice-breakers.

What is absolutely essential here, is that you prepare the training with the specific group of participants in mind. Keep every part of the process as close to their reality as possible, and make sure you integrate moments where they can reflect on what they are learning and how it would translate into their specific context. As Marlou would say, "this is about them, keep it real!"

Another thing to consider, depending on the context, is that SALT/CLCP terms and concepts may need to be translated into the local language, or explained in a way that is culture-sensitive. This is an important point in order for participants to feel ownership for the process but also to help them to adapt and apply it with their local groups/communities. Some trainers, such as Jean-Baby Fulama of the DR Congo, actually dedicate a full session of the training to making sure the group has a common understanding of the basic SALT/CLCP concepts and terms.

A big decision that must be made in terms of process outline is this: Will the facilitation team strive to take participants through all 6 steps of the CLC process, or will they choose to present the whole process but only focus on a few steps?

A rule of thumb here: quality over quantity!

2 Find in Appendix 8 a template programme agenda to help you to start in the planning of your sessions
Facilitators that are so stressed out about time that they harass their participants with a bell every 5 minutes can be counterproductive as it may cause resistance and lack of willingness to show up authentically.

Trainers have identified 3 non-negotiable steps that all trainings should include: the "who are we?", the shared dream, and the self-assessment. SALT as a concept and as an experience is of course also a non-negotiable, to be inserted throughout the training at every step. The first step is essential because it creates the space for authentic human connections, and allows participants to experience, from the inside, why SALT is different. The second step is also what sets CLCP apart from many other learning cycles, and if done powerfully it is bound to generate enthusiasm for the participants. The self-assessment is also a non-negotiable in that it creates the bridge between the projected future and the here-and-now, and allows participants to get a feel of how important, deep and often confronting group conversations can get at this point as different views of current levels are expressed and substantiated.

More ideas on how to go about facilitating this process in Chapter IV., and additional examples of tools in the tool box (Appendix 4).

Make sure each facilitator feels confident with their part of the "cake" and insist that this is a "collective dance", and though roles are distributed, the team should be ready at any point to step in and support a facilitator who feels challenged and ill-at-ease. The team may wish to decide on a "code" to use in such moments for individual facilitators to request the help of the group, or simply decide to call for a bathroom break when this happens in order to quickly convene as a team and decide on the way forward. This ability to constantly adapt to changing circumstances is as crucial during a training as it is when facilitating the process with a community.

Here are some tips from trainers around the world that you may want to remind each other of during this preparation meeting:

- "Carefully reread if necessary the module on the step you are to facilitate in order to have the process in mind".
- "Individually visualise the step you are to facilitate in order to find the wording and posture which help you feel confident and transmit this confidence to the participants."
- "Think about and write down the questions you want to raise to stimulate the dream building/visualisation, in order to fit the context".
- "Make sure your introductions and instructions for each activity are short, concise and clear."
- "With each new day, you may find it useful to review the whole programme of the day with your co-facilitators to refresh and adapt to the energy of the participants and to the past day(s) of facilitation. Participants may also find it useful for trainers to remind them each morning of where they stand on the cycle".

Take this moment also to go over practicalities, get acquainted with the participants’ list, check available equipment/material onsite and share responsibilities to bring what is missing. Posters or flipchart displays are also something that can be worked on during this meeting, as they’re quite useful to present the steps of the process.
Each person leading a specific step can also decide to prepare their own, in which case this doesn’t need to be done collectively. Either way, visuals must be pleasant to look at, clear, and big enough to be seen from a distance. Treated with care, they can be used several times.

SPACE PREPARATION

As you are getting ready to welcome your participants, make sure you prepare the space so that it feels homey, welcoming and warm. Remember, you may be trainers, but you are also hosts, so make sure you treat your guests with friendliness and your best SALTy spirit :)

Some trainers like to have a little "welcome drink" so that people can nibble and drink as they come into the space, and start to mingle informally before actually starting the training. This is particularly effective if you begin the training say on a Friday afternoon/evening and your participants are just emerging from a week of work.

Ideally, you could have your space arranged in two areas: one where people are welcomed and this informal mingling happens (this may also be the space where meals are taken), and another which is the actual training space. This second space is your training space per se, where you will have set the chairs in a circle, your flipchart stand at the ready, and perhaps some inspirational quotes, visuals etc. up on the walls or set on each chair. Some facilitators like to place a centerpiece in the middle of the circle, something symbolic or just aesthetically pleasing that symbolises that there is something that brings the participants together. Create an atmosphere that is both inviting and inspiring, and that leaves participants excited to start.

Where practicalities are concerned of course, make sure all your equipment is in place and handy, and that your flipchart displays are in the right order, with blank sheets in between where needed.

B. THE NON-NEGOTIABLE STEPS

The participants have signed up and you’ve been in contact with them through email or phone calls, your facilitation team is cohesive and confident, all practical details have been ironed out, your SALT visit or other SALT posture experience is organised, your space is arranged and welcoming, and your heart is beating a little faster than usual :)? You are ready to embark on the SALT training journey!

Every training will be different, depending on the format, the participants, the facilitation team, and your own internal weather. But one thing is certain: its success depends on how seamlessly the team is able to work as one, and how willing trainers are to tune in to the needs of the group and, if needed, adapt their process or drop it entirely!

Once again, the non-negotiables are: SALT
"Who are we?"
"Where do we want to be?" (dream-building) and
"Where are we now?" (the self-assessment)

Here is the kind of flow that you could find yourselves facilitating, with these non-negotiables at the core, and other possibilities if time permits.
BEGINNINGS:
The way you open your training, and the quality and depth of the "who are we?" step will set the stage for the quality of the entire training event. As Jean-Baby, DRC facilitator, likes to say "Relationship-building on the basis of our shared humanity is the glue that holds any training together and that makes the transfer of SALT possible"

- Joyful welcome and informal mingling (with nibbles and refreshments when possible)
- Opening circle in the training space
- Some facilitators with participants develop ground rules for the period of the training event: "respecting time constraints", "everyone is responsible for their own well-being", "no judgement", "what is said here stays here" and whatever else participants come up with. This is useful to get a sense of what is important for people in the group, and to hold the group accountable with regard to their own behavior.
- Ask everyone a version of the following 3 questions (they can answer on 3 different-colored post-it notes and stick them up on a flipchart)
  - Name/nickname
  - Areas of interest/work
  - What motivated their presence today (intentions and expectations for this training). This is valuable as a benchmark for after experience reflection at the end of training.
- Create a special opportunity for every participant to introduce himself or herself as a human being. One way some of our trainers do it is by asking people to bring to the training an object that they feel connected to or that can help them share something important about themselves. We then go around the circle, with each person introducing their object, and through it, themselves. Imagery in general is always very successful here, so as trainers make sure you always have a large stock of images with you (postcards, magazine cut-outs, Dixit cards, etc.). These evocative images can be picked by participants in the moment, and thus replace the object as a support for self-expression.

- Several activities to get acquainted during which we insist on the importance of listening, and paying attention to and surfacing the strengths and skills of each. The focus here is on connection through different means between participants to create an atmosphere of confidence and trust that leads to better communication and to the understanding of the need to be authentic and confident within a community to co-create something and act together.
- Agree on the objectives of the training and go through the flow of the next few days with participants.
- A brief history of Constellation and/or the local team followed by a presentation of the approach, the cycle and SALT, hopefully in connection with the example of a community. Emphasize the use of inherent strengths/skills at each stage.
- Check out the toolbox in Appendix 4 to find out how the "Dancing Jajas" documentary can be used at this point to help participants "feel", right from the beginning, how this approach can be applied in real-life.
- Mention the T of "transformation", and how practicing this approach consistently also has an impact on our personal lives. Here, local experiences of "communities of practice" around this application of SALT/CLCP to our personal growth and development can be mentioned. One such experience are the "Life Circles" organised on a monthly basis in Belgium. To find out more about this experience, contact Jean-Louis: lamborayj@gmail.com

WALKING THE PROCESS AS A "COMMUNITY"

In an effort to give their participants an inspiring and rewarding experience of SALT, many facilitators encourage to group of participants to take on the role of group/community members going through a CLC process together.
If the group is indeed a "community" in the sense of a group of people gathered around a common objective (colleagues, fellow villagers, volunteer’s group etc.), then this is easy: they are one community and will act as such.
What is crucial here is really that the participants get a sense of what the "we" is that will be connecting, dreaming, self-evaluating, and learning together over the next few days.

3 Find out more about this exercise in the toolbox in the Appendix n°4.
4 Life Circles - Individual Life Competence and SALT - Nathalie Legros Blog on Ning - 4 June 2014
During a training in the Netherlands in March 2018, Lois, Marlou and Gemma did this with a group of participants by asking a simple question: "If someone were to walk into this room right now and ask us who we are, what would be our answer?" The question sparked a deep conversation and created a strong sense of "we" that was harnessed for the duration of the training. The facilitators admitted, however, that with this particular group this may have been the result because of the fact that they shared strong common experiences and contexts (many of them being ex refugees in the Netherlands now working to support incoming refugees). If there is not sufficient homogeneity in the group, trainers may decide to somewhat artificially "create" communities based on common areas of interest.

**STEP 1: WHO ARE WE?**

The first step, "who are we?" is, as has been mentioned already, essential, and a good way to introduce the transformative effect of SALT. What is important here is to establish an atmosphere of trust, authenticity, and to some extent vulnerability as participants come to understand that they walk into this training as their whole selves, and not as a role or a job description. Participants must realise that this same authenticity and trust is a non-negotiable part of any future engagement they wish to undertake as a SALT facilitator; it is the container within which we operate.

The journey of this step goes from unveiling the individual "Who am I?" (which starts right from the self-introduction exercises with images or objects mentioned above), to connecting to the "we" that is emerging in the room (i.e. the "village" of trainees that are on this learning journey together), and connecting to the big "We" of "What makes us human?"; and to understand that this sense of our common humanity is the starting point of any SALTy engagement.

There are myriad exercises to take participants on this journey (harvesting our "hopes and concerns", triad conversations on "things we are grateful for/proud of" and surfacing strengths from the conversations, "removing the labels", "paper-pull" to understand the power of collaboration, filling an empty human silhouette with people's answers to "what makes us human?", etc.), and you will find a selection of them in Appendix 4.

It is also the step where we introduce SALT, and the concept of a "strengths-based approach".

Positive psychology defines strengths as "what's best in us", something that is natural and authentic within us and that energises us as we pursue valued outcomes. As you introduce the SALT acronym and posture, be sure to help participants create a bridge between the concept of SALT and "looking for strengths", and their reality. The way Gemma, Lois and Marlou did it during their training with Vluchtelingenwerk in March 2018, is to introduce the "from expert to facilitator" diagram and engage participants in a small-group 20-minute conversation on the following question: "what does strength-based work mean for me as a person/professional/volunteer?"
STEP 2: WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?

This is your opportunity as trainers, to make the group feel that "there’s nothing like a dream to create the future" (Victor Hugo) ! Again, as you introduce this step: keep things real! Give examples that illustrate the kinds of dreams that have come out of groups going through the process (try to keep the example as close and relevant to the group of participants as you can). Go back to the "Dancing Jajas" documentary if you used it the first day, and explain the dream and practices of the Ugandan older persons. As in the "who are we?", here again the journey travels from the "I" to the "We", building from individual aspirations and visions to the shared dream of the "we". Here, it is particularly important for participants to get an experience that feels authentic, and therefore to connect them deeply to their aspirations in the "individual dream" part. Usually, regardless of the tools chosen (drawing, "pantoum" poem\(^5\), "human sculpture\(^6\)", collage from images in magazines, etc.), the journey goes from individual dreams, to small groups exchanging on their individual dream and building a group dream in resonance, to then coming back into the biggest "we" (the full group of trainees or the subgroup of "fictitious" community depending on your configuration) and creating the "shared dream", to describing that shared dream in words which end up translated as a set of written "practices". In order to facilitate the step of practices, make sure that when the representation of the "shared dream" is being created (either drawing, body sculpture, collage, short skit or otherwise), a rapporteur is taking down the keywords that are mentioned by the group. These will serve as a good written basis to go back to for practices.

The shift from the "I" to the "We" can sometimes feel painful to participants, as all of a sudden the dream feels more alien to themselves, or they don’t see their individual aspirations as accurately represented in the shared dream.

This is an important thing to debrief, as it also reflects a reality when working with groups/communities as a facilitator. Insist on the importance of allowing plenty of time for dialogue, on reconnecting to the "we" before going into the exercise of the shared dream, and of two ideas that help co-construction at this stage:

- inclusion (every voice and every idea is welcomed and every person finds their voice/ideas represented in the shared dream) and
- consent (which is different from consensus). Consent doesn’t mean every single person has to agree (consensus), but rather that no-one in the group has a significant objection to the decision at hand (in this case, to the dream).

Another essential ingredient to encourage here is: **unbridled imagination :)** ! This isn’t about imagining existing possibilities within the limits of reason, but about projecting ourselves far beyond the current constraints in order to dream emerging possibilities - the time will come afterwards to self-assess and "come back down to Earth" and to what is feasible in a given timespan.

One last tip for trainers here: **practices can feel tedious** to participants; use your **creativity** to make them fun! Say for instance: "kids 100 years from now are asked by their history teacher to look at newspaper headlines of what happened in 2018. What exciting things will these kids read as headlines that describe what people (we!) are doing that makes this dream a possibility?". Don’t ask participants to come up with a full list of 10 practices, 3 or 4 would greatly suffice.

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\(^5\) Nathalie Legros has used the Pantoum Poem technique to facilitate the emergence of individual dreams - Find out more about this technique [here](#) in the toolbox - or directly access the PDF document [here](#).

\(^6\) Célícia Theys is enthusiastic about the "human sculpture technique", you can see how this technique can be useful for you to facilitate building the shared dream [here](#).
STEP 3: WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The step of self-assessment can be challenging when the context is that of "fictitious" communities. Again, make it fun and lively, for instance by making people move around in space on an imaginary scale of 1 to 5, or actually having sheets of paper marking the levels and asking people to place themselves on the continuum according to where they feel they are. If the fictitious context makes it too strained for them to pretend to be evaluating the group on no solid basis, you can pick a topic that has been mentioned during the first sessions and ask each person to self-evaluate based on their own individual practice.

Facilitator Celicia recalls a moment where participants were feeling lost and confused at this point during a training, having no real "we" to self-assess. The group had dreamed about holistic medicine and care. She then simply asked them, "as members of a group interested in holistic care, how is your own practice of caring for yourself in a holistic manner?". It then became much easier for individuals to position themselves, and surfacing the reasons why they were positioned where they were sparked important discussions on what was necessary in order to score high on such practices. It is then up to the trainers to connect these reflections in the group to real-life examples of reflections that may have happened during community discussions around the self-assessment.

For different tools to facilitate this step, see the toolbox in Appendix 4.

OTHER OPTIONAL STEPS

If the participants seem very involved in their dream, then for step 4 "What are we going to do?", an action plan can be drawn up as a group, and step 5 "Let's do it!" (where the community takes action) may be facilitated through a visualisation exercise, where participants let their imagination take them to the actions they may choose to take and how these actions may unfold.

If time allows your group to introduce step 6, Learning Festivals are a great thing to talk about, showing the short video of the one in Uganda and sharing about Knowledge Fairs and Learning Festivals that may have been organised in your own country or region. You may also wish to speak more generally about the principle of "learning-and-sharing", the newsletter, the online community of practice, your local Facebook group or the Constellation FB page and all other communication mechanisms in place.

Another possibility, if time permits, is to experiment the sharing of stories and extracting of principles for action together. This can be done in several ways, see the toolbox in Appendix 4 for inspiration.

7 Video of the global Learning Festival 2017 - Summary of lessons learned during the global event organised in Uganda - Youtube video developed by Visual Development.
INTEGRATING AND CLOSING

As in any workshop, the way you conclude is just as important as the way you open. Here are some things to consider as closing steps:

- **Have a collective conversation on the posture of a SALT facilitator**, inspired by what participants experienced during each step. This could also include coming up with a list of skillful questions that a facilitator may ask to stimulate his or her group (see example in Appendix 5).
- **Individual reconnection to intention**: each person reconnects with their intentions/expectations on the first day and comments on how they were met or evolved over the course of the training.

Forward to action: participants take a moment to note down their own action plan for the 3 coming months. Some trainers like to ask participants to then place this action plan in a sealed envelope which will be sent back to them 3 months later.

Other ways to symbolically and actively explore this bridge from intention to action in the group are explained by facilitator Anita Sheehan through the following exercises: “feedforward” and “chairs that speak”. Also see the toolbox in Appendix 4.

A closing circle to express gratitude and appreciation for one-another. An optional (yet important for documentation!) group photo.

For more insights from trainers around the world, see Appendix 9: Tips & tricks of seasoned trainers.

VI - LEARNING FROM THE EVENT

Constellation Support Teams deliver many training events around the world. The Constellation’s intention is to continuously learn from these experiences so that it can evolve SALT and the Community Life Competence Process on the basis of the experiences. Coaches and / or facilitators engaged in the training event naturally learn with and from these experiences to add new or value-added learning to the already documented wisdom. In this case, a Constellation ‘training event’ can be seen in as broad a way as the coach / facilitator may wish to see it. Learning should be habitual to every coach / facilitator within the Constellation.

A. WHY, WHAT, AND HOW TO DOCUMENT OUR EXPERIENCE?

From a historical perspective and for future reference, what we choose to document, now, has importance. Think for a moment......of items II.c [What is the essence of SALT for trainers around the world?] and IV above [Facilitation of the training]. These replications came from effective documentation from times past. Further, we would surely want our website to be ‘ALIVE’ with more recent learning and information, and to do so with quality material! What is more, we want our approach, and our way of transferring this approach, to be constantly evolving on the basis of YOUR experience as facilitators and trainers, all over the world. This is why this aspect of documentation is crucial.

As soon as the idea of a training event evolves into some action, we begin to record, even our plans. This record can help us to strategically, systematically and efficiently execute our plans from a checklist. All of this helps with an event report. Capturing stories on impact and strengthening our report with pictures are both part of the Constellation Way of Working. In some instances, having a rapporteur works well. We usually have at least two facilitators for ALL our activities. Capturing what takes place by photographs and videos is commonplace within these events. Sometime, but mostly at the outset, we indicate that we will be taking photographs and / or videos and get global permission. We indicate that photographs and / or videos will appear virtually. Ideally, because we would like to have a quality product, we would love to have a professional do these but until that time is more feasible, we settle for photos and videos from our mobiles and cameras.
Participants may do so as well. In many instances, we also invite participants to join NING so that they themselves begin to post their stories there (including that of the training).

B. AFTER EXPERIENCE REFLECTION

The After Experience Reflection (AER) is a key element of the learning process. The AER was inherent in the Way of Working when the Constellation started. It evolved from After Action Review. The idea that lies behind the AER for learning is that ‘Experience is the basis for all learning’.

It provides the opportunity for an individual or a group to reflect on their experience IMMEDIATELY after ANY activity. It is worth emphasising that there is one, and only one reason, to do an AER, and that is to take action on the basis of what we have learned. If you highlight one thing that you can do better next time… and you take action on that basis then you have got value out of your reflections. Learning takes time and effort. As Jean-Louis likes to say: "We don’t learn from experience, we learn from reflecting on the experience”.

At an AER [formerly AAR] the group considers 4 questions:

- What was supposed to happen?
- What actually happened? Why were there differences?
- What did we learn?
- What will we do differently next time?

Learning constitutes doing so as a team of facilitators / coaches but also we would love to learn with the community of participants. Usually, the team of facilitators do an AER after each day’s event. Doing the AER with participants offers them the opportunity to internalise this activity as important and stimulating a culture as a way of working when they are ready to facilitate a learning event for other communities.

"Playing" with the questions in order to make them relevant to the specific group and context you are in, is always a good idea. There are different ways to conduct the AER, too. You could first ask participants to reflect individually on a few questions, and then harvest collectively, or choose to go straight into a plenary mode for harvesting.

The following are some starting questions for you to consider:

- What were some of the high points of the training for you? What made them special in your view?
- Reflect individually on the following "4Ls" (taken from the world of agile organizational practices):
  - what you "liked/loved",
  - "lacked" (things you think were missing or that could have been done EVEN better),
  - "learned",
  - "long for"/wish to explore further. This last one is about asking participants now that they have done the training, what is it that they long to explore further? How can the facilitation team support them in that?

C. WHERE TO SHARE OUR LEARNING?

A conversation to capture learning

As you know, "learn" is at the core of who we are. Therefore, there is always an "ear" in the GST willing to take time for a conversation (virtual through Skype or Zoom) to learn from you and help you integrate your learnings. In this team, feel free to contact Laurie Khorchi via laurie@communitylifecompetence.org. We’ll be quick to setup a date :) !

We will probably also stimulate you to share your training documents (invitation, facilitation flow, handouts etc.) with us so that we may make them available to the global network.

Stories and photos on our online community of practice (Ning)

Our "traditional" sharing-and-learning channel is our online community of practice, http://aidscompetence.ning.com/ (Ning for short).

If you haven’t yet done so, set up your profile and start sharing your stories and photos, including those of the training :) !
Encouraging trainees to sign up on Ning also is a great way to have a record of their impression of the training, and more importantly, an occasion to stimulate them to keep sharing once they start applying what they have learned to their life and work. In particular, stories and feelings shared by some participants during the training may be of interest for the global communities. Facilitators should note these stories as they hear them during the training days and ask participants if they would be OK to share them through Ning. Support to join the Ning may be useful at that point.

Photos can be posted as albums on Ning, and "tagged" with specific keywords that will help others sort through the tons of images found on our platform.

Click on the following link for a few additional pointers on what and how to share.

**Videos uploaded to Youtube and shared with our Share facilitator**

You managed to capture important moments of the training or of AERs in video? Great! We would love to receive these videos. Generally 2-3 minutes of video is a maximum length to retain the attention of viewers. Please also ensure that you have verbal or written consent of those whose video you will be sharing.

Posting your video on Youtube (or Vimeo or other channels) is usually the easiest way to then be able to share it easily. Once you have uploaded and posted your video, please send the link to it, your name and a short description of your video (about 2-3 sentences including theme, place of video, etc.) to our "Share" facilitator Rituu B Nanda: rituu@communitylifecompetence.org

For more specific instructions on sharing your video, go to Appendix 6.

**D. ON FOLLOW-UP AND NURTURING TRAINEES**

It is our experience that, as a result of these events, people do become inspired. The intent throughout the event is for participants to explore how what they are experiencing is applicable to their respective context and how they can adapt the learning to do so. We are also cognisant of the fact that while people are inspired, internalisation of everything, and thinking through applications to their respective context may seem overwhelming over the short period of the event. It is therefore pertinent to have plans for follow-up and nurturing. Of course people may have different intentions of when they can apply / adapt to their context. Some of them may need to have consultation with their respective organization. There might be need for support to do so. Opportunities for staying connected with individuals needing this support would be important to explore as part of the closing of the event.

Experience has shown that this need for support and nurturing continues after the initial training as well. People are inspired to facilitate, but do not feel equipped or confident enough as facilitators. This is where opportunities like the Online SALT programme, described in part III [Training formats], are important to mention and invite participants to engage in.

Another great way to "nurture" these groups of people, where possible, is to invite them to join in on planned SALT/CLCP activities going on locally. They can drop-in as participants, or decide to take on an active role, in which case you may want to offer them a role as co-facilitator. The role of local support teams here is essential. These trainees really are a formidable source of learning and growth. They are also human resources, and inviting them to get involved with the local support team is the best way to both keep benefiting from and learning from their experience as they apply the approach. It can also strengthen local responses locally by gaining more facilitators. The key here is clarity of a) the existing opportunities, b) the needs of the local team, c) the aspirations and skills of the participants, and d) the different roles participants can take on within the local team if they are inspired to do so.
One local support team, Belcompetence, has reached level 4 on this practice of “following up on and nurturing trainees”. Since 2016, they have begun to systematically organize “spaghetti dates” for cohorts of trainees, inviting all participants of a training to come together again to check on each other’s practice, for mutual support, learning and growth. The francophone trainers of Belcompetence commit to organising 4 trainings and 4 “spaghetti dinners” a year! This has proved very successful, and shows the importance of encouraging the creation of a “community of practice” people can engage with on a regular basis. There’s always something to share and learn, even if one feels like they “don’t have any ongoing SALT projects”, they can share about their personal lives and reconnect in a SALTy spirit. It also helps the local support team take stock of the ways the approach is in fact being used by people trained in the country. This is what Emmanuel, a trainee, had to say after one such occasion: “We will never finish learning and this ultimately turns into a great richness for us all, a richness that could be called culture, work, connection, friendship, hope, joy, listening, responsibility, commitment.”

Needs raised by several participants are emerging, and integral coach and facilitator Tom Koninckx has wrapped his head around summarizing them as follows:

- The need of the facilitator for more tools to make SALT interventions more sustainable. An idea for instance would be to add an additional module to the basic SALT training ‘advanced level’ to further develop this.
- The need of the community where SALT gets implemented to learn about dynamic governance and shared leadership. This is a training/coaching track that could be developed for the core team within the community.
- The need for individual coaching within the community directly focused on personal transformation

If one or all of these topics pique your interest and you would like to explore further, Tom invites you to contact him via: tom.koninckx@gmail.com
VIII - APPENDICES

Appendix n°1 - Online SALT Programme presentation
Appendix n°2 - Examples of invitations to SALT trainings
Appendix n°3 - Constellation: Who are we? document
Appendix n°4 - Tool Box
Appendix n°5 - Appreciative questions
Appendix n°6 - How to post your video?
Appendix n°7 - Self-assessment template for facilitators
Appendix n°8 - Facilitation flow templates
Appendix n°9 - Tips and Tricks of seasoned facilitators