The Constellation

Connecting Local Responses around the World
"Is it possible to imagine [...] a world where individuals and communities recognise and respect their common humanity, and live out their full potential to contribute to society as a whole?"

Extract from The Constellation's Membership Statement.

Since 2005, The Constellation has facilitated local responses in more than 60 countries, through more than 100 partnerships with governments, national and international organisations: we have also accompanied small groups of people. They have all found SALT and CLCP an effective methodology to advance their projects. Community feedback and external evaluations show systematic and sustainable impact. Our approach is currently being rigorously evaluated in Assam by the Public Health Foundation of India in a project funded by the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3IE).

118
formal contracts signed and implemented by The Constellation

77
partner organisations

25
partners with 2 or more contracts

2215
members of our online community set up in 2008

104
countries represented in our online community

1778
stories posted in our online community

The Constellation has accompanied communities as they applied our methodology to these challenges:

- Agriculture, aquatic agriculture, food justice, forest governance, disaster risk reduction, environment protection, fire, business, entrepreneurship in rural areas, impact evaluation, knowledge management, network strengthening, organisational planning, strategy development, health, child health, maternal health, nutrition, cholera, diabetes, ebola, HIV/AIDS, malaria, poliomyelitis, water, sanitation and hygiene, palliative care, preparedness to pandemics, sexual and reproductive health, drugs, suicide prevention, community development, neighbourhood or village community life, eco-housing, family, gender, aging with dignity, people living with disabilities, youth, school life and education, governance, social audit, participatory action research, human rights, human trafficking, migration, dialogue between religions, peace.
A POSITIVE EPIDEMIC OF TRANSFORMATION IS HAPPENING

Children for a clean environment, Maluku, Indonesia, January 2015.


Neighbourhood meeting in Molenbeek, BelCompetence, Belgium, 2016.

Bottom-up process for the Popay business retreat, 2014.

"The unwanted pregnancies combatants" of Camp Kokolo, the largest military cantonment of DRC, Dr Shadie and Captain John, RDCCompetence, 2016.

Facilitating relationships between health workers and health services users in Gafsa, Tunisia, 2016.

High school students and youth with disabilities commenting mobility, Mobhils, Redon, France, 2016.

Systemic Participatory Action Research project on modern slavery (bonded labour, child labour and trafficking), India, 2016.
Experience since 2005

First partnership signed in March 2005
“…between 83% and 87% [of AIDS Competence Process users] are satisfied and confident that the program achieves impact within communities, based on the experiential outcomes that they see or perceive within their communities.”

Evidence of impact: The SALT approach is effective
Between 2008 and 2013, five external evaluations show the impact of The Constellation approach: reduced stigma and discrimination, greater reflection, strong sense of community ownership, community-led initiatives, increased quality of life… The approach meets local needs and promotes a sustainable response while being cost effective, and it can be implemented with existing interventions and be used for monitoring and evaluation.
“Since communities have raised resources from local sources on their own initiative, it is clear that there is a strong sense of responsibility for the activities planned.” Roll Back Malaria / PATH, Midterm Evaluation of the Malaria Community Competence Process in Nine African Countries (2009).

From the start, the AIDS Competence Process is being adapted to other issues, but, in 2011, **AIDS Competence becomes Community Life Competence**.
An elderly woman who is part of the traditional communicators promoting malaria competence in her community said: “Our children are no longer dying of malaria in Falakula.”

The Constellation has an experienced network of 46 coaches in 20 countries.
AIDS Competence spreads both through formal partnerships involving Constellation coaches, and through many other informal processes.

Realising that change is possible, communities themselves transfer the approach to family, friends, and neighbouring communities.
This viral communication grows parallel to virtual connection, learning and sharing between members on the online platform launched in 2008 on Ning, and on Facebook in 2011.

The Constellation has experience of setting up Facilitation Teams at local, national and international level which deepens the learning process and leads to sustainability.

In Mauritius, 10 organisations and a national team use the SALT approach.

Participants in The Constellation Global Learning Festival bring together their joint learning in a knowledge asset.
Local leaders in Botswana are proud to now have the space and trust to lead the response to HIV/AIDS together with their communities.
Why local response?

We live in a world where there is no shortage of challenges, whether individual, local or national. These challenges affect us all. If we can realise our capacity to be actors in our own lives, we can also activate our collective responsibility to co-create our world.

Our approach

Communities think and act for and by themselves. Facilitators stimulate action through an approach called SALT that appreciates strengths and fosters local ownership. To achieve ownership, communities walk through a rigorous action-learning cycle called the Community Life Competence Process (CLCP).

We are human.

We ALL have hopes and concerns.

We can ALL dream, learn, grow and change.

Progress happens when people connect, share their aspirations, act based on their strengths, learn from experience and own their challenge.

It is not sufficient to engage. It is not enough to consult. Rather we accompany the community as it goes on the path to ownership of their challenge. We call this path Local Response.

Communities have the capacity to respond when they own the issue they struggle with. That capacity remains to be revealed and nurtured. That is the purpose of our mode of interaction with communities characterised by the acronym SALT. SALT stands for "Stimulate and Support", "Appreciate, Authenticity", "Listen, Learn, Link", and "Transfer, Team, Trust and Transform". We think of SALT as the "DNA" of The Constellation. We stimulate communities by looking for people's strengths and by seeking to learn from their experiences.

We call the methodology that communities use the Community Life Competence Process (CLCP). CLCP is a form of learning cycle where a community takes action and learns from its experience. That learning becomes the basis for another round of action and learning. The cycle goes on indefinitely.

The steps of the learning cycle allow a community to divide a daunting challenge into a set of specific and manageable steps.
While we consider CLCP to be an effective implementation of the Learning Cycle, our experience tells us that on its own it would not consistently open the door to change. To make it fully effective, it is essential that we also encourage the community to apply the SALT approach.

**In SALT and CLCP we have a very beautiful and powerful combination:**

The methodology and the approach are mutually reinforcing. When we appreciate the strengths of the community, the community recognises its strengths and can base its action on those strengths. When the community takes action and reflects on that action, it recognises those strengths.

As the community moves through the process, each step documents progress, but the real measure of ownership lies in the depth of discussion, the consistency of engagement, and the joy of achievement that accompanies those steps.

**The Learning Cycle** concludes with a review of actions. One aspect of this review is the collection of material that allows the community to share its achievements with its peers. This produces stories that document what the community has learned from its experience and this forms the basis of the Learning Festival and the Knowledge Asset.

Once the community is comfortable that it has learned from its own experience and from the experience of its peers, it is ready to start the learning cycle once again to move it closer to its dream.
Once we accept the idea that we are going to stimulate, to support and to connect Local Response, many things change. In particular, we change the way in which we engage with communities, and our organisations change the way they think about communities:

Who are we?

The Constellation is a registered Belgian non-profit organisation. Over the years, we have also grown into a movement of individuals and communities, and a network of facilitators and coaches. We are bound by our conviction that every individual and community has the capacity to co-create a common vision, address their own challenges, act and adapt.

Our dream for The Constellation is that by 2050, we will live in a world where communities take action based on their strengths to realise their dream.

Why are we relevant?

The Constellation addresses a global challenge

Local Response is a concept, perhaps even a philosophy, which places the human being and collective wellbeing at its centre.

Telling people that they are wrong and presenting them with “the correct answer” does not work. However, when people know their own strengths and weaknesses, have a common vision, have the tools to learn from their own experience then it becomes possible for them to find a solution to their challenge that is appropriate to their context. When people learn from action, listen without judgement and reflect with others, they become part of a conversation that can lead to a better world.
**The Constellation learns**

The Constellation is a learning organisation. We continually challenge and renew our way of thinking and our way of working while keeping true to the essentials at the heart of what we do: trust in the strength of people, room for error, listening and questioning.

“Collective intelligence is the answer. The facilitator is the question.”
Hervé Guidou, Constellation facilitator.

We work to create a non-hierarchical and non-judgemental environment with the idea that everyone has something to learn and something to share. In a circle of equals, every opportunity to meet is an opportunity to learn.

Learn-and-share is a single process in which we recognise that, when we share experience, we always open the door to an exploration that can lead to new possibilities for both parties.

To learn, we constantly try to better understand the environment in which we work. The spirit of The Constellation lies in the energy, inspiration and meaning that facilitators find in their work with communities.

**The Constellation connects**

The Constellation proposes numerous opportunities to meet face to face (SALT visits, home visits, learning festivals, global learning festivals, learning events, Global Support Team meetings and partnerships) and online (online platform, Blended learning and Triads, Skype, Facebook).

Our online platform is a unique knowledge management tool and virtual community experience: http://aidscompetence.ning.com/.

Our monthly newsletter keeps you posted on what happens in The Constellation.

**The Constellation shares**

Our approach has been developed from the inspiration and insight of many individuals in a wide variety of organisations. In particular, The Constellation recognises the contributions of the Salvation Army, the AIDS Education Program in Chiang Mai, UNAIDS and BP to the development of its methodology.

All resources of The Constellation are available online. However, our experience shows that working together in applying the process brings best results.
Why our partners think we're relevant

“Despite the fact that I believe that "empowerment" is the only solution to achieve sustainable results and that many books have been written to explain the meaning and importance of empowerment, no one could tell me and show me how to do it. I got my answer yesterday!”

Geertrui Oris, Police officer, Belgium, 2016.

“The approach of The Constellation has changed the traditional relationships between those present and allowed the start of a dialogue. Several testimonials confirm that the initial distrust and fear were more or less gradually replaced by a relationship based on trust and mutual listening.”


“Constellation intervened regularly in humanitarian programs that Médecins du Monde has set up in certain disadvantaged governorates in Tunisia, and the result is very positive. The way of working also allowed for the sustainability of actions implemented in view of the practical and symbolic changes induced in the community’s way of working.”

Michel Roland, ULB, on the project in Tunisia.

“Constellation—through the support of two highly skilled trainers—has supported various workshops in Botswana within the scope of CATCH roll out where facilitators from the communities, along with traditional leaders and representatives of community-based structures, have been trained and coached on the process of meaningful consultations and mobilisation of communities through the methodology of the community-life-competence approach. During this process the have demonstrated good competence and high responsiveness to the situation and needs of the communities on the ground. Furthermore, when requested, they have always been very forthcoming by supporting and reviewing documents and processes from a distance.”

Gang Sun, UNAIDS Country Coordinator Botswana (CATCH Project), 2015.

“I highly recommend The Constellation for its participatory approach involving social actors in an approach aiming at the empowerment of individuals and groups in front of the challenges they face”

Dennis Christian Larsen, UNICEF Madagascar Communication Officer, Partnership for the Harmonization of Community Dialogue in Madagascar.

“I definitely recommend The Constellation for its participatory approach involving social actors in an appreciative approach for groups’ empowerment for their personal and collective development.”

Sandrine Gillet, IREPS Mayotte, Training, 2015
AN INVITATION

We invite you to contribute your strengths to a world where communities take action to fulfil their own vision of a better future and connect to each other to learn and share.

Would you like to:

Apply the life competence process in your own community?
For more information on our support:
http://www.communitylifecompetence.org/get-support.html

Share your experience?
www.aidscompetence.ning.com

Contribute your experience and talents to the Constellation’s Global Support Team
http://www.communitylifecompetence.org/contribute-time.html
or to a team near you?
http://www.communitylifecompetence.org/local-support-teams.html

Become a member of our organisation?
http://www.communitylifecompetence.org/become-a-member.html

Contribute financially to The Constellation?
BE62 0015 7904 9761 BIC: GEBABEBB
Constellation, BNP Paribas Fortis
Grez-Doiceau, Belgium
PayPal donations are also possible via our website:
http://www.communitylifecompetence.org/en/103-contribute-money
Financial contributions starting from 40 € are tax exempted in Belgium and many other European countries.

Would you like to know more? Please contact Marlou:
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The Constellation
connecting local responses around the world

Together, we’re striving for Life Competence