



Evaluation of the Art of Hosting and Harvesting Conversations that Matter

Success Works Conferences 2009-2011

October 2011

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1. Executive Summary

Success Works has undertaken an evaluation of the five Art of Hosting and Harvesting Conversations that Matter (AoH) conferences that it has organised in Australia. The purpose of this evaluation is to contribute to the evidence base of AoH by determining the conferences' effectiveness, and exploring how participants can be further supported in their learning. A literature review, surveys, interviews and a live evaluation have been undertaken.

The evaluation has found that nearly all AoH participants changed their intent and approach to communicating with others as a result of attending the conferences. Participants reported that this enabled them to explore issues more deeply through having noticeably different conversations.

Almost nine in ten participants reported having used at least one of the methodologies in their organisation one month after the completion of the conference. Almost all (97%) reported a positive impact on their work and more than nine in ten (92%) reported a positive impact on their organisation. Participants also reported using the methodologies in their personal lives, with almost nine in ten (88%) reporting a positive impact on their life, and more than seven in ten (72%) on their community.

There are also early indications that some participants' organisations are adopting the tools and methodologies into their processes and structures, while some are also incorporating the AoH teachings into their professional culture.

This evaluation confirms that the design and delivery of the three day residential conference successfully provides AoH learning and development. The evaluation also confirms that there are strengths in residential delivery; the length of the conference; the mix between experiencing the methodologies and the teachings; the opportunities to co-host; morning practice; and a non-metropolitan venue. There are also advantages in cohort diversity and participants suggest a cohort size of between 30 to 45 participants. The materials provided and the pre-conference preparation also supported participants.

Areas for further focus and investigation include further support for participants in transferring their new knowledge and skills into application, through post-conference support and strategies for improving organisational support for participants to experiment professionally with the methodologies. In relation to the pedagogy, being explicit about experiential learning appears important, as does explaining which methodology to use when and on what basis to make that decision. Scaffolded learning could be further investigated to further support participants who need it and extend those who are ready. Allowing participant questioning, feedback and encouraging the voice of dissent may also assist. Pre-conference preparation could also be further emphasised, and further caution could be given in regard to the depth of experience of hosts when organising AoH conferences.

Further investigation could also be made into how to continue to support participants through the paradigm shift being advocated by AoH, and the extent to which this is achieved by both them and their organisations.

Based on the findings and analysis, the following eleven recommendations are made for consideration by Success Works and the AoH hosting community.

Recommendation 1: That post-conference support be prioritised and that further consideration be made into what could provide participants such support.

Recommendation 2: That further consideration be given regarding what could provide participants, or assist participants in gaining, organisational support.

Recommendation 3: That framing be explicit for participants that they are undertaking experiential learning.

Recommendation 4: That the “which methodology when and why” teaching be provided as a full group teaching during conferences.

Recommendation 5: That further priority be given to pre-conference preparation for participants.

Recommendation 6: That consideration be made to further scaffold the learning for participants, such that some participants are further supported in their learning, and others are further extended.

Recommendation 7: That further consideration be given to allowing participant questions to be heard and answered, and encouraging the voice of dissent.

Recommendation 8: That further consideration be given to supporting participants through the paradigm shift being advocated, especially in relation to how they can relate this back to their professional organisation in their current position.

Recommendation 9: That particular care be given to considering the depth of experience on the hosting team when organising an AoH conference.

Recommendation 10: That framing be explicit that everyone is on an AoH spectrum of learning (the Four Fold Practice).

Recommendation 11: That consideration be made to creating more materials regarding stories of application as a method to assist transferring a depth of hosting experience to new hosts.

Success Works intends to continue this evaluation, to further contribute to the evidence base to support and influence a broader and deeper acceptance of AoH. The following are suggested next steps in relation to this evaluation.

- Inviting feedback from the international host community in relation to this evaluation, its findings and analysis.
- Using the AoH methodologies to have conversations about the findings and analysis of this evaluation.

- Conducting an evaluation of the Stewardship group facilitated by Success Works, which will focus on the medium term outcomes for participants and their organisations, and the nature and context of successful post-conference support. This could be enhanced by incorporating the upcoming work in Nova Scotia, as well as investigation into the types of post-conference support possible, including online support.
- Further consideration of other opportunities for evaluation of medium term outcomes for participants and organisations.
- Investigating further frameworks which may be used for evaluative purposes, to be used in conjunction with the learning and development frameworks used in this evaluation. Examples may include frameworks or rubrics related to cognitive development for assessing the personal and organisational paradigm shifts occurring with particular interest in technical and adaptive learning and leadership frameworks.
- Inviting others to coordinate and conduct more interviews of participants nationally and internationally across the AoH community.
- Revisiting the project logic and evaluation questions in light of the current findings.
- Conducting further evaluations of upcoming AoH conferences.

Success Works wishes to thank the international hosting community for their guidance, wisdom and support, our partner organisations for participating and making the Australian conferences possible, and finally the participants for taking part in the conferences and willingly sharing their views with the evaluation team.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation is to understand how the learning and development experience of the AoH conferences and related activities support and enhance participants' learning journeys.

The purpose is to determine the extent and types of outcomes achieved by participants, and to test assumptions embedded within the structure of the learning and development experience. We are hoping to contribute to the evidence base to support and influence a broader and deeper acceptance of AoH.

Success Works intends to share the results of the evaluation with the broader AoH international community, and incorporate their feedback for ongoing improvement and evaluation of the AoH.

3. Background

The following outlines the background of AoH itself, as well as Success Works' involvement in providing AoH learning and development.

3.1 AoH

AoH is known as both a network of practitioners and a learning and development program, developing capacity for strategic conversations to create wise actions and systemic change.

It is understood to be a response to a world that is becoming increasingly complex and fragmented, where true solutions and innovation lie not in one leader or one viewpoint, but in the bigger picture of our collective intelligence.

The three day educational experience is explained as a practice ground for all who aspire to bring out the best in others.

AoH is based on the assumption that human beings have enormous untapped resources and resilience and sustainable solutions lie in the collective wisdom of a group.

3.2 Australian Conferences

The first AoH conference to be held in Australia was organised by Dierdre Downie in September 2008 with 46 participants. One of these participants was Stephen Duns, Managing Partner of Success Works.

Success Works has since organised several learning and development conferences in relation to the AoH, as well as related learning and development activities and consulting work. These are the subject of this evaluation.

To date, 203 people have experienced the AoH conferences organised by Success Works, some multiples times. In total the five conferences are:

- The Art of Hosting and Harvesting Conversations that Matter, in Warburton, September 2009
- Participatory Leadership through the AoH, in Warburton, March 2010
- Participatory Leadership through the AoH, in Hepburn Springs, September 2010
- Social Leadership through the AoH, in Warburton, May 2011
- Social Leadership through the AoH, in Warburton, August 2011

Success Works has worked closely with international hosts to deliver the conferences. Apart from the conference in May 2011 international hosts have been present for all conferences, particularly Toke Møller and Monica Nissén.

In particular, two key social service provision organisations have consistently sent different groups of participants to each conference.

Success Works has also run a Stewardship: Journey Towards Deeper Practice regular community of practice, which offers monthly meetings for a group of practitioners which span several organisations.

4. Methodology

The following methodology was employed for this evaluation, as described by the:

- activities undertaken and
- the principles observed.

4.1 Activities

Initially a Project Logic was developed that describes the conferences' inputs, activities and outputs, the intended outcomes, and implicit assumptions (see appendix A). Evaluation Questions were then agreed upon based on the outcomes and assumptions of the Project Logic (see appendix B). Some key features of the Project Logic outputs, short and medium term outcomes are that:

- participants have experience of AoH methodologies
- participants start to have different conversations in their organisations and/or personal lives
- participants use the methodologies to make change in their workplaces and personal lives
- organisations that participate as a group see the value of changing their existing practices to embrace the methodologies.

It is noted that some medium term and all long term outcomes are beyond the scope of this evaluation, although these are noted to be that:

- organisations who participate as a group make large scale changes to the way they communicate and work
- interactions between people are meaningful and create positive change
- organisations are more effective in dealing with complexity.

A literature review was undertaken to research learning and development and evaluative frameworks to support this evaluation, as well as investigating some of the assumptions. The literature review can be viewed at chapter 11.

One-on-one interviews with a random sample of sixteen participants were undertaken. The random sample was from all conferences, which meant some interviewees had up to one year since attending the conference by the time of the interview. Some participants in this random sample had also attended multiple conferences. The interviews focused on short and medium term outcomes, and tested assumptions of the Project Logic. The evaluation report from the interview analysis can be found in chapter 12.

A live evaluation was undertaken of a single conference (August 2011) where an evaluator was embedded in the hosting team, and participant feedback was garnered through harvesting activities. This focused on analysis of the inputs and activities of the Project Logic. The live evaluation report can be viewed in chapter 13.

Surveys of all participants were undertaken of the three latest conferences (September 2010, May 2011, and August 2011). These surveys were conducted approximately one month following the completion of the conference. They focused on feedback regarding the activities, outputs and short term outcomes of the Project Logic. The evaluation reports from each survey can be reviewed in chapters 14, 15 and 16.

A systemic analysis was then undertaken across each element to inform this meta-evaluation report.

4.2 Principles

Success Works adopts a constructivist approach to evaluation. Constructivism is based on the belief that 'truth' is not objectively knowable but is individually and collectively constructed by the people who experience it¹. As constructivist evaluators we assume that there are many different ways of interpreting the intent and impact of a policy or program and that the evaluator must gather together understandings and experiences from a diverse range of perspectives.

To this end, Success Works combines qualitative and quantitative methodologies in a *mixed method* approach to data collection. We use qualitative approaches to gain an understanding of the issues. We use these understandings to formulate research questions for use in surveys and in our analysis of other available data sets.

The process of *triangulating* findings is critical when analysing data within a constructivist paradigm. Triangulating the data enables 'shared truth' to be identified. Qualitative and quantitative data share equal place within the triangulation process. The outcome is a robust representation of the scope, impact and outcomes of the policy or program in question.

In a complex world, where many things are true that may also be contradictory, the starting point for determining future directions is to establish what is already working well. In complexity theory this is called *positive deviance*, and is often referred to as a strengths paradigm. We identify 'what works' and then build on those strengths. This strengths approach recognises that there is no 'one way' in which things can or should be done. Rather, different organisations and different systems have diverse strengths and starting points and, to be successful, they should build on what they are already doing well and do more of that more often. There is an increasing body of evidence that shows the most effective way to overcome our challenges and problems is by using our strengths.

Complexity and systems thinking were also employed in the analysis of the data. A systems approach offers a powerful perspective in dealing with challenging complex issues, allowing the evaluator to see the conferences as part of a broader system. Taking this perspective allows us to see the relationships among the system's parts, and how these

¹ The other major approach to evaluation is positivism or post positivism. These approaches start from an understanding that truth is objectively knowable (positivism) or able to be approximated (post-positivism).

relationships impact the operation of individual parts. In this case, a systems approach to the analysis of the AoH data offers an opportunity to better understand the initiative itself due to a greater understanding of the domestic and international system/s of which it is a part. This places the evaluator in a better position to design smart, enduring solutions to identified issues, along with ways to strengthen the parts of the systems that already work well.

5. Findings: Outcomes

In summary the findings of the evaluation demonstrate that the AoH conference participants generally:

- were satisfied with the learning and development provided
- acquired new AoH knowledge and skills
- had applied AoH in their workplaces and/or personal lives, and
- saw the value in applying AoH.

There are also indications by some participants that their organisations are incorporating AoH into their structures, processes, and culture.

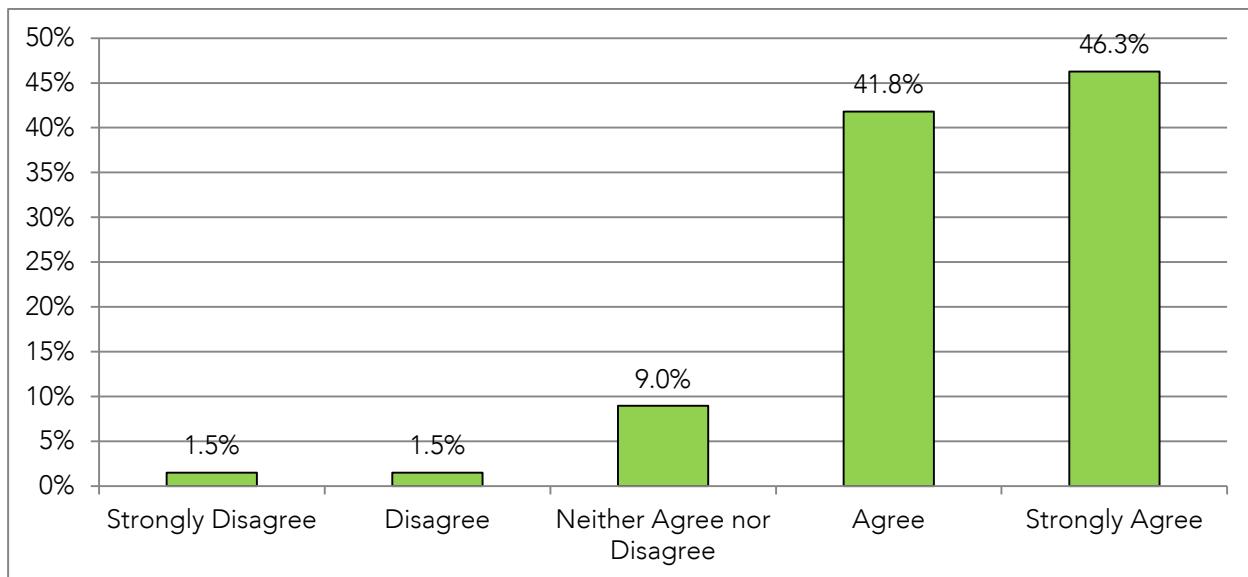
5.1 Participants are satisfied with the learning and development experience

According to the literature review, both Kirkpatrick and Guskey's models of evaluating effective training have, as the first step, the idea of a positive reaction to the training. Kirkpatrick uses initial participant reaction and asks to what degree participants react favourably to the training, whereas Guskey asks about the participants' initial satisfaction with the experience. Although both note these are not accurate determinants for learning effectiveness, it still provides useful information for the learning and development providers.

Across the three conferences, participants consistently agreed (42%) or strongly agreed (46%) that they were "very satisfied" with the learning and development experience, representing nine in ten participants. Around one eleventh of participants neither agreed nor disagreed and a few participants disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Figure 1: Satisfaction with the conference

I was very satisfied with the training experience.



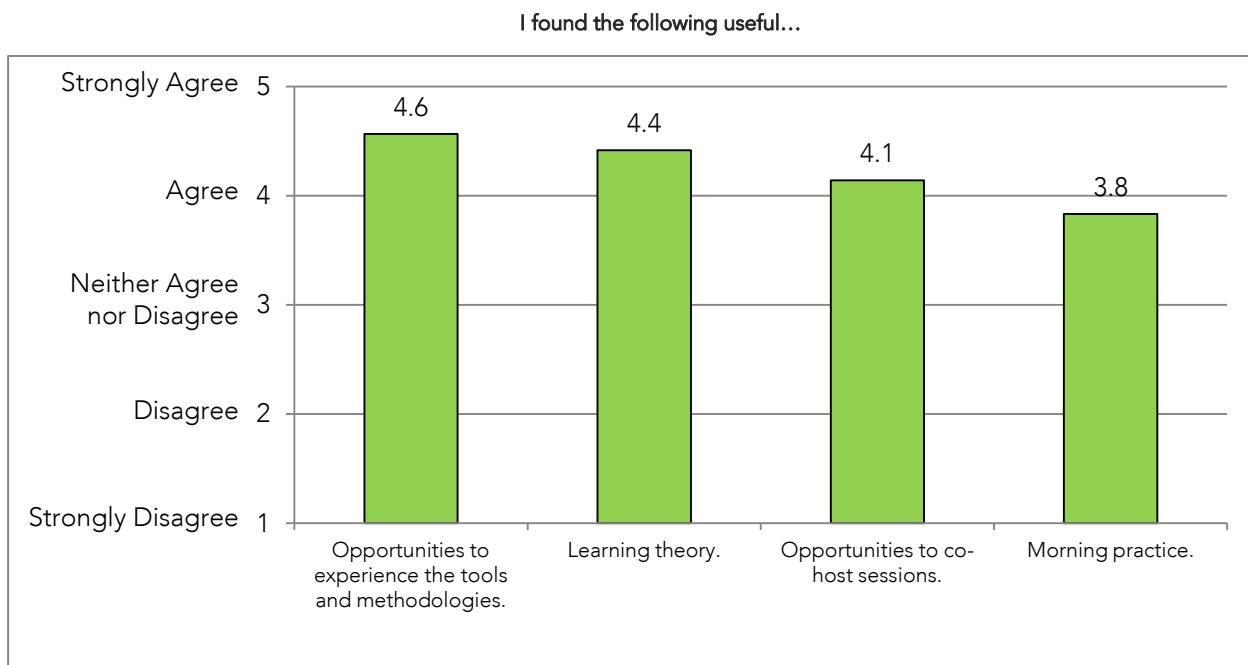
Interviewees also agreed they were satisfied with the conference.

"... the programming of how the days unfolded was nice ... It was deliberately structured to lead me to my learnings... structured teaching and voluntary opportunities were well balanced... [and there was also] great practical learning."

The live evaluation showed participants had experience of each of the four core methodologies, some multiple times, and also experienced some additional methodologies.

Participants across the three surveys and in interviews generally agreed the opportunities to experience the tools and methodologies were the strongest learning experiences of the conferences, as represented in the graph below.

Figure 2: Usefulness of the learning and development activities



Learning theory and opportunities to co-host sessions also recorded average responses between agreement and strong agreement. Morning practice averaged to a response between agreement and a neutral stance, although it should be noted that morning practice is optional, so not all participants would have experienced it. In particular:

- 96% agreed or strongly agreed that having opportunities to experience the tools and methodologies was useful
- 92% agreed or strongly agreed that learning theory was useful.

5.2 Participants acquire new AoH knowledge and skills

Within the literature review both Kirkpatrick and Guskey describe the acquisition of new knowledge and skills as a key evaluative element of assessing learning and development. It is described as the degree to which “participants acquired the intended knowledge, skills, attitudes, confidence, and commitment based on their participation in a training event.”

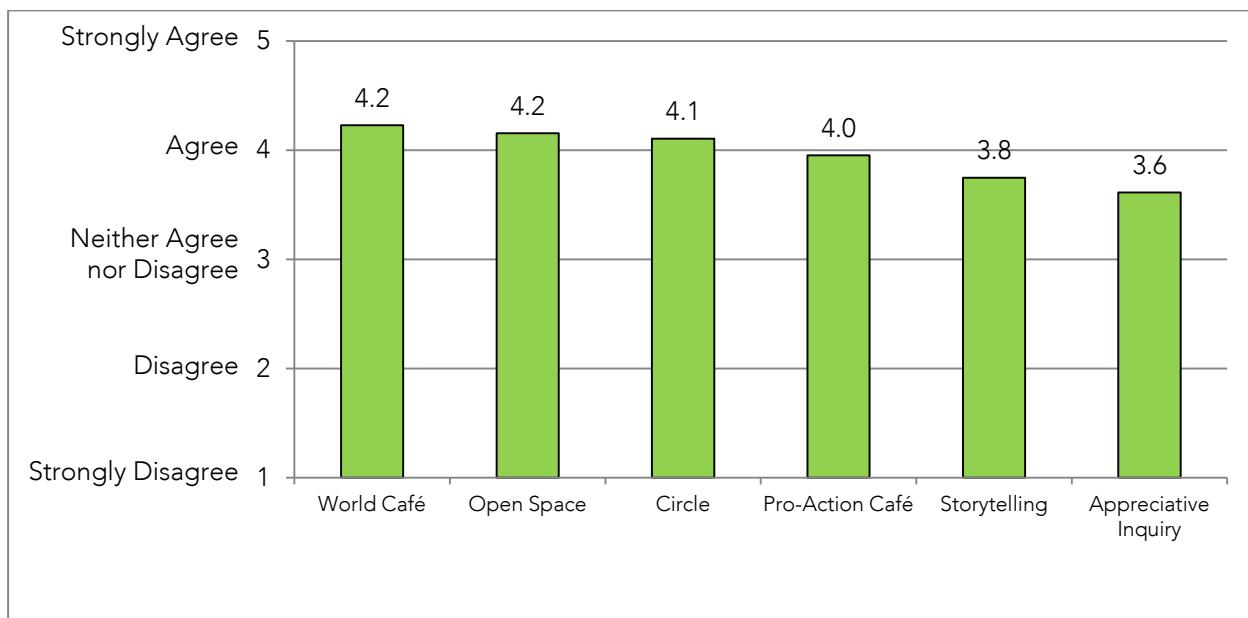
Methodologies

The literature review showed AoH intends that the methodologies represent a different way to approach issues, such that if methodologies are being applied, the participant is harnessing this different approach. Participants generally agreed that through learning the theory and methodologies of World Café, Open Space, Circle, Pro-Action Café, Storytelling and Appreciative Inquiry, they had learnt about different ways to approach issues.

The graph below shows participant responses from across the three conferences indicate general agreement across the cohort that they had learnt enough about each methodology to apply it within their organisation.

Figure 3: Methodology skills and knowledge

I have gained enough skills and knowledge from the conference(s) to apply the methodologies in my organisation....



Across the three conferences participants rated World Café most strongly for having enough skills and knowledge to apply it within their organisation, followed by Open Space and Circle. Pro-Action Café, Storytelling and Appreciative Inquiry were rated slightly less strongly however still achieved average responses that equate to cohort agreement that they had enough skills and knowledge to apply it within their organisation. In particular:

- 92% agreed or strongly agreed that they could apply World Café
- 86% agreed or strongly agreed that they could apply Open Space
- 83% agreed or strongly agreed that they could apply Circle
- 78% agreed or strongly agreed that they could apply Pro-Action Café
- 69% agreed or strongly agreed that they could apply Storytelling
- 63% agreed or strongly agreed that they could apply Appreciative Inquiry.

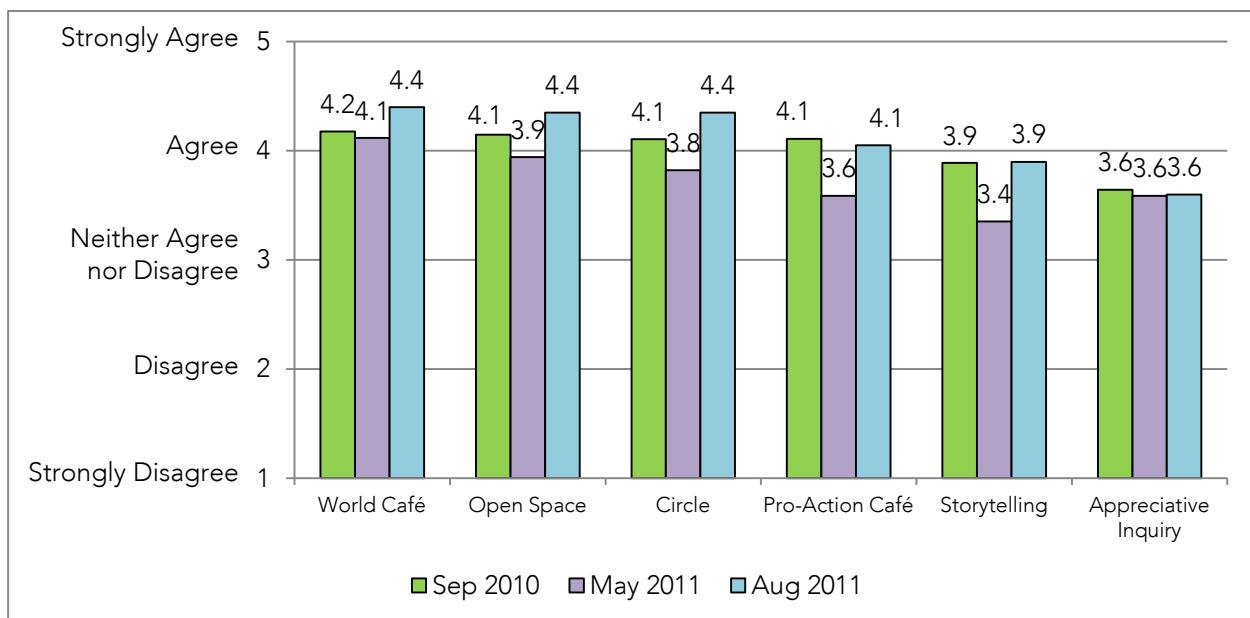
Interviewees expanded upon this agreement that they had learnt enough to apply the methodologies following the conference.

"One of the most valuable things I took away a stronger sense of understanding of the techniques and what it takes to put it into practice."

The following graph shows the difference in responses across the three conferences for each methodology.

Figure 4: Methodology skills and knowledge (by conference)

I have gained enough skills and knowledge from the conference(s) to apply the methodologies in my organisation....



The conference of May 2011 consistently received a lower response across the methodologies, which will be discussed below under chapter 7 Further Analysis, however it can also be seen that there is some consistency in participant responses for each methodology. Participants report having gained enough skills and knowledge to apply World Café, Open Space, and Circle relatively consistently. Storytelling and Appreciative Inquiry appear consistently lower.

Storytelling is particularly low for the May 2011 conference where there were some participants who expressed strong disagreement, hence affecting the cohort average response. Comments show that those participants thought there was a lack of safety in the teaching of that session, and they could not see the value in it.

Theory

Regarding learning the theory behind the methodologies, responses from the surveys indicate participants found this useful, and responses from the interviews show that participants appeared to have understood the theories taught.

In the surveys participants indicated that learning theory was useful. Across the surveys almost all individual theories asked about that were taught at the conference received agreement or strong agreement that it was useful to learn. The interviewees mentioned having learnt the following theories, among others, without prompting:

- the dimensions of chaos and control
- the importance of the question, and powerful questions
- the importance of the invitation
- harvesting
- personal practice, or whole-of-person practice

- holding the space
- the chaordic path
- systems/complexity thinking
- the nature of organisations, with differences between circle and hierarchy based models.

It appears that learning the theory behind the methodologies assisted participants to understand the approach and basis of the methodologies.

5.3 Participants apply AoH in their workplaces and/or personal lives

All interviewees noted there was now a difference in their intent and approach to communicating with others as a result of attending the conference. Both personally and organisationally, they felt the learnings gained from the conference had enabled them to explore issues more deeply. All interviewees indicated they have had noticeably different conversations. Some have been purposeful in their attempts to use different approaches, including using specific language and listening techniques.

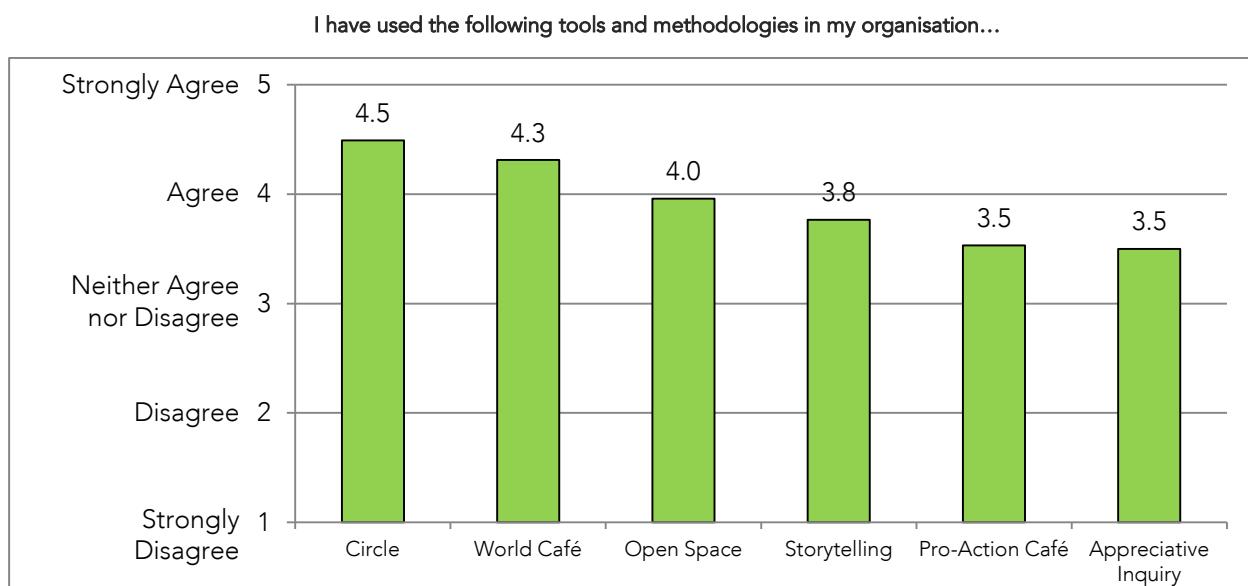
"I'm listening differently, I'm usually outcomes driven [but] I've started listening more to the journey."

The majority of people interviewed had tried out some or all of the techniques they learned within the conference. The most consistently applied were Circle, World Café, and Open Space Technology. Many said they were purposefully taking a different approach to conversations with work colleagues and several interviewees reported having tried out ideas in their personal life. These included practices and concepts such as meditation, mindfulness, Appreciative Inquiry and Circle. Some referred to hosting conversations with 'themselves' and others used the practices with their personal lives.

"They didn't know it, but [I did] Appreciative Inquiry with a large family group. The rest feels too constructive to apply in life but certainly Circle with family coming together."

Respondents to the surveys, which were completed approximately one month after each AoH conference, indicated that many had used the AoH tools and methodologies in their organisation. Below are the results from across two conferences, as one post-conference survey did not include this specific question.

Figure 5: Use of methodologies



Participants indicated that the most commonly used methodology was Circle, followed by World Café and Open Space. Storytelling, Pro-Action Café and Appreciative Inquiry also were indicated by many to have been applied as well. In particular:

- 88% indicated they had used Circle in their organisation
- 86% indicated they had used World Café in their organisation
- 71% indicated they had used Open Space in their organisation
- 63% indicated they had used Storytelling in their organisation
- 59% indicated they had used Pro-Action Café in their organisation
- 53% indicated they had used Appreciative Inquiry in their organisation.

"[I] have already tried a few of these back in the workplace with good results."

The interviews suggest that application and understanding is further enhanced where participants become part of a network, such as a Community of Practice, beyond the initial learning experience. The interviewees noted their ability to draw others into experimenting with the tools within their organisation, however, was impacted upon by the structure, processes and leadership of their organisation, and that this could present a real barrier to extending and deepening the AoH practice of participants. This aligns with Guskey's evaluative model of professional learning highlighting the importance of organisational support for participant application of new knowledge and skills.

The interviews indicated that maintaining ongoing relationships with other participants appeared to lessen the negative impact of the lack of organisational support by providing a community of 'like-minded' individuals.

5.4 Participants see value in applying AoH

Across the surveys, interviews, and live evaluation, participants saw the value in applying AoH to their workplaces as well as their personal lives.

Respondents to the surveys generally agreed or strongly agreed that the tools and methodologies they had learnt had had a positive impact of their work, organisation, life and community, as illustrated below.

Figure 6: Positive impact from the conference



Participants rated the positive impact on their work most strongly, which may align with the fact that many participants at the conferences were attending as representatives of their workplace. Participants also saw a positive impact for their organisation, with most also seeing a positive impact for the life, and their community. In particular:

- 97% agreed or strongly agreed that there had been a positive impact on their work
- 92% agreed or strongly agreed that there had been a positive impact on their organisation
- 88% agreed or strongly agreed that there had been a positive impact on their life
- 72% agreed or strongly agreed that there had been a positive impact on their community.

Interviewees reflected this sentiment, and the live evaluation showed some participants were experiencing deep, personal questions sparked by the AoH learning.

"Do I have the courage to work through why/how the world needs me?"

"Can I afford to take the risk of NOT thinking and practicing and questioning and learning in these ways?"

"What can't we achieve when we tap into people's insight, goodwill, energy and creativity?"

5.5 Organisations see value in applying AoH

As noted above, participants clearly saw positive impacts for their organisation by learning about AoH, however this is separate to the organisations seeing value in adopting AoH into their structures, processes and culture. The extent to which organisations have adopted the AoH methodologies is beyond the scope of this current evaluation, however participant responses indicate that some have actively sought to incorporate AoH methodologies into the structures and processes of their organisation.

"We are working on how to get better processes into Board of Management structures... better listening, less adversarial... Trying to get people to be kind."

Some have also incorporated the theory behind AoH into the culture of the organisation.

"Not only myself, but certainly the organisation now uses different language. I am leading the use of AoH and I consciously use the language."

Some commented further that they saw shifts were taking place within their organisation that would further allow AoH to be applied.

"There are more opportunities in government now. Some of the linear, boxed thinking is less prominent. People are thinking about leadership...and are being reflective....questioning the way things are done."

The next steps for this evaluation include further investigation into the medium term outcomes for participants' organisations.

6. Findings: Design and Delivery

The evaluation found that several aspects of the design and delivery of the AoH conferences were important factors in participants achieving outcomes. These related to the conference:

- being well planned
- being a residential, especially at a non-metropolitan venue set in natural habitat
- being a length of three-days
- having a strength in a diverse cohort of between 35-40 participants
- having materials that support learning, as well as support pre-conference preparations.

6.1 Planning

The majority of interviewees expressed a high level of satisfaction with the way the conferences were planned. Comments related to the pace and style of the program and indicated an understanding by participants that a high level of planning supported what in fact appeared to be quite a fluid and unstructured process. Equally, the balance between theory and practice was generally assessed positively across those interviewed, as well as when asked about in the surveys.

6.2 Residential and Place

The literature review notes that residential conferences can allow for extended dialogues, unhurried reflection, identification of shared goals, active learning, stimulation, camaraderie and a safe place to experiment. It was also noted that training programs offered in an off-site residential setting have been found to lead to self-discovery, more open and honest discussion with peers or other participants, problem solving discussions, including those that can happen after hours and behaviour change.

Interviewees indicated the residential style most suited the subject matter and promoted learning.

"It was more concentrated: it meant we could take up offers to run things and continue the learning rather than taking it home to family and friends and creating that break in the learning."

The residential experience was seen as essential to achieve the learning experience by all but one person who was concerned about smaller community based not-for-profit groups being excluded because of costs.

"Residential is so intense, you are meeting on deep level. Residential allows opportunity to dissipate or bring together that energy. You would break or lose concentration of that, the conference needs to be residential for the training."

Each conference was held outside a metropolitan area and in a venue surrounded by natural habitat. Around four-fifths of interviewees agreed that the natural environment was a necessary part of the learning experience, with several commenting the environment made for a more reflective space and that the setting fitted with the theoretical underpinnings of the AoH program ideals.

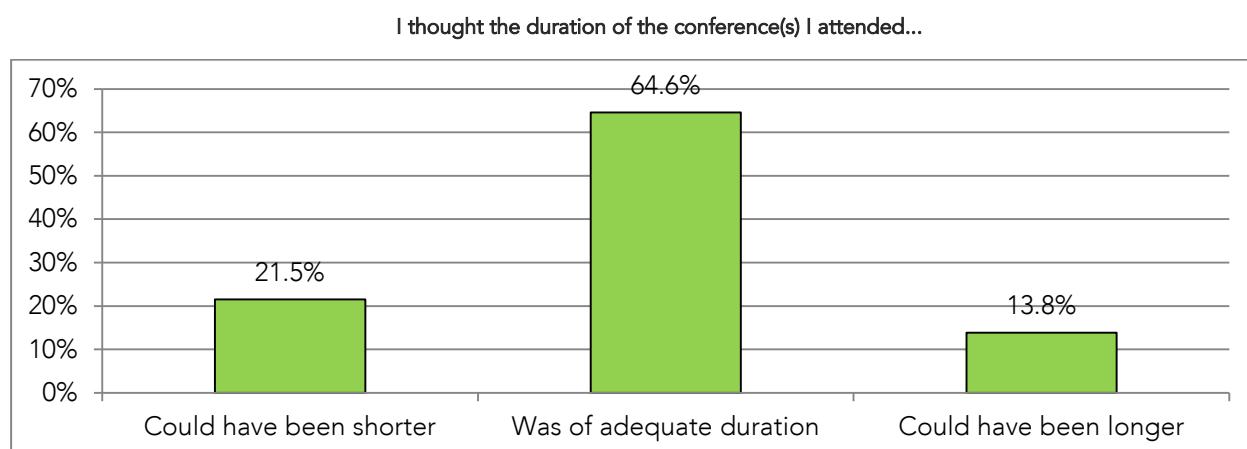
"All the techniques are around space and containers. Some places, closed in, will not give the same learning opportunities. In the bush allowed for mindfulness."

Those who expressed concern about the non-metropolitan venues indicated that cost, disability access and access for participants with family obligations may restrict participation.

6.3 Length

Each conference was three days in length. Almost two-thirds of survey respondents generally felt the conference was of adequate length, while around one-fifth indicated that the conference could have been shorter and one-eighth said it could have been longer.

Figure 7: Conference duration



6.4 Cohort size and diversity

The average cohort size suggested by participants was between 30-45. Reasons given were mostly around the perceived ability to connect with others on a deeper level and achieve the same learning outcomes. Most felt that a larger group would negatively impact

upon the effectiveness of the conference. In particular, the interactive elements such as circle work would be more difficult to manage.

"40 odd is a good balance, if bigger [it] could break the interactive process. I got to meet most people. 20-30 could go deeper."

Overwhelmingly, interviewees stated they benefitted from being exposed to people from other backgrounds and sectors. It was felt that this prevented the focus from getting bogged down in the day-to-day issues and move towards gaining positive perspective from diversity and difference. However, in one survey, there was a theme among respondents that too many participants from one sector limited the ability of participants from other sectors to engage with the material.

6.5 Materials

In each conference a workbook of over 130 pages in length was distributed. Interviewees strongly agreed that the workbook was useful with many commenting on their use of the book in the weeks and months following the training; particularly copying and distributing parts of the book to explain the theories:

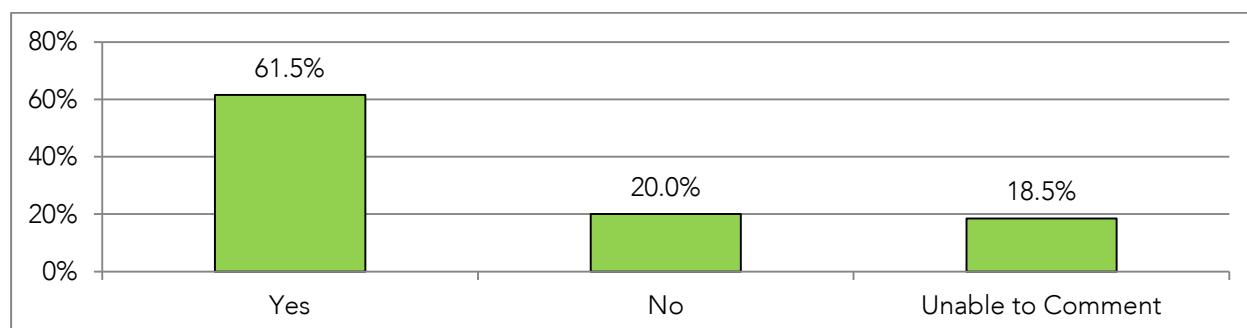
"Not so much while I was there... but it was great to come back to with my notes later, the references were excellent. It gave lots of avenues for further study."

Some interviewees believed, however, the information in the workbook could be better organised. It is noted that the workbook has since been modified.

For each conference a brochure was distributed outlining the nature and key questions to be considered at the conference. The graph below indicates that around three-fifths of survey respondents across the three conferences thought the language in the brochure accurately portrayed their experience of the conference. One-fifth indicated the language in the brochure did not accurately portray their experience and around a further fifth of survey respondents were not able to comment.

Figure 8: Language of the brochure

Thinking back, did the language of the brochure(s) accurately portray your experience of the conference(s)?



Interviewees felt the pre-questions and communication prior to attending the conference helped to characterise the nature of the program as being something 'different'. Some recalled feeling hesitant and nervous on reading the questions. There was also a sense that the true purpose of this communication wasn't fully realised until after attending the conference. The literature review also highlighted the importance of pre-conference preparation for learning effectiveness.

7. Further Analysis

Themes have emerged from the meta-evaluation which relate to key influencing factors in participants achieving outcomes from the AoH conferences. These are discussed in four categories:

- application
- pedagogy
- paradigm shift, and
- the depth of experience of hosts.

7.1 Application

The acquisition of new knowledge and skills is distinct from the ability to apply those new knowledge and skills. Learning and development frameworks highlight this distinction.

While the majority of survey and interview respondents indicated they had applied one or more of the methodologies, the ability to transfer the improved knowledge and understanding into application within a workplace and/or personal life remained an important focus for participants. It was noted in the live evaluation that the story of application was found particularly insightful by participants. It was also the focus of most participant questions at the end of Day 2. The Columbus Medical Association Foundation evaluation included in the literature review also showed participants wanted more exposure to situations where it would be appropriate to apply AoH. Participants in the interviews, surveys and live evaluation were asking about the post-conference support and making reference to the importance of the organisational culture in regard to application of something ‘different’.

Essentially this theme relates to importance of the “how?” to participants and discusses both:

- post-conference support, and
- organisational support.

Post-conference support

Participants across the surveys, interviews, and live evaluation had questions or comments about post-conference support. There was a consistent interest by many participants in both continuing their learning in regard to AoH and in creating sustainable practice of AoH personally and in their organisations. The literature review also highlighted research which showed post-conference support as critical to creating behavioural change; that up to 50% of learning effectiveness is attributable to follow-up activities. In the AoH context the interviews showed involvement in communities of practice increased both application and understanding of theory.

The literature review highlighted possible post-conference support options including:

- On-the-job assistance
- Mentoring programs
- Internet forums
- Refresher or follow-up courses

The Columbus evaluation also explored what types of post-conference support would most likely be utilised by participants, with more than half saying they would be very likely to attend a two-hour refresher training, slightly less than half saying they would be very likely to attend quarterly two-hour gatherings, a third very likely to use online technology, and only a few very likely to utilise monthly one-hour conference calls.

In the Australian (Success Works) context there are communities of practice internal to partner organisations. Two attempts have also been made by participants to form a broader community of practice. Emails with materials have also been sent to participants following each conference, including contact details of participants. The interviews showed networking can also be sustained successfully online, however any form of networking tended to drop away over time. There is also an online NING to facilitate international collaboration in relation to AoH, and it is understood this is referenced in the materials and was mentioned by the hosts at each of the three conferences. It is unclear the extent to which participants have accessed this resource.

Given the importance of post-conference support, it is suggested that further consideration be made into what could provide participants such support. Support options may include:

- a workplace project to encourage and support participants to apply a methodology within their professional context. This could include communication to participants and their leaders that completion of such a project is an expectation of the program.
- a fourth day to reconvene the participant cohort to discuss application, which could be framed around the workplace project undertaken
- conference packages could be offered that include more post-program support, such as periodic coaching by the hosts
- mentoring or buddy systems with past AoH participants or Stewardship community members
- other forms of coaching, or
- further work on an online portal, and communicating this to participants.

Organisational support

The culture of an organisation impacts upon a participants ability to apply their learning in their workplace. The Guskey learning and development framework highlights the importance of organisational support for the application of new knowledge and skills.

The interviews show the pre-existing culture of an organisation determines the tolerance for trying something ‘different’ which can either support or hinder application by

participants. It was found that leadership style of senior management was a critical factor of whether participants applied their new knowledge and skills in their workplace or not. Some interviews linked this with being “allowed to experiment” with the methodologies. The live evaluation also showed participants had questions about “mandate” – how to apply AoH without a mandate, or how to create a mandate to enable application of AoH.

This theme also corresponds with the teachings of AoH about “living systems” and “participatory” approaches which may be different to many existing hierarchical structures and processes operating within participants’ organisations.

The importance of organisational support thus appears to be critically important for participants to apply their learning from the AoH learning and development.

In regard to improving organisational support, the interviews showed attendance as part of a group benefits participants as it increases the safety within the organisation for experimenting and trying new approaches. The Columbus evaluation also noted many participants indicated a need for additional support to increase organisational safety, including suggestions that others in participants’ organisations be trained and more support be won from participants’ managers and organisations. This raises the question of whether managers should attend the AoH conferences, or full hierarchies? And what is the best mix to increase feelings of safety for participants to apply and experiment with the methodologies in their workplace? What other strategies may assist participants in gaining a “mandate” or permission from their managers and/or organisation to apply and experiment with the methodologies?

Given the importance of organisational support, it is suggested that further consideration be made as to what could provide participants, or assist participants in gaining, organisational support. Options may include:

- the workplace project as discussed above, which is communicated as an expectation of the program to a participants’ leader
- encouraging group attendance through organisational packages
- communication with participants’ leaders prior to and/or following the conference to explain AoH and encourage explicit permission for participants to experiment with the methodologies in the workplace
- coaching or mentoring packages for organisations
- researching specific stories or strategies to give participants during the conference about how to bring along managers, or engage a “mandate”

7.2 Pedagogy

Several themes emerged relating to the method and practice of the learning provided, or pedagogy, of the conferences. These related to:

- being explicit about experiential learning
- being explicit about which methodology to use when and why

- pre-conference preparation
- providing scaffolded learning, and
- allowing participant questions and the voice of dissent to be heard

Experiential learning

The findings of the evaluation show the strength of the experiential learning provided during the conferences, however the value of being explicit about this was seen in the live evaluation. Allowing participants to experience the methodologies was the strongest learning for participants, and being explicit to the participants that they were “learning by doing” such as through initial introductions or “framing” by the hosts, appeared important for participants to be confident in their learning. Co-hosting also appeared to be an important experiential learning for participants in the longer term. Explicit experiential learning should continue to be offered.

Which methodology when and why?

The live evaluation showed that participants may have left the conference with questions remaining about the set of methodologies experienced, particularly which methodology to use when, and on what basis to make that decision.

The live evaluation noted a “methodology Café” was provided in the August 2011 conference, although it only had two rounds, while there are four core methodologies – meaning participants could only have heard a full session about two methodologies at a maximum. The live evaluation noted that one methodology Café session hosted by Monica Nissén was explicitly on this topic of “which methodology when” but the whole group did not experience this teaching.

Further group learning could be provided during the conference about each methodology, and the basis on which to choose the use of each methodology.

Pre-conference preparation

The literature review suggests pre-conference preparation determines up to a quarter of learning effectiveness. The interviews showed that the pre-questions and communications prior to attending the conference were important, characterising the conference as being ‘different’. Some interviewees recalled feeling hesitant and nervous reading the questions, although those who attended twice engaged with the intent of the calling questions more the second time around. The literature review highlighted the importance of “exciting” the participant for learning in this pre-conference stage – it should motivate, excite, be brief and create a framework for the participant to enter the learning.

This reflects the AoH teaching of the importance of invitation. It is understood that for each conference a calling question was sent to participants, and it was requested that they bring an object representing their authentic self. Further emphasis could be placed on the pre-conference preparation, including how to further motivate and excite participants in

preparation for the conference. This may also relate to garnering further organisational support, as discussed above, if participants' leaders or organisations were involved in the pre-conference preparation.

Scaffolded learning

In light of feedback by a minor but consistent portion of participants across conferences that they were at times overwhelmed by dense content, long days, or needed more reflective time, further investigation could be made into how to allow these participants more time to reflect, or more assistance to embed their learning.

Further investigation could be made into pedagogical frameworks, such as those relating to scaffolded learning.² Reciprocal scaffolding³ and the adult learning framework of the Zone of Reflective Capacity⁴ may be particularly relevant for AoH.

These pedagogical frameworks indicate that learning should be scaffolded to participants' existing knowledge and belief structures, so that it is not too challenging, while still being challenging enough for a participant to learn – representing a "zone of proximal development". Expressed another way, each participant must begin their learning at their current level of practice. Single activities can be tailored to provide scaffolded learning with multiple entry points for learning and reflecting.

This may also link to the invitation into the learning and being explicit about the experiential learning taking place, both discussed above.

Participant questions and the voice of dissent

The live evaluation suggested that some positive feedback received from participants did not accurately portray their experience of the conference. It showed some participants had questions about the training or methodology, including the value or purpose of them, which may have remained unanswered or unaddressed by the end of the conference. It also appeared to show that encouraging participant questions or encouraging the voice of dissent allowed more disengaged participants to become more engaged in the conference.

Further consideration could be made into methods of allowing questioning or feedback by participants, including anonymous methods, for the hosts to address unanswered concerns or questions during the conference. For instance, feedback triads, or inviting participants to record questions, insights and/or challenges daily on the landscape.

² *Inter alia*, Wells, G. (1999). *Dialogic Inquiries in education: Building on the legacy of Vygotsky*. Cambridge University Press.

³ Holton, Derek, and Clark, David (2006). *Scaffolding and metacognition*. International Journal of Mathematical Education in Science and Technology

⁴ Tinsley, R. & Lebak, K. (2009). *Expanding the Zone of Reflective Capacity: Taking separate journeys together*.

Attention should be paid, however, to achieving an appropriate balance between providing learning for willing participants and providing further assistance to those requesting it.

7.3 Paradigm shift

The AoH conferences encourage participants through various methods to explore personal development, self-actualisation or “new ways of thinking and being”. Examples include the conference including morning practice such as Aikido, a morning walk in nature or meditation, using artefacts such as personal objects, and encouraging participants to revisit their purpose.

This evaluation shows participants consistently report an impact of the conference on their “life”, including their personal life and community. Some participants report personal transformation from the learning provided at the conference. The live evaluation showed some participants were asking deep personal questions sparked by the conference, but also some were struggling with the “language” used, and how they would transfer this learning back to their workplace.

The interviews showed that most indicated the methodologies had a high relevance to their personal life and thus were freely experimenting with them within this realm. The interviews showed the artefacts were well received by many participants and that some participants felt they had moved to a “heart space”. Some had also taken on some of the theoretical learning more broadly, such as practicing meditation or mindfulness.

It should be noted here that a distinction can be drawn between the technical learning provided through the “tools” or methodologies taught, and the adaptive learning provided.⁵ This also relates to the adaptive leadership styles taught through AoH through participatory engagement, and living systems and systems thinking approaches.

Cumulatively the conference is advocating a paradigm shift for participants both personally and professionally, and in turn their organisations. This may be of particular interest for further investigation in relation to the AoH learning and development, as opposed to other professional development training programs. As such, further investigation could be made into cognitive development and leadership frameworks to assist to evaluate the AoH learning. Such frameworks could be further used for evaluative purposes to assess the cognitive or leadership development of participants.

Another question that remains is how the concept of requiring a paradigm shift to acquire the learning fits with the previous theme of scaffolding the learning to participants’ pre-existing knowledge and practice.

⁵ Inter alia, Heifetz, R. A. Laurie, D. L. (1997) *The Work of Leadership*. Harvard Business Review, vol 75, pp 124-134, and Kegan R. and Laskow L., (2009) *Immunity to Change: How to Overcome it and Unlock the potential in Yourself and your Organization*, Harvard Business Press.

7.4 Depth of experience of hosts

The evaluation appeared to highlight the importance of the depth of experience of the hosts in providing the AoH learning. Unlike the other two conferences included in this evaluation, the May 2011 conference was provided by Australian hosts. While these Australian hosts were each experienced in using the AoH methodologies; three had experience in providing the AoH conferences, and one was a Steward, the conference nevertheless received lower ratings from the participant cohort. The ratings were consistently lower (as shown in the graphs below) across:

- Satisfaction
- The usefulness of the different elements of the conference
- Whether they had gained enough knowledge and skills to apply the methodologies (see figure 4 above), and
- The assessment of the positive impact of what they had learned.

Figure 9: Satisfaction with the conference (by conference)



Figure 10: Methodology skills and knowledge (by conference)

I have gained enough skills and knowledge from the conference(s) to apply the methodologies in my organisation....

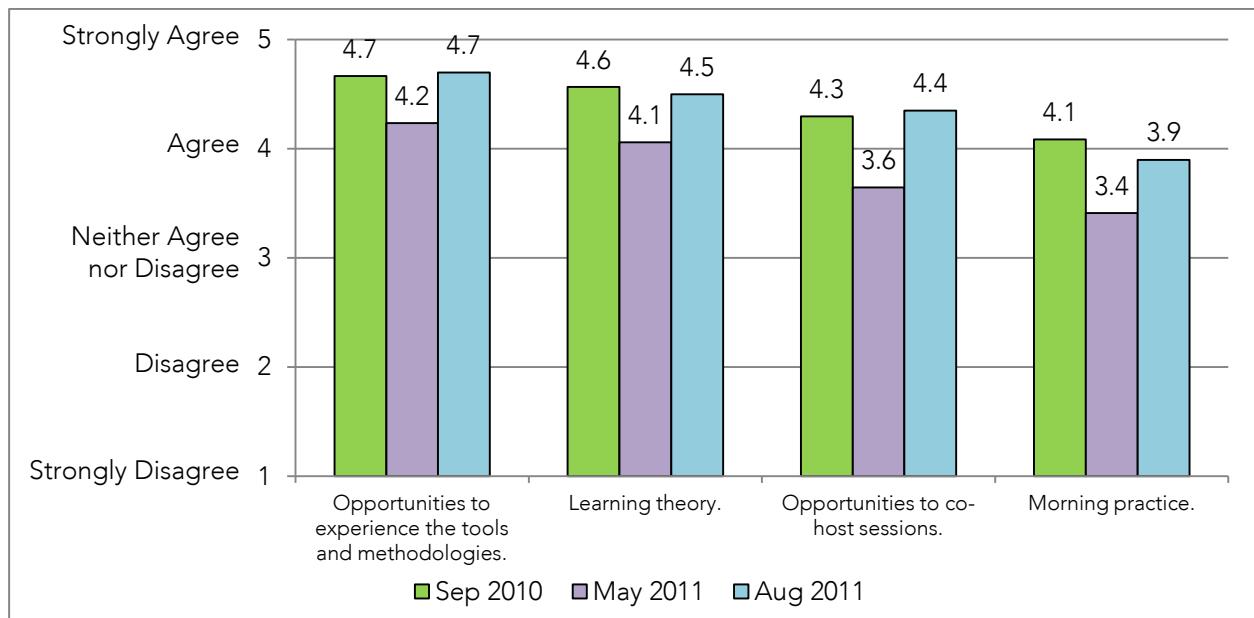


Figure 11: Positive impact from the conference

I think the tools and methodologies I learnt have had a positive impact on my...



Ultimately differences between the cohorts cannot be excluded as a factor, however certain feedback from the May 2011 conference participants suggests the differences in ratings were related to the depth of experience of the hosts, both in relation to notions of safety, and specific comments that the more experienced hosts were "propping up" the less experienced.

This issue of the depth of experience of hosts and the impact on participants of any AoH methodology when applying and teaching AoH, may relate to the embedded concept that

AoH is indeed an “art”. This raises the question of how and whether an art can be taught and whether it is possible to reliably and consistently transfer the knowledge and skills required to use the methodologies.

The AoH learning and development is presented as a ‘learning journey’ with the idea that everyone; hosts and participants alike, are at different points on a journey to deepen their knowledge and practice. AoH names this as a Four Fold Practice and the workbook provides some direction in “being truly present, engaging skilfully in conversations, being a good host of conversations and engaging with others in co-creation, are all practices or skills that are easily understood but it takes a continuous practice to hone these skills.”

Nevertheless, the expectation that participants transfer the methodologies to their organisations successfully when the depth of their experience impacts on the effectiveness of their AoH implementation may be unrealistic in the short, and possibly even medium, term. This may again highlight the importance of post-conference support and assistance for participants in garnering organisational support.

This theme may also relate to the concept of the paradigm shift discussed above, and the difficulty in developing a “personal practice” which has been described as paying attention to the group’s energetics, and being a “warrior of the heart” ready to create safety for the group and respond to what the group needs. It was noted, for instance, that the storytelling exercise in the May 2011 conference lacked safety for some participants. From the live evaluation it appeared that the storytelling exercise in August 2011 was undertaken following more confidential and participatory approaches – where participants reflected on the themes of the stories shared in triads, rather than as a full group. No issues of safety were raised by participants in the August 2011 conference. A question arises of whether more participatory approaches are inherently safer, and whether less participatory approaches rely on the concept of a heroic or charismatic leader (or host). Also whether this is useful for participants at their stage of learning, attempting to transfer the knowledge back to their workplace?

This theme may also raise the question of whether international hosts lend a certain cachet to the AoH learning.

Again, being explicit in the learning may possibly assist, such as being clear in the framing that everyone is on an AoH spectrum of learning, including the hosts, such as explained by the Four Fold Practice. Participants could also be encouraged to include this in their framing when implementing AoH in their organisations.

Further investigation could also be made into how to support participants to be hosts, encouraging them to gain a depth of experience which is shown to be important, but without first having that depth of experience. The live evaluation, for instance, showed a story of application received many of the participants’ reported “insights” during the conference. An option which may further assist participants with this issue could be to provide materials that include more stories of application, both successful and less

successful, in relation to each of the methodologies and a reflection on why it was successful or less successful, such as:

- What were the critical success factors?
- Which elements are transferrable to different contexts, and which are particular to certain contexts?
- What were the coping mechanisms or resilience factors for the hosts?
- How did hosts create purpose and safety for the conversations?
- How did the hosts harvest and use the conversations?
- How did the hosts harness any paradigm shift or personal development for using the methodologies?

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, this evaluation has found that nearly all AoH participants changed their intent and approach to communicating with others as a result of attending the conferences. Participants reported that this enabled them to explore issues more deeply through having noticeably different conversations.

Almost nine in ten participants reported having used at least one of the methodologies in their organisation one month after the completion of the conference. Almost all (97%) reported a positive impact on their work and more than nine in ten (92%) reported a positive impact on their organisation. Participants also reported using the methodologies in their personal lives, with almost nine in ten (88%) reporting a positive impact on their life, and more than seven in ten (72%) on their community.

There are also early indications that some participants' organisations are adopting the tools and methodologies into their processes and structures, while some are also incorporating the AoH teachings into their professional culture.

This evaluation confirms that the design and delivery of the three day residential conference successfully provides AoH learning and development. The evaluation also confirms that there are strengths in residential delivery; the length of the conference; the mix between experiencing the methodologies and the teachings; the opportunities to co-host; morning practice; and a non-metropolitan venue. There are also advantages in cohort diversity and participants suggest a cohort size of between 30 to 45 participants. The materials provided and the pre-conference preparation also supported participants.

Areas for further focus and investigation include further support for participants in transferring their new knowledge and skills into application, through post-conference support and strategies for improving organisational support for participants to experiment professionally with the methodologies. In relation to the pedagogy, being explicit about experiential learning appears important, as does explaining which methodology to use when and on what basis to make that decision. Scaffolded learning could be further investigated to further support participants who need it and extend those who are ready. Allowing participant questioning, feedback and encouraging the voice of dissent may also assist. Pre-conference preparation could also be further emphasised, and further caution could be given in regard to the depth of experience of hosts when organising AoH conferences.

Further investigation could also be made into how to continue to support participants through the paradigm shift being advocated by AoH, and the extent to which this is achieved by both them and their organisations.

9. Recommendations

Based on the findings and analysis, the following eleven recommendations are made for consideration by Success Works and the AoH hosting community.

Recommendation 1: That post-conference support be prioritised and that further consideration be made into what could provide participants such support.

Recommendation 2: That further consideration be given regarding what could provide participants, or assist participants in gaining, organisational support.

Recommendation 3: That framing be explicit for participants that they are undertaking experiential learning.

Recommendation 4: That the “which methodology when and why” teaching be provided as a full group teaching during conferences.

Recommendation 5: That further priority be given to pre-conference preparation for participants.

Recommendation 6: That consideration be made to further scaffold the learning for participants, such that some participants are further supported in their learning, and others are further extended.

Recommendation 7: That further consideration be given to allowing participant questions to be heard and answered, and encouraging the voice of dissent.

Recommendation 8: That further consideration be given to supporting participants through the paradigm shift being advocated, especially in relation to how they can relate this back to their professional organisation in their current position.

Recommendation 9: That particular care be given to considering the depth of experience on the hosting team when organising an AoH conference.

Recommendation 10: That framing be explicit that everyone is on an AoH spectrum of learning (the Four Fold Practice).

Recommendation 11: That consideration be made to creating more materials regarding stories of application as a method to assist transferring a depth of hosting experience to new hosts.

10. Suggested Next Steps

The following are suggested next steps in relation to this evaluation.

- Inviting feedback from the international host community in relation to this evaluation, its findings and analysis.
- Using the AoH methodologies to have conversations about the findings and analysis of this evaluation.
- Conducting an evaluation of the Stewardship group facilitated by Success Works, which will focus on the medium term outcomes for participants and their organisations, and the nature and context of successful post-conference support. This could be enhanced by incorporating the upcoming work in Nova Scotia, as well as investigation into the types of post-conference support possible, including online support.
- Further consideration of other opportunities for evaluation of medium term outcomes for participants and organisations.
- Investigating further frameworks which may be used for evaluative purposes, to be used in conjunction with the learning and development frameworks used in this evaluation. Examples may include frameworks or rubrics related to cognitive development for assessing the personal and organisational paradigm shifts occurring with particular interest in technical and adaptive learning and leadership frameworks.
- Inviting others to coordinate and conduct more interviews of participants nationally and internationally across the AoH community.
- Revisiting the project logic and evaluation questions in light of the current findings.
- Conducting further evaluations of upcoming AoH conferences.

11. Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to discover what good training that achieves sustained behaviour change looks like. The literature review was undertaken to support this evaluation. It provides:

- A brief introduction of the Art of Hosting – what it is, what its purpose is and how hosting is different to facilitating;
- Findings from an evaluation conducted for the Columbus Medical Association Foundation to assess the impact of the Art of Hosting training and how it is put into practice;
- Learnings from other literature about training (not AOH related) that achieves sustained behaviour change; and
- What to look out for when evaluating training programs.

11.1 A brief Introduction to the Art of Hosting

The Art of Hosting is primarily a collection of facilitation tools designed to generate connection, release wisdom within groups of people and provide ways for people to participate in intention, design, and outcomes/decisions/actions (Art of Hosting. <http://www.artofhosting.org/theart/>). It has the potential to deliver results including fostering synergy, harvesting collective intelligence and wisdom, wise action, systemic change, etc.

The Art of Hosting Web site states that the Art of Hosting:

"...activates the collective intelligence in a group to find new solutions to the increasing challenges of the world of work today. Participatory leadership practice is based on convening strategic dialogue and conversations as drivers for development and change."

("Why the Art of Hosting & Harvesting Conversations that Matter",
www.artofhosting.org)

The Art of Hosting tools include Circle, World Café, Appreciative Inquiry, Open Space and Pro-Action Café.

11.2 The Difference between Facilitators and Hosts

The Art of Hosting is an alternative to more traditional facilitation techniques, which typically involve rational planning and control of the process, in order to achieve planned results (Success Works, 2010).

Common views in literature on facilitating and hosting are that facilitators are convenors, community owners, team leaders, moderators, and their roles include providing leadership, focus, stimulation for group interaction, team building, refereeing, dealing with problems, timekeeping, ensuring everyone gets a chance to speak, and seeking answers and outcomes (White, 2004; Rheingold, 1998; Feenber et al).

Hosts, on the other hand, are greeters, conversationalists, conversation stimulators, role models/exemplars, conflict resolvers and sometimes even bouncers. Their roles include running social, conversational communities, helping participants feel "at home", stimulate conversation, enforce rules, and model the behavior they want others to emulate (White, 2004; Rheingold, 1998).

"A host is like a host at a party. You don't automatically throw a great party by hiring a room and buying some beer. Someone needs to invite an interesting mix of people, greet people at the door, make introductions, start conversations, avert fisticuffs, encourage people to let their hair down and entertain each other."

(Howard Rheingold, 1998, <http://www.rheingold.com/texts/artonlinehost.html>)

According to Chris Corrigan, one of the early proponents of Art of Hosting, facilitators typically remain neutral stand, bring their tools to assist with the job, simplify complex problems and find a simple path for getting to the solution.

Hosts, on the other hand, "enters the field with all of the resources and assets he or she has and offers what they can to the centre of the work" (Corrigan, 2007). Hosting works better as it "is more aligned with the nature of complex systems, where there are no answers, but instead only choices to make around the next question, and the paths where those questions lead us" (Corrigan, 2007).

11.3 Learnings from an Evaluation on an Art of Hosting Training

In this and the next section, the literature review will examine what good training that achieves sustained behaviour change looks like.

This section will focus only on the evaluation completed for the Columbus Medical Association Foundation. At the time of writing this literature review this evaluation was the first and only evaluation we could find that had been conducted on AoH training.

Introduction

An evaluation was completed for the Columbus Medical Association Foundation in August 2008 to assess the impact of the Art of Hosting training in Ohio and how it is practised, in particular focusing on the extent of participant changes and application of what was learned.

Most of the survey participants work for not-for-profit or education organizations and represent a variety of Art of Hosting training experiences at various locations in Ohio. The main reason participants gave for attending the training is to learn something new and almost half did not have much knowledge of Art of Hosting before the training (Lang et al, 2008).

The evaluators used Donald Kirkpatrick's "Evaluating Training Programs: The Four Levels" (Kirkpatrick, 1998, p. 29) in assessing the impact that the training had on the participants.

Kirkpatrick's Four Levels model for evaluating training programs includes:

- **Level 1: Reaction** - To what degree participants react favourably to the training;
- **Level 2: Learning** - To what degree participants acquire the intended knowledge, skills, attitudes, confidence, and commitment based on their participation in a training event;
- **Level 3: Behaviour** - To what degree participants apply what they learned during training when they are back on the job; and
- **Level 4: Results** - To what degree targeted outcomes occur as a result of the training event and subsequent reinforcement (Kirkpatrick Partners, 2009).

In the case of the evaluation conducted for the Columbus Medical Association Foundation, the training was assessed on the following levels:

- Level 1: Satisfaction with training;
- Level 2: Acquisition of new knowledge or skills;
- Level 3: Application of what was learned; and
- Level 4: Longer term impact on the organisation (Lang et al, 2008).

It should be noted that it was not within the scope of the evaluation to determine the longer term impact (Level 4) of the Art of Hosting training and use of techniques in organisations and the community. The evaluators cite the World Bank Institute (WBI), which states that evaluation research on the longer term effectiveness of corporate training is very limited and that only 8 percent of organisations carry out results or impact evaluations on training (Lockheed et al, 2005).

Learnings from the Evaluation

In measuring Level 3: Application of what was learned, the following was assessed:

- Opportunity to apply AoH concepts and techniques in a professional setting (ie in their organisations) or in a community setting or in a personal setting (ie among family and friends).

What was found was most participants who applied AoH concepts and techniques did so in a professional setting, followed by in a community setting and personal setting. A handful had also applied AoH concepts and techniques in all three settings.

- Which AoH concepts and techniques were applied.

Response from participants was that the most popular concepts and techniques are Circle and World Café for participants who apply AoH in a professional setting; and Powerful Questions & Circle for participants who apply AoH in a community and personal settings.

- Effectiveness of the AoH concepts and techniques in reaching the goals or outcomes of the meetings, discussions and/or dialogues that participants hosted or led in a professional setting.

Findings were AoH concepts and techniques were more successful when applied in a community and personal setting than when applied in a professional setting.

- Effectiveness as a leader or staff member.

All participants said their effectiveness as a leader or staff member has improved following the AoH training, but in varying degrees. Most said their effectiveness as a leader or staff member has improved moderately and a third said it has improved a lot (Lang et al, 2008).

Other behaviour changes which participants have included are:

- Listening much more to what others are saying (and not reacting without thinking);
- Recognising the importance of questions and formulating them better;
- Looking at situations and people differently (eg going deeper, having a greater awareness);
- Being more comfortable and/or open with others;
- Having a better understanding of others' opinions and ideas; and

- Looking at the world differently since the training experience (Lang et al, 2008).

What would it take for participants to apply AoH concepts and techniques more?

Significantly, almost all (97 percent) of survey participants expressed the view that if more organisations and individuals applied the Art of Hosting concepts and techniques, goals and outcomes would be more likely achieved (Lang et al, 2008).

Given this view, what will assist participants to apply, lead or host AoH concepts and techniques more? From the Columbus Medical Association Foundation evaluation report, these include:

- More **exposure** to situations where it would be appropriate to apply the AoH. This is the most frequently mentioned suggestion. Comments include participants wanting to better understand how the AoH concepts and techniques have been successfully applied, so they can be more successful at applying them to their own situations.
- Some type of **follow up**. More than half of the survey participants brought this up. Suggestions include meetings, get-togethers and/or discussions; more support from individuals experienced in AoH; and more access to information and communications on the Internet.
- **Additional support and training.** Many participants mentioned the need for additional training and reinforcements to increase their comfort levels and effectiveness in applying AoH concepts and techniques. Their suggestions include:
 - More training on specific techniques;
 - More training to help participants apply the techniques to their situation;
 - If others in participants' organisation were trained;
 - Someone whom they can turn to for help or support; and
 - More support from participants' manager and organisation (Lang et al, 2008).

Importance of Post-Training Activities

More than half of survey participants indicated that some type of follow up will assist them in applying AoH concepts and techniques more. As part of the evaluation, participants were presented with four possible follow-up training activities, and asked which they are very likely to attend.

The activities, and likely attendance are:

- Two-hour refresher training with AoH Trainers - more than half of participants said they are very likely to attend;
- Quarterly two-hour gatherings with other training participants - slightly less than half of participants said they are very likely to attend;
- Use of Web technology - about a third are very likely to do this; and

- Monthly one-hour conference calls with trainer or host – a small handful expressed an interest in this.

Also notable is that those who participated in post-training events or get-togethers tend to lead or host Art of Hosting concepts and techniques in their work organisations more, and think the techniques were more effective, as compared to those who didn't participate in post-training events or get-togethers. This was the case despite participants (who participated in post-training events or get-togethers) saying they did not feel any more prepared to apply what they learned after the training (Lang et al, 2008).

Other Findings

"Residential" Versus "Non-Residential"

The evaluation also found that more participants who attended a residential training, as compared those who attended a non-residential training, had applied, led or hosted an Art of Hosting concept and technique at their work, in a community setting and/or a personal setting. However, both groups gave similar ratings about the effectiveness of the Art of Hosting concepts and techniques in reaching goals or outcomes.

Participants who attended residential training also tended to give higher ratings to their training experience, relationship development, improvement in communications and improvement in effectiveness as a leader, as compared to participants who attended non-residential training.

Residential trainings were held over a weekend and included two overnight stays. Non-residential trainings were held from three to six hours on one or two week days (Lang et al, 2008).

Benefits of Residential Training

John Baker found that training program offered in an off-site residential setting can lead to:

- Self discovery;
- More opened and honest discussion with peers or other participants;
- Problem solving discussions, including those that can happen after hours; and
- Behaviour change.

The argument is that in a three to four-day residential training, participants are spared interruptions such as returning to the office to check emails, being called to handle urgent tasks, picking up children from sport or even going home every evening.

To further assist the process of self discovery and behaviour change, participants are in an environment where their peers are experiencing the same self-reflective process, thus leading to opportunities for open and honest discussions, including discussions out-of-session or after hours (Baker, http://www.cpm.org.au/coursesnews/cn_residentials.php).

William Charland (2008) reviewed the recently established Michigan Art Education Association's Residential Summer Institute for art educators, and found that the "residential learning community" provided:

- **Extended dialogues** - The flow and ease of exchange of information over the course of several days - "discussions continue in hallways and residences, during meals, or under a shady tree" (Charland, 2008, p. 34).
- **Unhurried reflection** - The luxury of synthesizing, reconsidering, and elaborating on ideas;
- **Identification of shared goals** - Pedagogical priorities become the basis for participation in focused learning circles;
- **Active learning** - Learning circles encourage shared responsibility for learning and application of knowledge;
- **Stimulation** - Diverse ideas and worldviews are encountered through a dynamic and symbiotic exchange of knowledge and concerns;
- **Camaraderie** - Community, support, feedback, and mutual encouragement facilitates engagement among peers who understand the particular values and challenges of the art classroom, and replaces the isolation often experienced by art teachers in their schools; and
- **A safe place to experiment** - Participants are emboldened to approach topics openly, without fear of administrative or peer reprisals.

A key feature of the Residential Institute is that prior to participating in the training, participants are encouraged to prioritise their goals, and this resulted in participants being able to make connections between workshops, and find peers with whom they share interests and values.

Over the course of the training, learning circles formed spontaneously partly as a result of the residential experience.

"Art teachers who live and work together during the institute enjoy the luxury of synthesizing, reconsidering, and elaborating on ideas far into the night in classrooms, studios, and social settings specifically structured to bring minds together."

(Charland, 2008, p. 36)

11.4 Training that Achieves Sustained Behaviour Change

While the evaluation report for the Columbus Medical Association Foundation is the most relevant as it relates directly to AOH training, there are other valuable learnings that can be gathered from other research and literature that have been written about training that leads to sustained behaviour change.

Below are areas which research has shown to make a difference in ensuring sustained behaviour change.

Follow-Up Support

Research has shown that the most important aspect of training is the activities that follow a training event, more than the training program itself.

In a study conducted by Dr. Brent Peterson of Columbia University, it was found that 50 percent of learning effectiveness is attributable to follow-up activities, 26 percent to pre work and 24 percent to the learning event itself. However organisations typically invest 85 percent of its resources in the training event, which in turn contributed just 24 percent to the learning effectiveness of the participants (Peterson, 2004).

"What does this mean? That we are putting most of our time into designing, developing and delivering training and only getting about one-quarter of the benefit. And we are spending virtually none of our time on the follow-up activities that translate into positive behavior change and subsequent results that we intend our training programs to deliver."

(Peterson, 2004, cited by Kirkpatrick et al, 2009, page 5)

In 2007, as CEO of the Ascent Group, Peterson pioneered "The Ascent Group Learning Model: 4E's for Change", where the four stages, or four E's, are:

- **Excite:** This stage prepares the training participant for the training, and should motivate, excite, create a framework and be brief;
- **Experience,** which is the training event itself;
- **Execute,** which involves the implementation or application of what is learned back into the job; and
- **Evaluate,** which helps determine the impact of the training and leads to refinements in the training to achieve the greatest impact. This may be a continuous process that takes place throughout each of the first three E's (Peterson, 2007).

The **Experience** stage, or the actual learning event, contributes only to a quarter of the learning impact regardless of the mode of delivery of the training ie instructor led, on-line, or blended learning. The stage that really matters is the **Execute** or post-training stage, as it contributes 50 percent of training effectiveness. This stage "focuses on personal application to the work environment with effective implementation of knowledge and skills (Peterson, 2007, <http://brent-peterson.com/252550.htm>)."

The Independent Evaluation Group, an independent unit within the World Bank which conducts evaluations of training projects financed by the World Bank, also emphasised the importance of post-training follow-up support.

"Research has indicated that learning, particularly of skills, is far less likely to be retained and implemented if it is not reinforced by follow-up support once trainees return to the workplace. Where follow-up support is not given, short-term learning gains may not translate into sustainable behavioral change, due to participant uncertainty about how to apply the learning or lack of positive reinforcement in the workplace."

(Independent Evaluation Group, 2009,
<http://www.worldbank.org/ieg/training/learning.html>)

Some common types of follow-up support suggested by the Independent Evaluation Group are:

- Assistance in using what training participants have learned at work from on-the-job technical assistants;
- Mentoring programs provided by more experienced counterparts in participants' organisations;
- Internet forums to enable training participants to exchange information and seek advice from each other or from trainers or other expert moderators; and
- Refresher or follow-up courses to address issues that participants have experienced when trying to apply what they had learned or to supplement learning (Independent Evaluation Group, 2009).

Other suggestions for follow-up activities and support include:

- A follow-up session for a period of time after the participant has completed the program and had time to apply the new skills and knowledge to check-in with all participants so they can share their experiences of applying their new skills and knowledge and provide support to each other. This enables the facilitator to provide additional support to the participants and also enables the participants to support each other.

- A support portal with references/materials/downloads from the training program that the participants can log in to for access. This can also serve as a central location for participants to support each other and access subject matter expertise/support from the facilitator (Abudi, 2010).

Pre-training Activities/Tasks

Activities/tasks undertaken prior to the training event are also important in sustaining behaviour change after the training. Peterson's research has shown that if organisations do not use the Excite (or pre-training) stage properly, they can lose as much as 25% of the impact of the training. "The Excite stage gets a person ready for maximum learning in the stages that follow" (Peterson, 2007, <http://brent-peterson.com/252550.htm>).

It can include:

- Short self-assessment questionnaires;
- Critical incident activities;
- Environmental and performance context assessments; and
- Storytelling and parable review experiences.

Pre-training activities and tasks may also include pre-course briefings between participants and their immediate supervisors. This discussion may include what the participants will learn in the training and how they will apply their training back on the job, and may include the development of an action plan on how the new skills and knowledge learned will be applied back on the job (Donovan et al, cited by Abudi, 2010).

Other Recommendations

In Donovan and Townsend's *Training Evaluation Pocketbook*, the delivery of training should also include:

- A performance improvement plan - Training should be linked to the objectives in the training participants' performance improvement plans;
- Participation - The participants' immediate supervisors should be involved in the development and delivery of training programs to ensure that they support the objective of the programs;
- Program support - Ensure that supervisors support the training program by providing uninterrupted time for participants to attend and ensuring that time is also provided for pre- or post-work assignments;
- Post-course briefings - Ensure that the participant and his/her immediate manager schedule time to discuss the course the participant attended, along with the skills and knowledge gained from the course and how the participant will apply those skills and knowledge back on the job;

- Peer and team support - If the participant is part of a larger team, such as a project team or a specific business unit, it provides greater support to the participant if his/her peers and team members can assist with transferring the new skills and knowledge learned from the program back on the job; and
- Prizes and sanctions - Ensure that during the next performance review the participant is recognized for his/her efforts in improving and utilizing his/her new skills and knowledge. (Donovan et al, cited by Abudi, 2010)

In Abudi's "Making the Training Stick", other suggestions include:

- Action Planning - At the end of a training session, have participants work with their managers to complete an action plan on how they will apply the skills and knowledge learned;
- One-on-one coaching - Coaches will work with the participant to guide them through the situation, providing support, suggestions and acting as a sounding board
- Portal Solution - This can serve as a central location for training participants to support each other and access subject matter expertise/support from the facilitator. (Abudi, 2009)

11.5 Evaluating Training Programs: What to Look Out For

Both Donald Kirkpatrick and Thomas Guskey have outlined what needs to be included in evaluating programs.

Kirkpatrick's Four Levels Training Evaluation Model

The Kirkpatrick Four Levels Training Evaluation Model includes:

- **Level 1: Reaction** - To what degree participants react favorably to the training;
- **Level 2: Learning** - To what degree participants acquire the intended knowledge, skills, attitudes, confidence, and commitment based on their participation in a training event;
- **Level 3: Behavior** - To what degree participants apply what they learned during training when they are back on the job; and
- **Level 4: Results** - To what degree targeted outcomes occur as a result of the training event and subsequent reinforcement. (Kirkpatrick Partners, 2009)

In measuring behaviour ie the extent to which the participants applied the learning and changed their behaviour, some questions which can be asked include:

- Did the participants put their learning into effect when back at their job?
 - Were the relevant skills and knowledge used?
 - Was there noticeable and measurable change in the activity and performance of the participants when back in their organisations?
 - Was the change in behaviour and new level of knowledge sustained?
 - Are the participants able to transfer their learning to another person?
 - Are participants aware of their change in behaviour, knowledge and skill levels?
- (Kirkpatrick, 1959, cited by businessballs.com)

Kirkpatrick notes that the measurement of behaviour change is less easy to quantify and interpret than measuring participants' early reaction to the training and increase in knowledge, and will typically require the cooperation of supervisors and/or line-managers.

Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation

The "Five Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation" by Thomas Guskey (a professor of education policy studies and evaluation at University of Kentucky) was developed for assessing training and professional development programs for teachers and educators. Guskey noted the importance of organisational support for application to occur.

- **Participants' Reactions:** Initial satisfaction with the experience;
- **Participants' Learning:** New knowledge and skills of participants;

- **Organisations Support and Change:** The organisation's advocacy, support, accommodation, facilitation and recognition;
- **Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills:** Degree and quality of implementation; and
- **Student Learning Outcomes:** Cognitive (performance and achievement), affective (attitudes and dispositions) and psychomotor (skills and behaviour).

Guskey has emphasised that as each level builds on those that come before, success at one level is usually necessary for success at higher levels.

Like Kirkpatrick, Guskey notes that while **Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills** can be evaluated using interviews and surveys with participants and their supervisors, it is more effectively assessed via observations, either by trained observers or videotapes or audiotapes (Guskey, 2002).

12. Interview Analysis

A total of sixteen participants who have attended the AoH conference were interviewed in 2010/11. The interviewees spanned a range of people who had attended one or more AoH conferences.

Interviewees came from a range of backgrounds including community aged care and disability services, private consultancy, education and local government. The majority had attended a residential conference over 3 days, with the average number of participants being 30-50. Almost half of the sample attended as part of a larger organisational group. Most attended on a voluntary basis. The most consistently commented on hosts were Toke, Monica, Aart and Mary Alice.

The majority of interviewees rated themselves as having an average amount of pre-existing experience in the core components of the conference (3-3.5 out of 5). A number of participants had participated in a conference more than once. Many participants had a previous understanding of concepts and frameworks relevant to the Art of Hosting – World Café practice, Circle work, Appreciative Inquiry (AI) and Open Space.

Their experience of the conference can be reflected in the following comments:

"Amazing. I am constantly surprised by how much clarity I gain. The content is fantastic."

"It was like a retreat from Government and the hurly burly, then the second was like coming back and meeting those same people I had met the year before. It was much more than a collection of techniques."

"AoH was fantastic. I am a bloke... I was surprised how quickly things moved from my head to my heart. The opening Circle was amazing."

The interviewees were asked a series of questions related to key outputs, outcomes and main assumptions of the conference. The following analysis captures the main themes across these domains.

12.1 Outputs

Based on responses, it would appear that participants were able to absorb the key conceptual elements of the Art of Hosting. This was reinforced by the activities undertaken during the conference and supplemented by the opportunity to experiment with these tools both during and immediately after attending the conference. Evidence would suggest that this understanding is further enhanced where participants become part of a network, such as a Community of Practice, beyond the initial learning experience. The

ability to apply these learnings in the workplace was varied and often depended on the individual organisation. Most interviewees expressed a high level of relevance to their personal life and had therefore experimented freely within this realm.

1. Which concepts do you remember learning at the AoH Conference?

Concepts around leadership, chaos and control, the use of space, purposeful conversations and systems/complexity thinking were all recalled by interviewees. Many associated these with the primary practices of Circle work, AI, Storytelling and World Café. This may also be linked to the fact that interviewees reported these as the main ideas tried out in their workplace and personal life (see Q5 & 6).

"Lots of concepts – using a natural fluid process, changing people's expectations about creating ideas... World Café and Open Space really resonated for me."

"Conceptually the spirit of Circle, the dualities of midwife and warrior, the spirit/design as a journey... it is a whole of person practice..."

"Apart from the tools – the idea of holding the space, not needing to fill the silence, powerful questions, calling people to a conversation."

2. Did you step up to facilitate an activity at the AOH Conference? Which activities? What was this like? (Did it make a difference to your learning? Did it make a difference to your confidence?)

The majority of interviewees did not take the opportunity to facilitate an activity. Reasons for this mostly focussed on a sense of not feeling 'ready' to take this step. Where participants did step up, all agreed that it had a significant impact on their learning during the conference. These interviewees also stated they felt it was a safe environment in which to do this.

"One of the most valuable things I took away [was the opportunity to step up to facilitate an activity] – [it gave me] a stronger sense of understanding of the techniques and what it takes to put it into practice."

3. What was your response to the 'artefacts' (bells, personal object, deeper emotional sharing, talking-piece, etc)

Many interviewees commented on the impact of the personal object, stating it brought everyone closer together and enabled a deeper connection than otherwise might have been possible. More broadly, the artefacts were seen as useful and meaningful, with many references to tribal ceremony and ancient belief systems.

"These emphasised the validity of people's experience and stories... it was a judgement free zone and the artefacts did that. They made it thoughtful... made people think about how and who they wanted to be... getting to the core is special."

4. Have you had contact with others who attended the AoH Conference since you have been back? Did you join a community of practice? What impact do you think this had on you?

The extent to which interviewees have had contact and networked with other participants was varied. Some indicated this had diminished over time. Others have maintained regular contact using technologies such as Skype and NING, as well as more traditional face to face interactions. Those who had attended as part of an organisational group obviously benefitted by being able to interact with their colleagues more easily and regularly beyond the end of the conference.

"There was a risk of not trying it again soon and losing it. Having a few people in the organisation who are holding it is good."

Several interviewees had maintained contact through participating in a Community of Practice. There was a general sense that this helped to reinforce the learnings from the conference. It also provided a mechanism by which people could connect with 'like-minded' others. Again, many reported that their participation in a Community of Practice had been most consistent in the immediate 6-12 months following a conference, and then slowly decreased with time. One interviewee stated this was not due to a lack of motivation, but rather a lack of time and other logistical factors.

5. Which ideas have you tried out in your work?

The majority of people interviewed had tried out some or all techniques learned within the conference. The most consistently applied were Circle, World Café, and Open Space Technology with interviewees stating they had varied success.

"Circle can be challenging with people who find it confronting, I think it depends on the crowd... it doesn't always work."

"World Café and Open Space – both have been amazing and [I've] seen significant results."

Many said they were purposefully taking a different approach to conversations with work colleagues, as reported below in the outcomes section of this chapter.

6. Which ideas have you tried out in your life?

Several interviewees reported having tried out ideas in their personal life. These included practices and concepts such as meditation, mindfulness, Appreciative Inquiry

and Circle work. Some referred to hosting conversations with 'themselves', and others used practices with their families (such as AI and Circle).

"They didn't know it, but [I did] AI with a large family group. The rest feels too constructive to apply in life but certainly Circle with family coming together."

"Hosting conversations with myself - presence, meditation, listening deeply, on the kids!"

"The personal stuff: being present, looking after me. My life is my work and I have false barriers sometimes..."

12.2 Outcomes

All interviewees noted there was now a difference in their intent and approach to communicating with others as a result of attending the conference. Both personally and organisationally, they felt the learnings gained from the conference had enabled them to explore issues more deeply. Again, their ability to draw others into experimenting with the tools within their organisation was impacted upon by the leadership style of senior management. This reinforces the notion that the structure and functions of a workplace can be a real barrier to extending and deepening the practice of participants. Maintaining ongoing relationships with other participants appears to lessen the negative impact of this by providing a community of 'like-minded' individuals.

7. To what extent have you started to have different conversations as a part of this learning and development?

All interviewees indicated they have had noticeably different conversations with people, both personally and organisationally. Some have been purposeful in their attempts to use different approaches, including using specific language and listening techniques. Many said this helped them to look more deeply at issues and problems and explore possible solutions. A few participants stated there was a level of curiosity amongst their colleagues as a result of implementing this new practice.

"Not only myself, but certainly the organisation now uses different language. I am leading the use of AoH and I consciously use the language. Sometimes I define it differently... it stops it sounding so hippy and cultish..."

"Definitely, a lot of personal conversations and the same ones have a different meaning; I'm listening differently. I'm usually outcomes driven, I've started listening more to the journey..."

8. To what extent do you network with other participants?

See Q4 under outputs.

9. To what extent is your organisation experimenting with the tools?

The ability to experiment with the tools within organisations seemed to be linked to the pre-existing culture of the organisation and corresponding tolerance for something 'different'. Therefore, not all interviewees felt they have had the chance to introduce the tools or some felt they had been able to do this but on a relatively small scale limited to their immediate work area. On the other hand, one interviewee commented on the changing nature of thinking in government and the perceived increase in opportunity to experiment with new techniques such as those learned at the conference.

"Within our unit, yes we use it a lot. With the larger group or my organisation, partially but dismal at times... my CEO is a commander/control sort [sic]."

"There are more opportunities in government now. Some of the linear, boxed thinking is less prominent. People are thinking about leadership... and are being reflective... questioning the way things are done."

10. What AoH learning and development ideas have been taken up in your organisation?

Have you been involved?

Similar feedback was provided by interviewees regarding their ability to implement learning and development ideas in their organisation. There was a general sense that more could be done. Many noted they would like to send more staff to a conference.

11. Do you notice others in your work/life being curious about AoH methods and processes?

See Q7 above.

12.3 Assumptions

Responses from interviewees indicated an extremely positive attitude towards the way the conference is planned and managed, including the choice of venue and mix of participants. The resources used as part of the program were also found to be satisfactory, although many felt they did not realise the true worth of these until after the conference had finished. Most said they used the resources back in their organisations as a guide to implementing ideas and practice. All who attended a residential conference agreed that it optimised their engagement with the content and, importantly, other participants. There was also an appreciation for the ability to interact with people from different backgrounds with the belief that this made their experience even richer.

12. Did you think that the AoH conference was well planned?

The majority of interviewees expressed a high level of satisfaction with the way the conferences were planned. Comments related to the pace and style of the program and indicated an understanding by participants that a high level of planning supported what in fact appeared to be quite a fluid and unstructured process. Equally, the balance between theory and practice was appreciated across the groups interviewed.

13. Did you find the workbook was adequate and supported your learning? Have you used or referred to the workbook since the conference? What?)

The majority of interviewees stated they found the workbook adequately supported their learning. On reflection, many said they used the resource more often after attending the conference, rather than during the sessions. Areas for improvement identified included the creation of an index (as it was felt it was difficult to navigate through the content) and potential re-ordering of content, possibly into themes. Ways in which interviewees have used the workbook include as a guide and reference point when implementing activities in their organisation. Some stated they have done this often and others 'constantly'.

"Having the workbook and being taught helps me hold the science... It is helpful to determine when to apply and in what circumstance... I use it as a refresher."

14. Did the pre-conference questions and communication set the scene for you as a participant? In what way?

Interviewees felt the pre-questions and communication prior to attending the conference helped to characterise the nature of the program as being something 'different'. Some recalled feeling hesitant and nervous on reading the questions. There was also a sense that the true purpose of this communication wasn't fully realised until after attending the conference. Those who attended more than once felt they engaged more with the intent of the questions the second time round.

"Because I didn't really know much, when the questions came in, I didn't really know what I wanted."

"It built an expectation of reflection being important, signalled it would be a different experience from the usual conference."

15.What do you believe is an ideal number of participants?

The average recommended number was between 30-45. Reasons given were mostly around the perceived ability to connect with others on a deeper level and achieve the same learning outcomes. Most felt that more than this would negatively impact upon the effectiveness of the conference. In particular, the interactive elements such as circle work would be more difficult to manage.

16.What impact on your learning, if any, do you believe the venue/environment (includes 'being' in the environment, the venue setting) had?

There was general agreement by interviewees that the natural environment was considered to be the most appropriate context for this type of conference. The opportunity to be in the open space was seen as beneficial to both learning and personal wellbeing whilst in residence. Amenities at the Warburton venue were seen as adequate and satisfactory. Added to this was the associated deep connection with other participants enabled by attending a residential conference.

12.4 Residential

17.What impact on your learning, if any, do you believe the conference being residential style had? Do you think your same outcomes could have been achieved with a non-residential conference?

In general, interviewees felt the residential style enhanced their ability to learn and agreed they would not have achieved the same outcomes from a non-residential conference. Comments related to the same perceived ability to connect to the content, learning and others on a deeper level. A sense of continuity was also provided by being in residence, with some interviewees stating they felt they benefitted from not 'breaking' from the experience.

"Residential is so intense, you are meeting on a deep level. Residential allows ...opportunity to dissipate or bring together that energy. You would break or lose concentration of that..."

18.What impact do you believe attending as part of a group from your work place had?

See Q4 above.

19.What impact did attending with other organisations have (a diverse range of participants)?

Overwhelmingly, interviewees stated they benefitted from being exposed to people from other backgrounds and sectors. It was felt that this prevented the focus from getting bogged down in the day-to-day issues and move towards gaining positive perspective from diversity and difference. Some commented on the perceived difference between consultants and 'workers', indicating joining these groups together had a varied impact on the dynamics of the conference.

"The cross section contributed to the group being as good as it was...other sectors being there made it richer."

"I liked it - it gave me a huge perspective on the kinds of journeys. An appreciation of what they deal with. It made it multidimensional."

13. Live Evaluation

This chapter contains the report of a live, in-conference evaluation of the August 2011 conference "Social Leadership through the Art of Hosting and Harvesting Conversations that Matter".

The purpose of this live evaluation was to provide early feedback to the hosts, and to gauge participant feedback in relation to the inputs and activities, as well as some of the assumptions underpinning the effectiveness of the conference in facilitating outcomes for participants.

This chapter explains the conference, and the findings, analysis and suggestions made based on the live evaluation.

13.1 The conference

The conference was a three day retreat held at Green Gables Conference Centre, Warburton, Victoria, Australia, from the 28th to the 30th of September inclusive. The introduction of the conference workbook explains:

"[AoH] invites us to explore how engaging the resources and collective intelligence of a diverse group of stakeholders, through Conversations that Matter, can lead to social leadership. ... AoH is both a network of practitioners and a training program in how you go from strategic conversations to wise action and systemic change."

The cohort included a total of 34 participants from mostly social service provider organisations, and one corporate organisation:

- 16 participants from two social service providers, both organisations that have had previous participants at AoH conferences, and utilise the AoH methodologies as part of its internal activities
- 4 participants from a corporate organisation with no known previous involvement with AoH
- 3 participants from a social service provider with no known previous involvement with AoH
- 3 participants from Success Works, the organisation sponsoring the conference
- 8 individuals, including from social service providers, health and government organisations.

The hosting team for the conference included (in alphabetical order):

- Debbie Bennett, a consultant from Success Works, with experience in hosting several AoH conferences and further consulting experience utilising the methodologies
- Estelle Fyffe, the CEO of an Aged and Disability Care Organisation called annecto who has used and participated in the processes, but had not hosted an AoH Conference. annecto employees were present at the conference.
- Linette Harriott, a consultant from Success Works, also with experience in hosting several AoH conferences and further consulting experience utilising the methodologies
- Monica Nissen, from Denmark, who is one of the founders of the AoH approach, with extensive experience in hosting AoH conferences and utilising the methodologies
- Phil Cass, from the United States, with experience utilising the AoH methodologies in his health-based organisation and his community of Columbus, Ohio
- Stephen Duns, a director of Success Works, with experience utilising the methodologies in his social policy-based organisation, in hosting several AoH conferences and further consulting experience utilising the methodologies
- Toke Møller, also from Denmark, who is also one of the founders of the AoH approach, with extensive experience in hosting AoH conferences and utilising the methodologies

A planning day for the hosts was undertaken on the 27th of September.

The live evaluation

During the planning day it was collectively decided that the evaluator, Jed Gilbert, also a consultant from Success Works, would be part of the hosting team. The rationale behind this decision was a wish by the hosting team not to create a conduit of connection to the participants which was separate to the hosting team. One of the hosts talked about an experience during a previous AoH event when a translator had insisted that they be a conduit to the participant cohort. The host reported that this had lessened the connection between the hosting team and the participants to the detriment of the learning and development provided. There was also agreement that the purposes of the evaluation should not interfere with the purposes of the learning and development conference.

It was decided that the best way to include a live evaluation during the conference was to utilise and build upon the “harvesting” activities undertaken. Harvesting was described during the conference as capturing and recording the themes of the conversations, and “making meaning” of the conversations taking place. The conference workbook explains:

“Harvesting is more than just taking notes. There are [five] stages of harvesting. ... understanding the need... the invitation... planning to harvest... collecting the wisdom... [and] synthesis and feedback. ...

Most harvesting is done to bring closure to a process or bring us to the next level of understanding. More importantly, it helps us to know collectively, to see the same picture and share the same understanding together."

The activities

During the planning day, the structure and activities of the three days were agreed upon by the hosts. The process for agreement was that all the hosts wrote what methodology or teaching they proposed and when during the conference they proposed it. A collective decision was then made about all the proposals for each day with an emphasis on creating a "flow" for the conference, and for each day.

The activities undertaken were as follows:

Day 1 – "New ways of thinking together"

- Framing and welcome
- Teaching: Theory U
- Methodology: Circle – for check-in
- Methodology: Word Café
- Teaching: Living Systems, Chaordic Path and Four Fold Practice
- Methodology: Open Space Technology
- Check-out

Day 2 – "New ways of being together"

- *Optional Morning Practice (Meditation, Warrior of the Heart Dojo (Aikido), Morning Walk)*
- Check-in (with intelligent game)
- Methodology: Appreciative Inquiry Interview
- Methodology: Appreciative Inquiry Storytelling
- Reflective Time
- Teaching: Chaordic Stepping Stones, Clarity of Purpose
- Methodology Café
- Collective Harvest (utilising Circle)
- Check-out
- *Optional evening activity: The Success Works story, collective story harvest*

Day 3 – "New ways of working together"

- *Optional Morning Practice (Meditation, Warrior of the Heart Dojo (Aikido), Morning Walk)*
- Check-in
- Story of Application: Columbus, Ohio story, collective story harvest

- Teaching: Six Breaths of Design
- Methodology: Pro-Action Café
- Methodology: 20 Questions
- Methodology: Circle – for check-out

13.2 Methodology

The methodology of this evaluation involved utilising:

- The collective harvest at the end of Day 2, where participants formed circles to discuss key learnings and key questions. Some participants “stepped up” to host these circles. Two conversations were hosted, the first about the key learnings and insights reached over the two days, and the second about the key questions that people had.
 - What has shifted or resonated for you in your journey so far?
 - What question am I still sitting with?
- A harvesting “landscape” which was developed during the days of the conference. The landscape was a visual representation hung on the wall of the main conference room, which depicted a river flowing across a landscape with the three days demarcated. Each planned activity was drawn onto the landscape and participants were encouraged to share their views, opinions or feelings about each activity by writing on the landscape
- Observations by the evaluator, during the planning day, conference and post-conference period
- A reflective conversation in triads was also held following the teaching and experience of Appreciative Inquiry. This did not occur for other methodologies.
- A post-conference participant survey.

Key reservations must be noted in regard to this methodology.

- The evaluator was involved in the hosting team, and presented as such to the participants. This may have limited the observations the evaluator was able to make, or the feedback which the evaluator may have received. Strategies were employed to limit this reservation, including:
 - Explaining the nature of the evaluation to the participants
 - Inviting the participants to give feedback anonymously through the collective harvest, landscape and post-conference survey (although the anonymity of the collective harvest and landscape could not be guaranteed at all times for all participants).
- The evaluator hosted the collective harvest, which in turn involved hosting a methodology (Circle) and training participants to co-host this methodology, and was

also a consultant of Success Works. This may have created inherent bias. Strategies were employed to limit this reservation, including:

- Involving a second host from the hosting team for the collective harvest
- The evaluator hosted one of the smaller circles in the collective harvest. Some circles did not include a host ensuring anonymity for the feedback
- Utilising a Success Works consultant with evaluation training and experience across several evaluation projects of professional learning programs
- Explicit safety for the consultant in determining the findings of the evaluation, with no additional pecuniary or other benefits or penalties applicable.

13.3 Findings

The following are the findings of the live evaluation of the conference. Findings are arranged in accordance with the project logic agreed upon for the purposes of the meta-evaluation.

Inputs

It is concluded that the inputs to the conference occurred as intended, these included:

- Relevant theoretical frameworks
- Hosts' knowledge and skill
- Support from program developers and critical friends
- Program planning

Relevant theoretical frameworks⁶

It was explained at the beginning of the conference that the main learning would be through experiencing the methodologies in practice. After or before undertaking some methodologies (although not all) it was explained to the participants the basic principles of the methodology, its advantages or disadvantages, when to use it and some simple tips about how to use it.

A “methodology Café” was also held during the conference where participants could learn specifically about a methodology, although this meant participants had to choose which methodology to specifically learn about, as different teachings were held about each in separate locations at the same time.

Some references were made during the conference directing participants to the workbook, which explained relevant theoretical frameworks regarding the methodologies, and gave references to further learning about the frameworks.

⁶ Relevant theoretical frameworks include Appreciative Inquiry, Theory U, Circle, World Café, Open Space Technology etc

In general, the main teachings provided to the whole group were not about the methodologies themselves, but about the theory underpinning AoH itself, and therefore all the methodologies.

Hosts' knowledge and skills

It was clear that the hosts had a depth of knowledge and skills about the methodologies, and about their roles. From the planning day and throughout the conference the hosts displayed and applied these knowledge and skills.

The hosts shared between them the hosting role for each of the methodologies. The hosts also asked for participants to "step-up" to co-host some of the methodologies from the second half of Day 1 onwards.

All of the teachings, however, including the story of application, were undertaken by the international hosts. The Danish hosts especially appeared to have a large breadth of experience in teaching and applying the AoH methodologies.

Support from program developers and critical friends

It is understood the international hosts were invited through this network of program developers and critical friends.

It is unclear the extent to which the conference further garnered the support from program developers or critical friends, although the workbook cites an extensive range of publications in relation to the AoH teachings or methodologies.

During the program planning (discussed below), hosts clearly drew upon previous experiences in designing and delivering similar conferences.

Program planning

It appeared the large majority of planning took place on the hosts' planning day; the day prior to the conference. During the planning day the hosts spent in excess of ten hours together mapping out, discussing and preparing for the days.

It appeared there was some tension within the hosting team regarding the understanding of "social leadership" and whether this aligned with "participatory leadership". It was agreed that they were similar terms in meaning, but that the use of social leadership would be preferred throughout the conference, given the title of the conference and Success Works' continued use of the term with social service providers. Notably hosts agreed that it was important to have had the conversation and "be on the same page" entering the conference.

During the conference, hosts talked about being adaptable to the demands and scheduling pressures of the day, and reference was made to adapting to the needs of participants as they emerged. Nevertheless, although some adjustments were made, the key activities undertaken during the conference largely remained unchanged in nature, scope or timing from that planned during the planning day. This may indicate a lack of

flexibility or, conversely, good planning. It is understood that activities at previous conferences were shifted due to participant needs, suggesting that this conference appeared to be well-planned.

Activities

All activities outlined in the Project Logic were undertaken at the conference, either facilitated formally or informally by the hosts:

- A three day residential program
- Learning about theories
- Experience of theories in practice
- Personal and group reflection and learning
- Networking

The residential program included theoretical learning linked to experiential learning of the methodologies. There was also personal and group reflection time given.

Networking could be seen to be occurring amongst the participants. Organisational groupings remained prominent during breaks, although as many were from different departments within their organisation, networking was thus still occurring.

It is concluded that the activities were undertaken as intended in the Project Logic. Analysis of these activities is discussed in the following section.

13.4 Analysis

The following analysis is presented based on the participant feedback received during the training.

Participant reflections at the end of Day 2

Participant reflections at the end of Day 2 focused on application, however themes also emerged relating to remaining queries about the methodologies, the personal development queries that had been sparked by the conference, and queries about the support following the conference for continued learning and sustainable practice.

Themes were analysed by extent and are presented below. Some questions spanned multiple themes so the extent of themes presented is approximate. The full list of questions asked by participants divided into their most relevant theme is presented at appendix C. In full, 77 questions were asked representing approximately 2 questions per person. Hosts could also note the questions they were sitting with, and these have been included in the analysis.

Application

Application was the strongest theme amongst the questions asked by participants at the end of the 2nd Day, with about half of all questions relating to application. This suggests

that the intended design of the conference achieved its aim of following the “U” of Theory U, where participants were encouraged to “enter the U” on Day 1 to experience the methodologies, deepen their practice on Day 2, and enter the “prototyping” stages by Day 3. Themes which emerged in regard to application included how to:

- start using the methodologies
- form the invitation to conversation
- create buy in and overcome resistance
- communicate the learnings of the conference to others
- communicate or adapt the language of the methodologies
- engage within the existing hierarchy of the workplace/organisation
- engage without a mandate, or how to create a mandate
- ensure the effective use of methodologies.

It is noted Day 3 which followed when these questions were asked focused on application. The extent to which these questions were answered for participants by Day 3 is beyond the scope of this live evaluation, however the post-conference survey will provide data in relation to this theme.

Questions about the methodologies

The next most prevalent theme was questions about the methodologies themselves. This theme related to approximately one in six questions. Given participants had been provided with learning about multiple methodologies, participants asked when to use which methodology. Questions related to whether timing or intended outcome was the determining factor in choosing which methodology to use. Participants also wondered about the use of methodologies in particular situations, such as remote locations or in research and evaluation. Two asked about specific ideas for check-in and check-out. Two also asked about harvesting.

The questions about the methodologies held by participants at the end of Day 2 is an important theme, as no explicit group learning was provided in Day 3 in regard to the methodologies. As such, unless participants sought out answers to their questions, or had a chance to have their question answered during the Pro Action Café or 20 Questions activities on Day 3, these questions may have remained unanswered by the end of the conference.

Support following the conference

The next most prevalent theme, representing about one in eight questions, was about the support provided following the conference. Participants wondered about their continued learning and practice of the methodologies following the conference, in both the short,

medium and long term. Participants also wondered about the sustainability of the practices within their organisations.

Questions about the conference or its teachings

Around one in ten questions were about the conference itself, the way it had been delivered, or questioned the teaching that had been provided in regard to the methodologies. Most were wondering about how to improve the conference in specific ways, such as having more personal practice time, making it longer or encouraging more people to attend across organisational hierarchies. One wondered about the purpose of their organisation investing in using the methodologies.

Personal questions

Some participants reflected on the personal questions that had been raised by the conference. These questions displayed a belief in the methodologies and suggested some had indeed reached a deeper place within the "U" as intended. Some reflected questions about the strengths of the methodologies and teachings, others questioned their courage in taking the learning forward.

Participant insights and challenges during the conference

Participant feedback was encouraged via the landscape both during the conference, and at the end. At the end of the conference small adhesive blue and pink dots were given to participants along with pens, and participants were asked to place the dot and write a brief description. Blue dots denoted a "challenge" while pink dots denoted an "insight". Participants were encouraged to place one or two, but could place more if they desired. Hosts were also able to record their challenges and insights. The final landscape created is pictured below.



Note: a larger image of this landscape is displayed in appendix D although with the full list of insights and challenges, and their accompanying text.

In total, 61 insights and 47 challenges were noted, amounting to more than one per person in each category.

Figure 12: Number of insights and challenges by Day

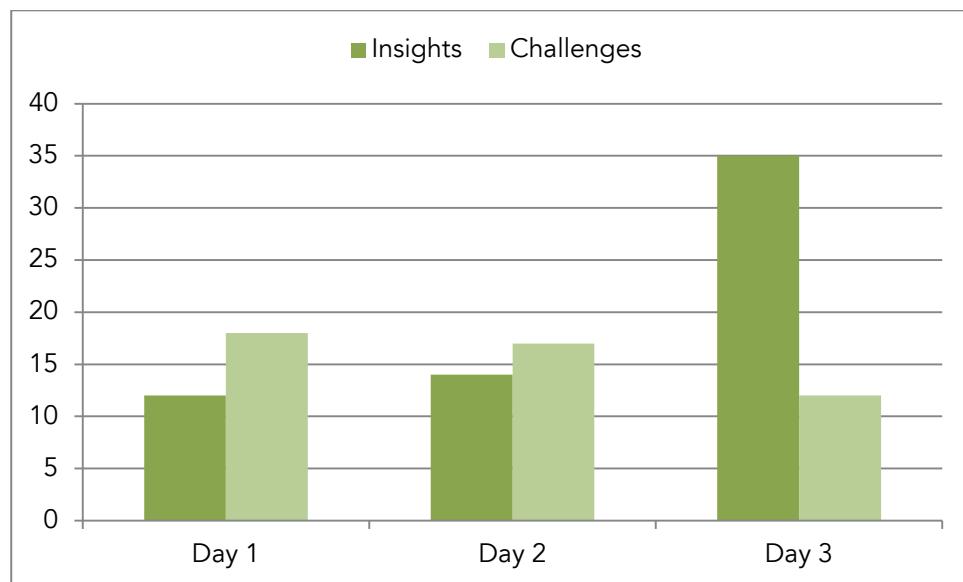


Figure 13: Insights by activity

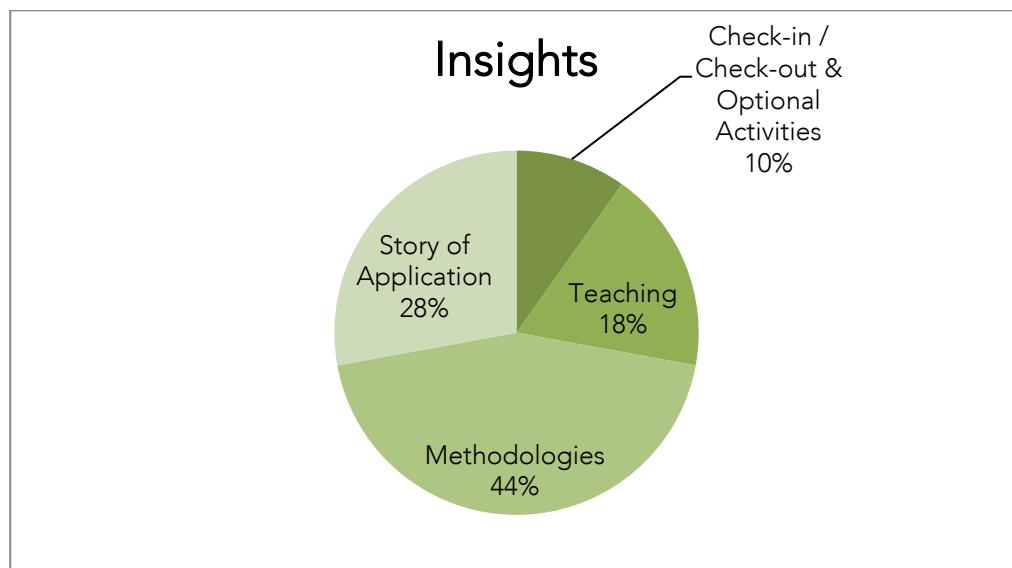


Figure 14: Challenges by activity

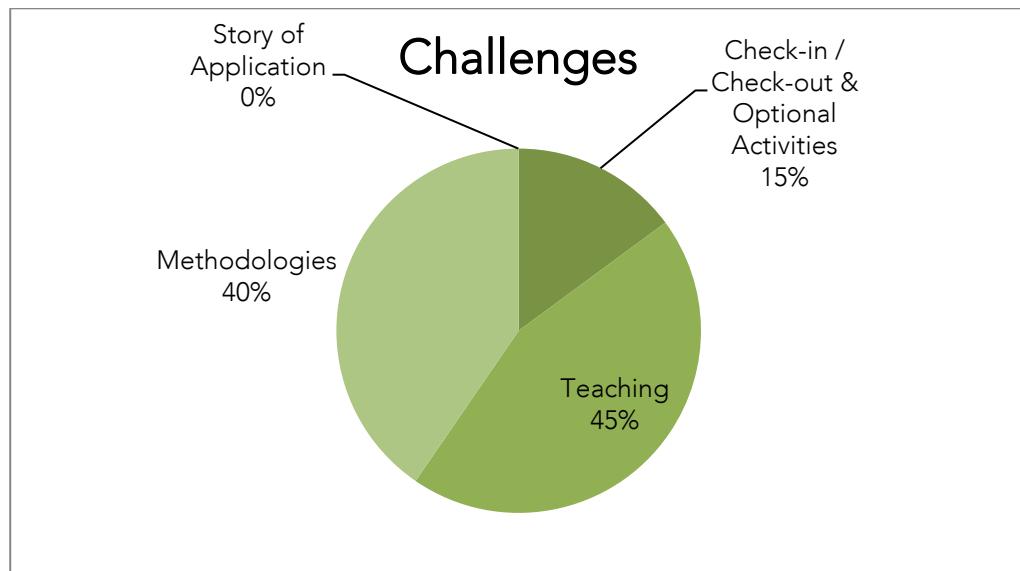
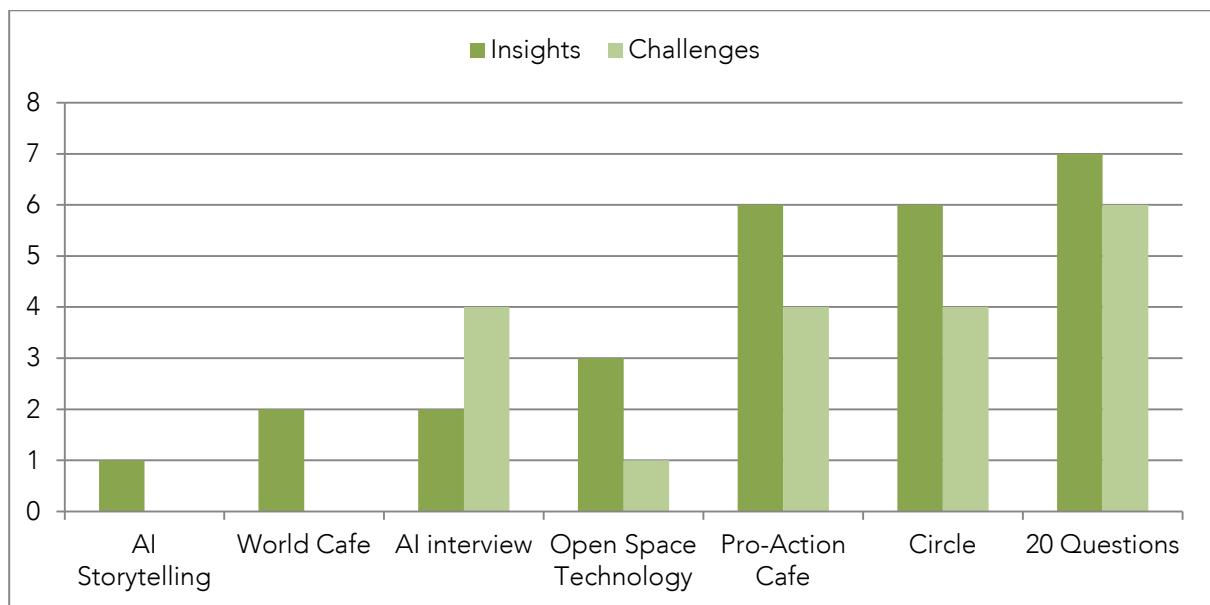


Figure 15: Number of challenges and insights by methodology.



Analysis of the insights and challenges reveal:

- Days 1 and 2 had higher numbers of challenges than insights, whereas by Day 3 a large proportion of the insights were recorded (see figure 12 above).
- The story of application undertaken by the host Phil Cass at the start of Day 3 represented more than a quarter of the insights achieved (see figure 13 above).
- Generally the teachings were found more challenging than the methodologies
- Experience of the methodologies recorded:
 - 44% of the insights
 - 40% of the challenges (see figures 13 and 14 above).

- The teachings recorded:
 - 18% of the insights
 - 45% of the challenges (see figures 13 and 14 above).
- Of the methodologies, the greatest insights and challenges were recorded against the activities in Day 3 (20 Questions and Pro-Action Café) – suggesting a possible bias towards those activities most “fresh” in participants mind when undertaking this reflection exercise. The next most commented on methodology was Circle, however unlike the other methodologies Circle was used more than once during the conference. The only methodology with more challenges recorded than insights was the AI interview, although this could be explained by participants “viewing” this interview rather than “participating” in it, hence it being more like a teaching than an experience of a methodology (see figure 15 above).

It must be noted that the concept of “challenge” and “insight” can be intertwined, and indeed one may be necessary to facilitate the other. This was reflected by some participants placing both pink and blue dots together with a single note of reflection, representing a moment of both challenge and insight.

13.5 Suggestions for consideration

The following suggestions are made for consideration as a result of the live evaluation.

Teachings about methodologies

Several questions remained for participants in regard to the methodologies themselves by the end of Day 2. As no further group-based learning on the methodologies was provided in Day 3, it may be that questions about the methodologies remained unanswered. These questions focused around when to use each methodology, ie, how to select which methodology to use, and on what criteria to make this choice.

This could be explained by the “methodology Café” only having two rounds, while there are four core methodologies – meaning participants could only have heard a full session about two methodologies at a maximum. It is noted that one methodology Café session hosted by Monica Nissén was explicitly on this topic of “which methodology when” but not the whole group will have experienced this teaching.

Further reflections after each methodology is taught and explained, regarding its strengths, weaknesses and when it is best to use compared with other methodologies may further participants understanding of this issue.

It is suggested that further exploration be made into how participant questions in relation to the methodologies could be answered during the conference.

Feedback about methodologies

Should a further live evaluation take place it is suggested that feedback and reflective sessions occur, if possible, after each methodology is taught and experienced by participants. This will allow hosts to both respond to feedback, or participant questions, and allow an evaluative approach to the success of the teaching and experience of each methodology.

The voice of dissent and anonymity of feedback

It is noted that the voice of dissent was encouraged following the Appreciative Inquiry experiential learning, which was the last core methodology presented. The hosts requested that participants talk in triads about the strengths of the methodology, and then the questions or concerns they had about it.

It was noted that one participant who presented with disinterested behaviour and who had not actively participated until this point during the conference willingly shared their views with the rest of the group at this point. Their level of engagement and participation appeared to improve from this point onwards.

Anonymity of feedback remains a concern, however, and thus the ability of the hosts (and the live evaluation) to obtain honest and reliable formative feedback is somewhat limited. The post-conference survey will be relied upon to provide further formative feedback.

It was later reported, for instance, that one participant who attended who gave very positive feedback to a host near the end of the conference returned to their organisation with negative views about AoH and the conference itself, which they shared with their colleagues. Either this participant changed their views once having left the conference, or they did not feel able to share their views openly during the conference.

It is suggested that further forms of anonymous feedback are explored to ensure the voice of dissent is heard from participants, and thus responses can be made to further these participants' experiences.

Post-conference support

Post-conference support, both for continued learning and the sustainability of practice were participant questions at the end of Day 2. At the end of the conference, reference was made by the hosts to a community of practice being established. It was discussed that this would provide a form of post-conference support to participants, shown through the literature review to be a key determinant in the longevity of outcomes for participants.

At the time of writing it is understood that Success Works is in the process of establishing a community of practice.

At the end of the conference it was also referenced that the landscape and harvests from the conference would be sent to participants via email. An email was sent to participants on the 9th of September 2011 with a video including photos and harvests from the

conference, and explaining that the landscape was being produced. At the time of writing, the landscape has not yet been sent to participants.

It is understood several attempts have been made to provide various communities of practice or other forms of post-conference support, however, it is suggested that further consideration be given to post-conference support for participants in any form to assist them to continue their learning, and foster sustainable practice of the methodologies.

14. Post-Conference Questionnaire: September 2010 Conference

This chapter contains the evaluation report of the September 2010 conference, based on the responses to a post-conference survey.

14.1 Respondent Assessment

Response Rate

Overall, 57 participants attended the conference and 29 responses were received to the survey. This is an overall response rate of 51%.

Overall Satisfaction

Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction of the Participatory Leadership conference along with the usefulness of the conference components and theories, on a scale ranging from one to five, with one being very dissatisfied or strongly disagree and five being very satisfied or strongly agree.

An option of “Unable to Comment” was allowed which has been excluded from these results. 11 respondents chose “Unable to Comment” in relation to finding the following useful:

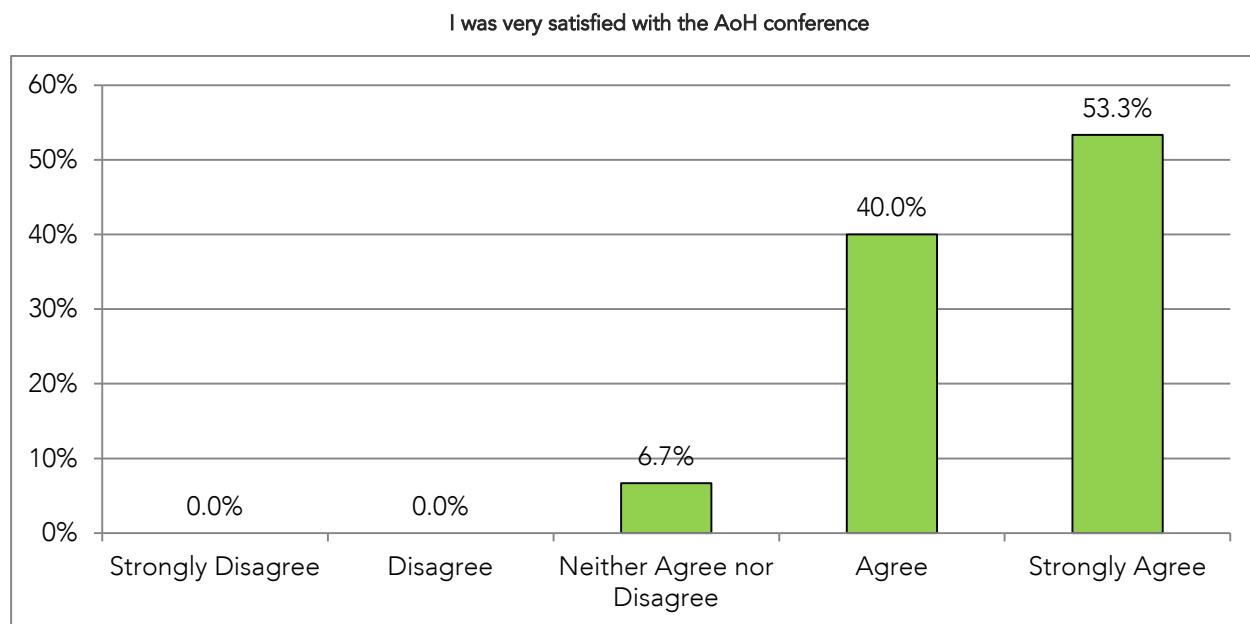
- Opportunities to co-host
- Opportunities for team work
- Morning practice

93.3% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed they were very satisfied with the Participatory Leadership conference.

Respondents indicated the training was “inspirational” and though there was a sense that “the group was too large, the facilitators coped with this well”. Those who had attended previous conferences found the repeat experience was of great benefit “due to the amount of information to be absorbed” and repeating the learning allowed them to understand the methodologies at a deeper level while acknowledging there was “still a way to go yet”.

It felt like a large group worked more closely together without the restrictions a large groups can sometimes have.

Figure 16: Satisfaction with the Participatory Leadership Conference

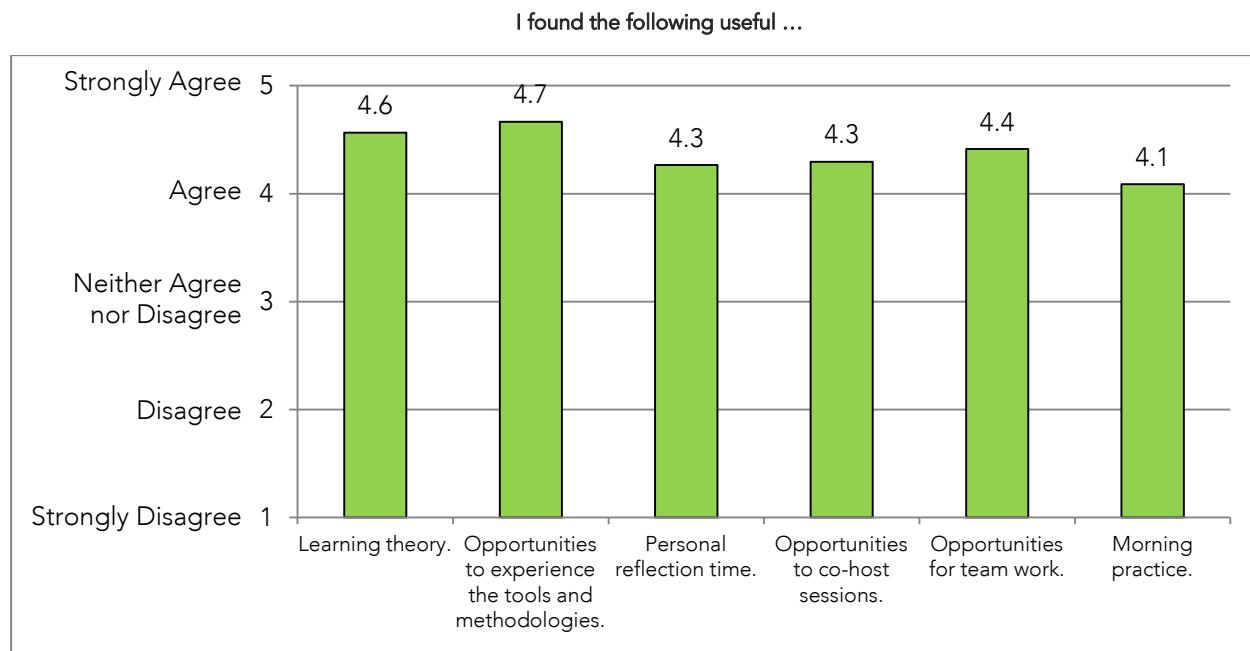


14.2 Program Design

The design of the conference provided opportunities for participants to learn theory, experience the tools and methodologies, practice personal reflection time, co-host sessions, work with their teams and attend morning practice.

96.7% of respondents found learning the theory and the opportunity to experience the tools and methodologies useful with a significant slant to strongly agree.

Figure 17: Usefulness of the learning and development activities



90% of respondents found personal reflection time and the opportunity to work with their teams useful. 6% of participants attended as single representation of their organisation and did not attend as part of a team.

While 73.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed the opportunity to co-host sessions was useful, 26% of respondents were either unable to comment or took a neutral stance.

66.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed morning practice was useful however 30% of respondents were either unable to comment or took a neutral stance.

"I have made significant changes to how I approach work team issues..."

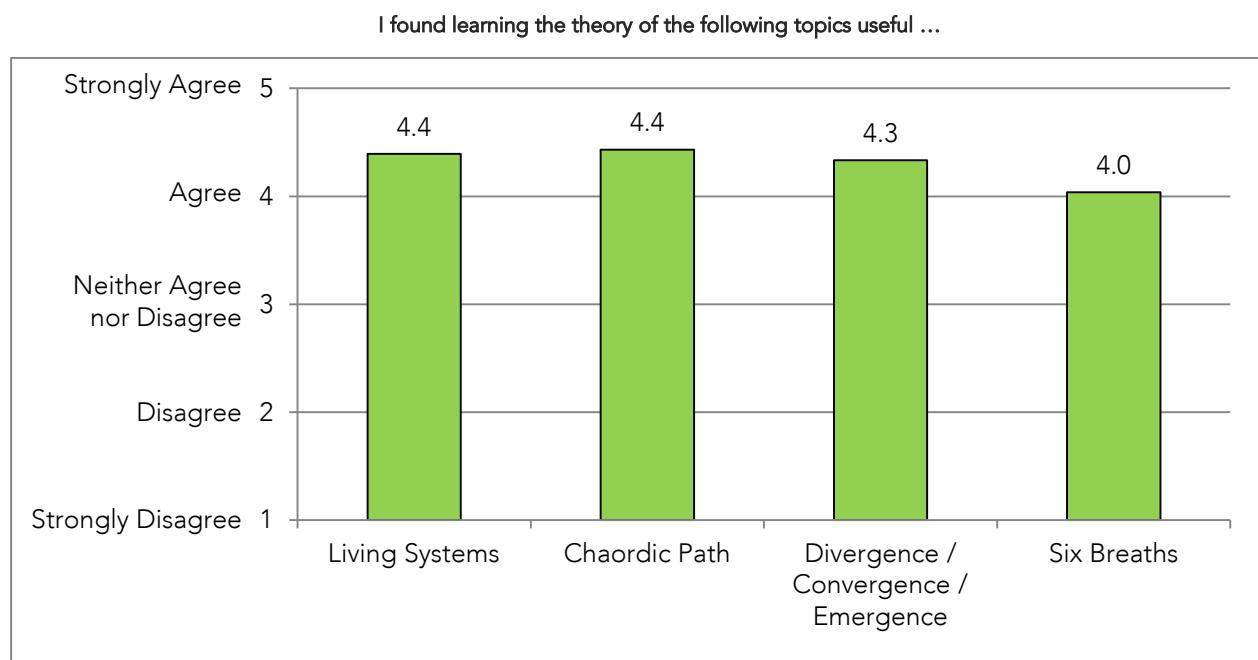
14.3 Theory

When participants were asked if they agree with the statement "I found learning the theory of the topics useful" on a scale from one to five, with one being strongly disagree and five being strongly agree, each section achieved a rating greater than 4 representing agreement that the topic was "useful".

One participant reported "there were a couple that I really wanted to learn about in more depth – and not just by reading the notes – but the ones that I found out most about I enjoyed immensely." There was a theme from a number of participants expressing interest in how to design a conference. Some suggested they would have benefited from a hands-on design experience, using the 6 breaths.

**I believe a deep insight into the practical 'how to design' is required.
Perhaps a working example could be worked through to intensify the design aspects.**

Figure 18: Usefulness of theory



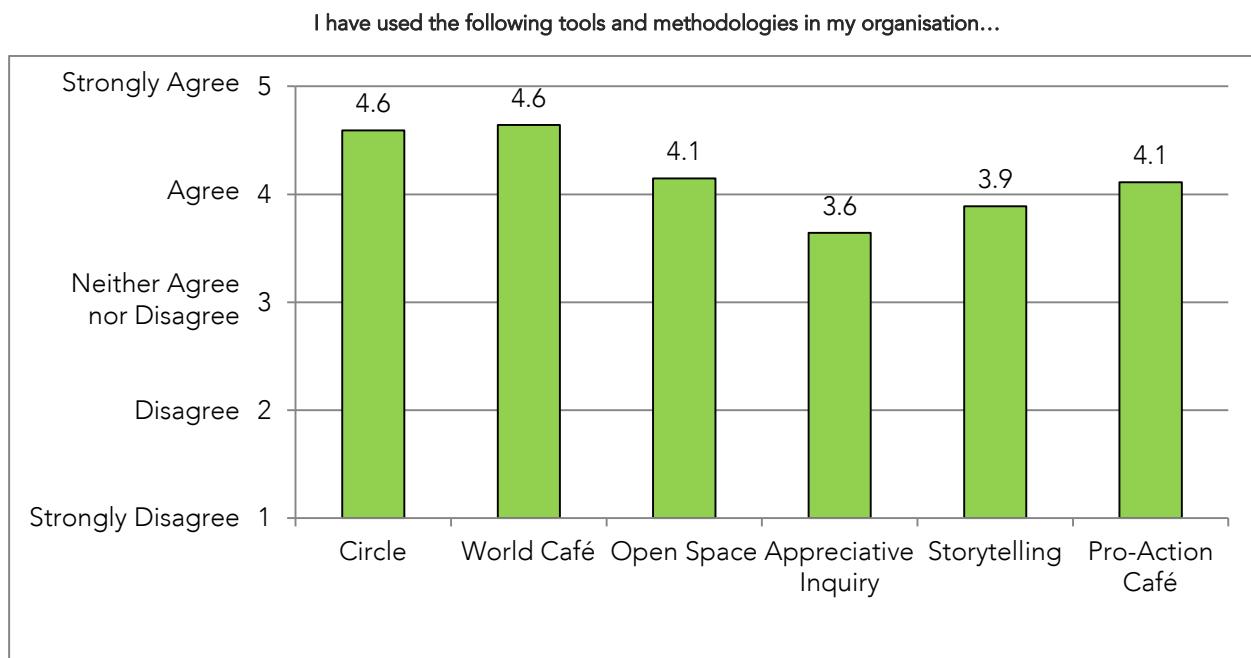
14.4 Tools & Methodologies

Use of Tools and Methodologies

In response to the question “I have used the following tools and methodologies in my organisation” participants provided a variety of responses. These are as follows:

- For Circle and World Café, 97% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, while 3% were neutral.
- For Open Space and Storytelling, 90% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.
- For Appreciative Inquiry, 73% of participants agreed or strongly with the statement, while 67% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement for the Pro Action Café.

Figure 19: Use of the tools and methodologies in my organisation



Skill Level to Apply Methodologies

Responses to the question “I have gained enough skills and knowledge from the conference to apply the methodologies in my organisation” resulted in more mixed responses.

Results for Circle, World Café, Open Space and Pro-Action Café ranged from 79% to 90% of respondents agreeing they have enough skills and knowledge to apply these methodologies within their organisations.

Results for Appreciative Inquiry and Storytelling indicated 59% and 68% of respondents respectively agreeing they have enough skills and knowledge.

Participants had the opportunity to practice and participate within Circle, World Café, Open Space and Pro-Action Café on more than one occasion throughout the conference. In contrast, participants had less opportunity to learn and practice Appreciative Inquiry and Storytelling theory and the results show respondents being less confident in applying these into their organisation. The results from this question may reflect the amount of exposure participants had to practice time for each of the methodologies along with teaching of the theory.

"There were some that 'clicked' for me more than others. I wouldn't mind though revising the ones I was neutral on. It could have just been a matter of timing"

One respondent stated “it is still a matter of distilling for me”, consistent with the overall theme that the conference imparts a great deal of information that requires some time to absorb.

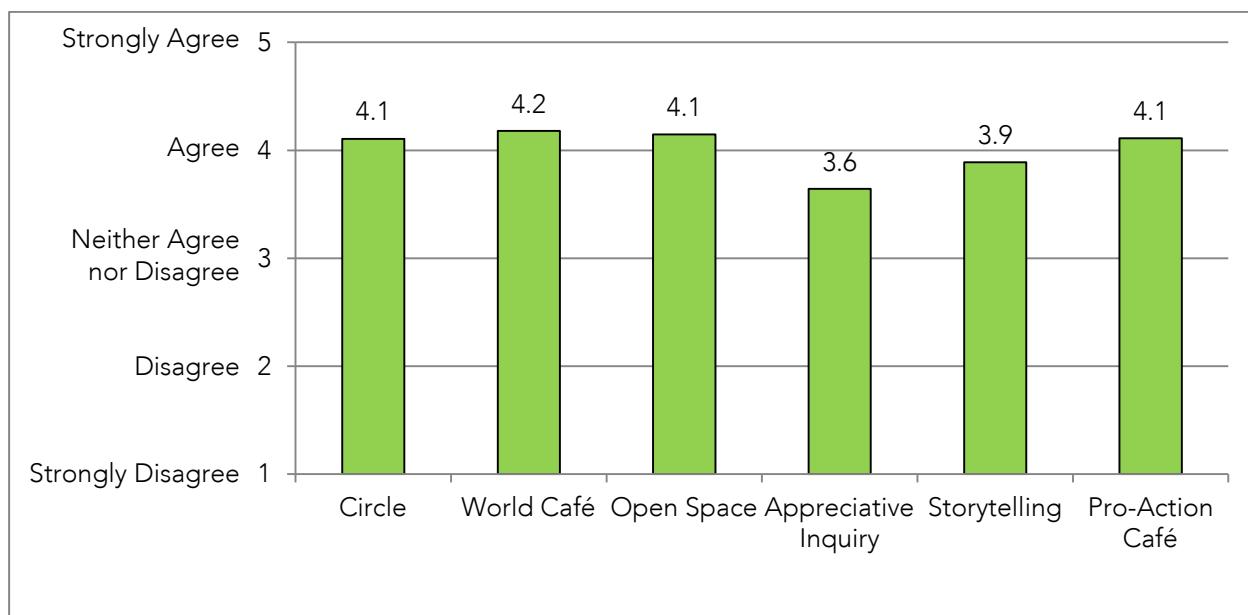
"I wish the workshop could have been longer! There was so much more I wanted to learn about in depth."

Others indicated hesitancy in "being allowed to use it" back in their organisation with the view some managers are stuck in the way they engage staff and are not open to trying something new for meaningful engagement. So, while there is a level of confidence in their skill and knowledge from the conference, participants who do not have support from senior managers may struggle to start using the methodologies.

There was also a view additional research into the methodology is needed. One participant did not feel confident to launch into the methodologies with the material provided at the conference and indicated they had since researched and purchased additional supporting material.

Figure 20: Enough skill and knowledge to apply the methodologies in my organisation

I have gained enough skills and knowledge from the conference(s) to apply the methodologies in my organisation....



14.5 Conference Logistics

Brochure Language

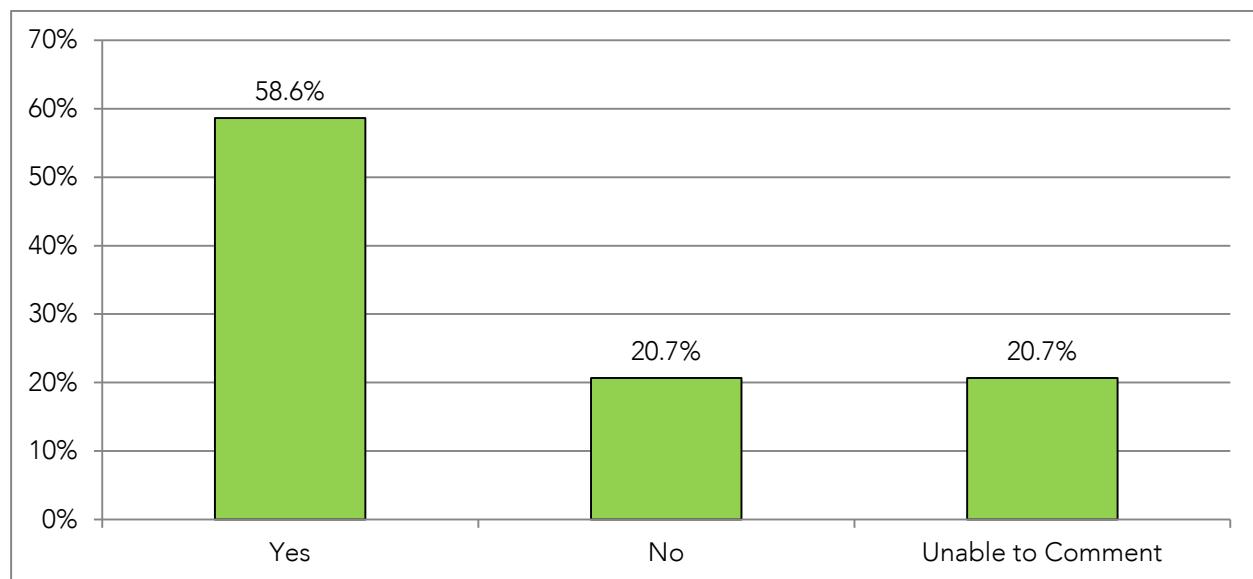
59% of respondents agreed the language of the conference brochure accurately portrayed their experience.

The remaining respondents were either "Unable to Comment" or indicated the brochure did not accurately portray their experience of the conference.

"I wonder if the language could be a little better in the brochures. I wasn't really sure what I was going to"

Figure 21: Language of the brochure

Thinking back, did the language of the brochure(s) accurately portray your experience of the conference(s)?



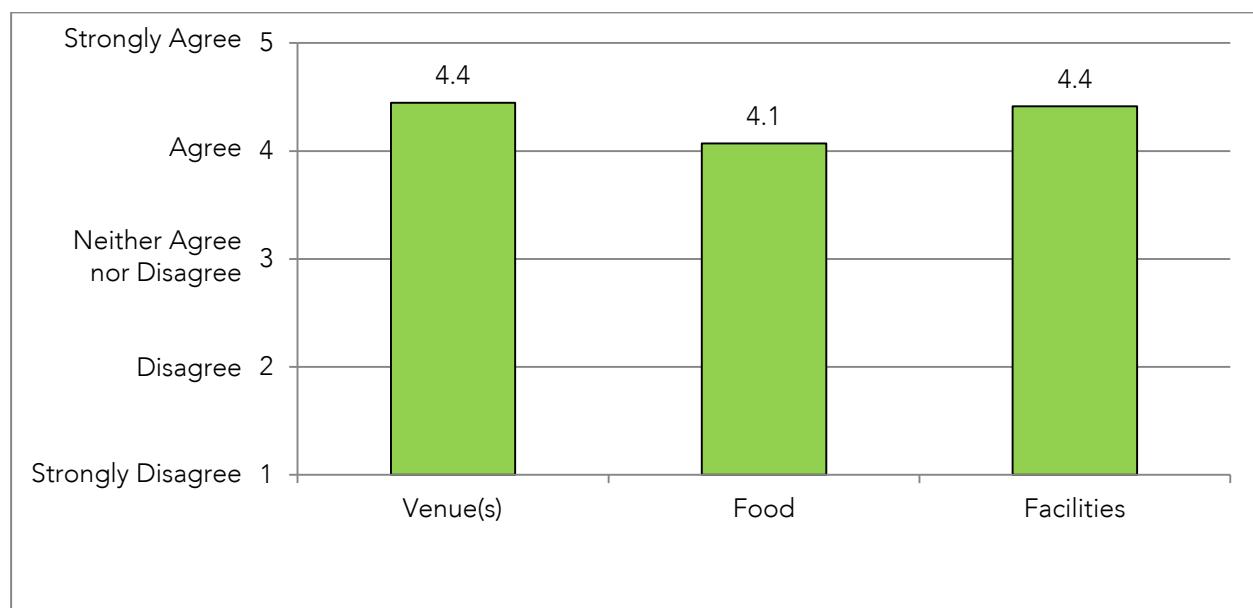
Venue, Food, Facilities

When asked to rate the logistics of venue, food and facilities, over 86% of respondents were highly satisfied with each area. 13% of respondents were unsatisfied, however, with the catering provided.

"Better coffee!"

Figure 22: Venue, food, facilities

I was very satisfied with the...



Length of Conference

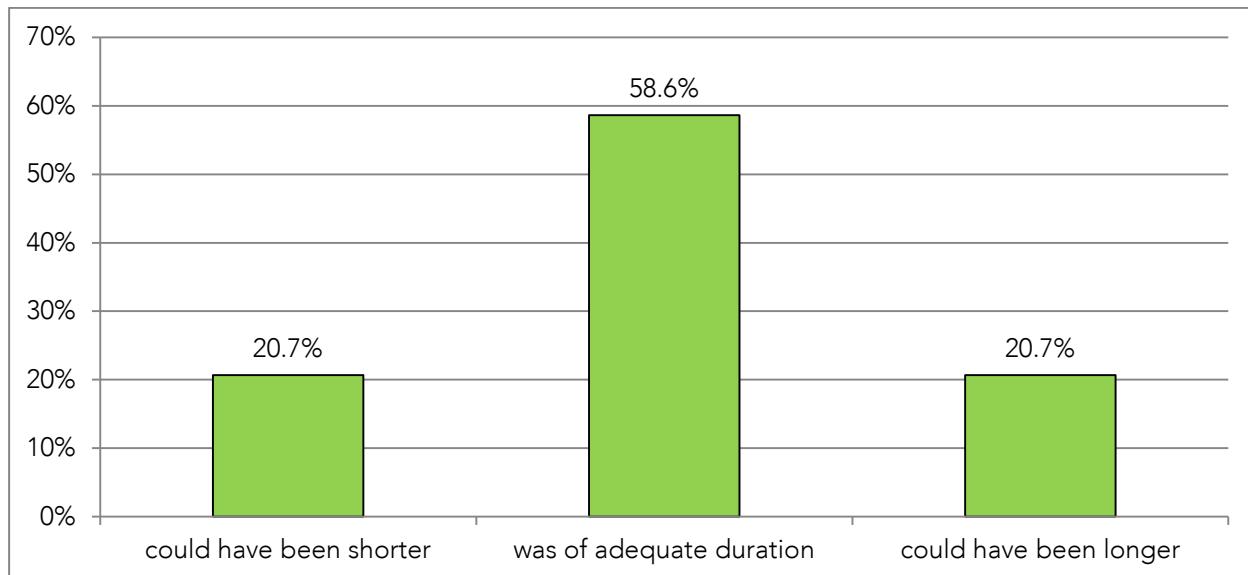
The duration of the conference was of adequate duration for 59% of respondents. The remaining 41% of respondents were split evenly between those thinking the conference could have been shorter and those who thought it could have been longer.

However, in the comments, themes of participants wanting more opportunity to co-host along with seeking experience and information on the design of programs were repeated in this section.

"First day I was cynical, second day I was understanding it better, third day I was impressed."

Figure 23: Duration of conference

I thought the duration of the conference I attended ...

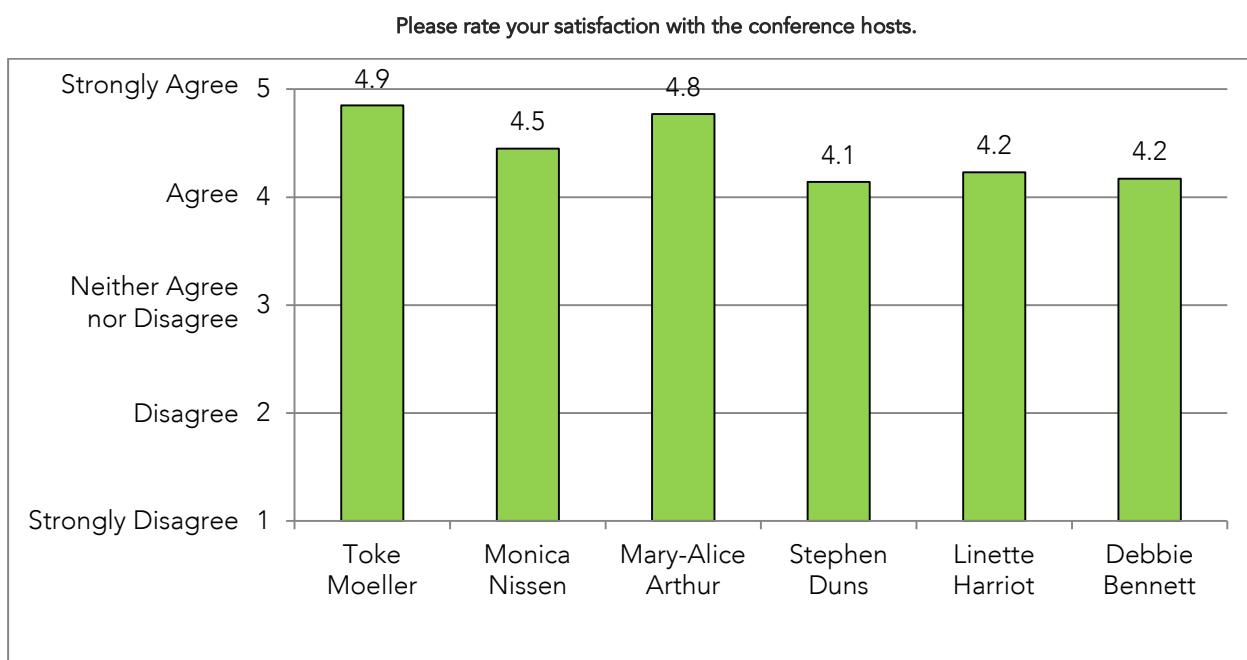


14.6 Hosting Team

When asked to rate the hosting team, respondents showed a high level of satisfaction with each member. On a scale of one to five, one being very dissatisfied and five being very satisfied, the hosting team achieved mean scores between 4.28 to 4.86 representing overall scores between satisfied and very satisfied.

"The presenters / facilitators were fantastic, insightful and engaging."

Figure 24: Satisfaction with hosting team



14.7 Conference Impacts

Positive Impact

Over nine out of ten people (96.6%) agreed or strongly agreed the tools and methodologies learnt will have a positive impact on their Life.

"I have been expanded and enriched by this exposure, learning and the possibility now before me."

Over nine out of ten people (93.1%) agreed or strongly agreed the tools and methodologies learnt will have a positive impact on their work.

"Ideas and ways of hosting space / using of "natural" evolution of ideas in groups decision making / the fact that humans can work through conflict to resolve issues."

Over eight out of ten people (86.2%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed the training will have a positive impact on their organisation. Some respondents commented this impact could be even greater except for resistance from people who may not wish to relinquish control, highlighting the importance of training a cross range of people throughout organisations.

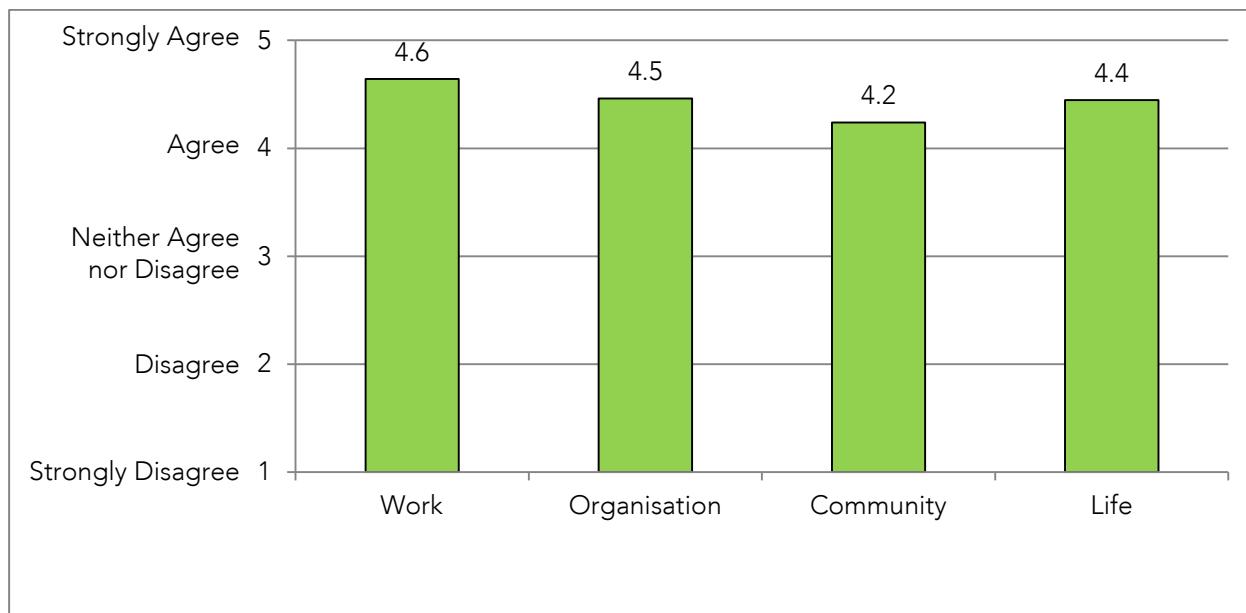
"I would like to think it could have a greater impact on my work, organisation and community but I think there are many people who don't want to relinquish control. So hopefully the more people we can train the more influence we can have."

Over two-thirds (68.9%) agreed or strongly agreed the training will have a positive impact on their community.

"Some really great skills in meaningfully engaging people and coming up with something that in the end is meaningful."

Figure 25: Positive impact from the conference

I think the tools and methodologies I have learnt have had a positive impact on my ...



14.8 Strengths of Conference

Respondents enjoyed the opportunity to learn different methodologies in an experiential setting, new ways of thinking, participating and interacting while "learning really great skills" to engage people in a meaningful manner. The manner in which the theory was explained and integrated into complementary group processes was also observed. There is a sense respondents have more confidence to deal with difficult issues and to expand their thinking towards work.

Respondents commented on the opportunity for self reflection, the time to remember what is important and why, learning to 'go deep' and reconnecting with areas that had been pushed away. While confronting at times, this opportunity to think about personal values and practices they brought to their organisations and lives was a rewarding experience, allowing for a better sense of self and others.

"The most valuable thing was how it gave me the opportunity to really think about my own values and practices that I bring not only to my organisation but to my every day life."

The benefits of attending as part of one's own organisation while drawing from the experience and expertise of others, the power of collective wisdom, the opportunity to work on organisation specific practical issues and a supportive learning environment highlighted the value respondents placed on the diversity of the group.

"I was initially sceptical, thought it may be a whole heap of new age stuff. But gradually found it to be very useful and opened up a whole range of ideas for me."

14.9 Suggestion for Improvement

The language of the brochure and pre conference material did not clearly reflect the training for some respondents. There was an indication some participants were not sure "what they were going in to" or "what I was in for" to prepare participants for "brave moments to go deep". For some, the brochure only made sense when reading after the conference. One respondent noted "although not the fault of the organisers, it would have helped if I'd known the purpose of my attendance at the conference."

"I wonder if the language could be a little better in the brochures. I wasn't really sure what I was going too. Maybe some more info about meaningfully engaging people and assisting in developing collaborative outcomes."

Many respondents expressed a need for post conference support and follow up opportunities, both organisation specific and with the group as a whole. Information on how others have kept going post conference, what support they needed to put skills into practice and the difficulties they faced would be helpful. The "difficulty in being allowed to use it" was also expressed from respondents, wondering how they can use the methodologies with their superiors who they consider 'stuck in their ways.'

"I got far more out of it (the conference) than expected. Wished it could have been longer, or a follow up course offered so I could get to sessions I didn't get to this time."

15. Post-Conference Questionnaire: May 2011 Conference

This chapter contains the evaluation report of the May 2011 conference, based on the responses to a post-conference survey.

15.1 Respondent Assessment

Response Rate

Overall, 36 participants attended the conference and 17 responses were received to the survey. This is an overall response rate of 47%.

Overall Satisfaction

Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction of the Art of Hosting (AoH) conference along with the usefulness of the conference components and theories. Scores were provided on a scale ranging from one to five, with one being very dissatisfied or strongly disagree and five being very satisfied or strongly agree.

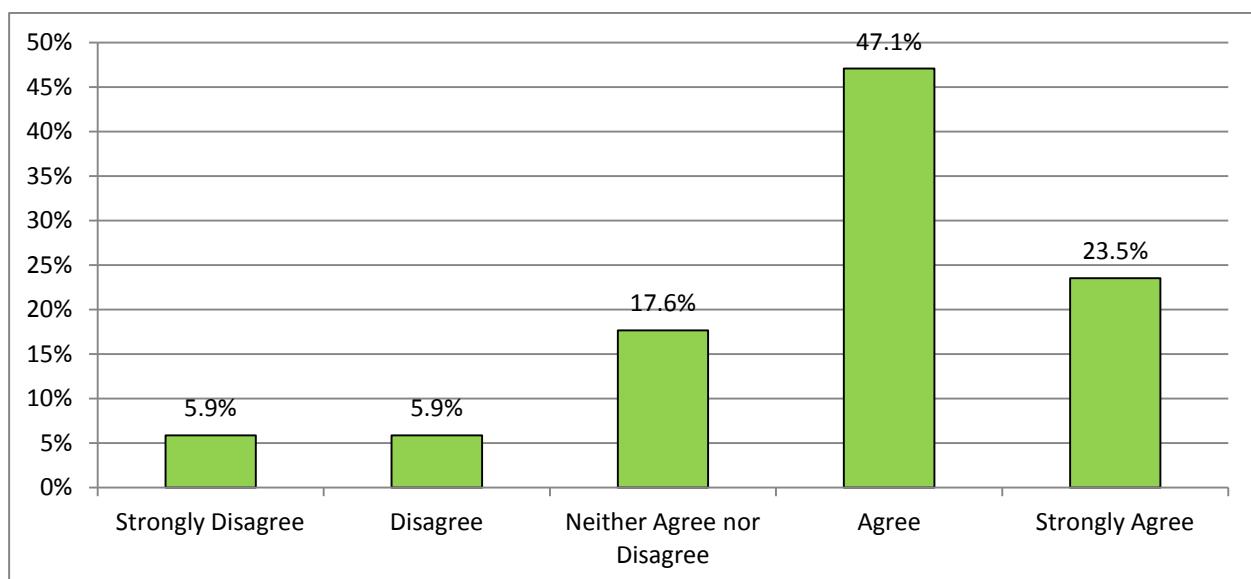
71% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they were very satisfied with the AoH conference.

While no immediate themes can be drawn from the comments, respondents felt that the program challenged them in new ways and was "immensely rewarding on a personal level".

"It has enhanced the knowledge & practices of CD, which I studied a number of years ago & now see another layer to improved conversations/practises for a wider audience."

Figure 26: Satisfaction with the Participatory Leadership Conference

Please rate your agreement to the following statement: I was very satisfied with the Participatory Leadership conference.



One respondent in particular felt that the techniques were used inappropriately, and were not supported by theory.

15.2 Program Design

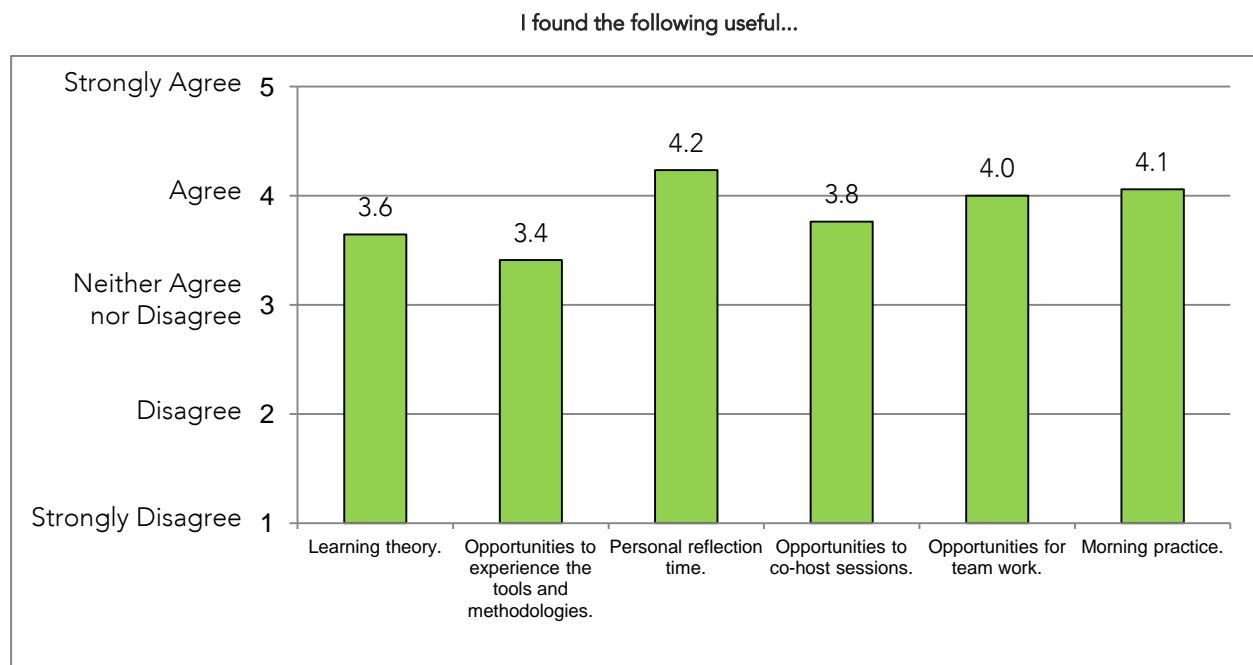
The design of the conference provided opportunities for participants to learn theory, experience the tools and methodologies, practice personal reflection time, co-host sessions, work with their teams and attend morning practice.

88% of respondents found the opportunity to experience the tools and methodologies useful, while 82% found the opportunities for team work useful.

77% of respondents found learning the theory useful, while 71% found the personal reflection time useful. Finally, 59% found the opportunities to co-host sessions useful, while 47.1% found the morning practice useful.

"The process of AoH was very useful as it allowed me to learn & understand the theory & see how it can be used & how productive it can be."

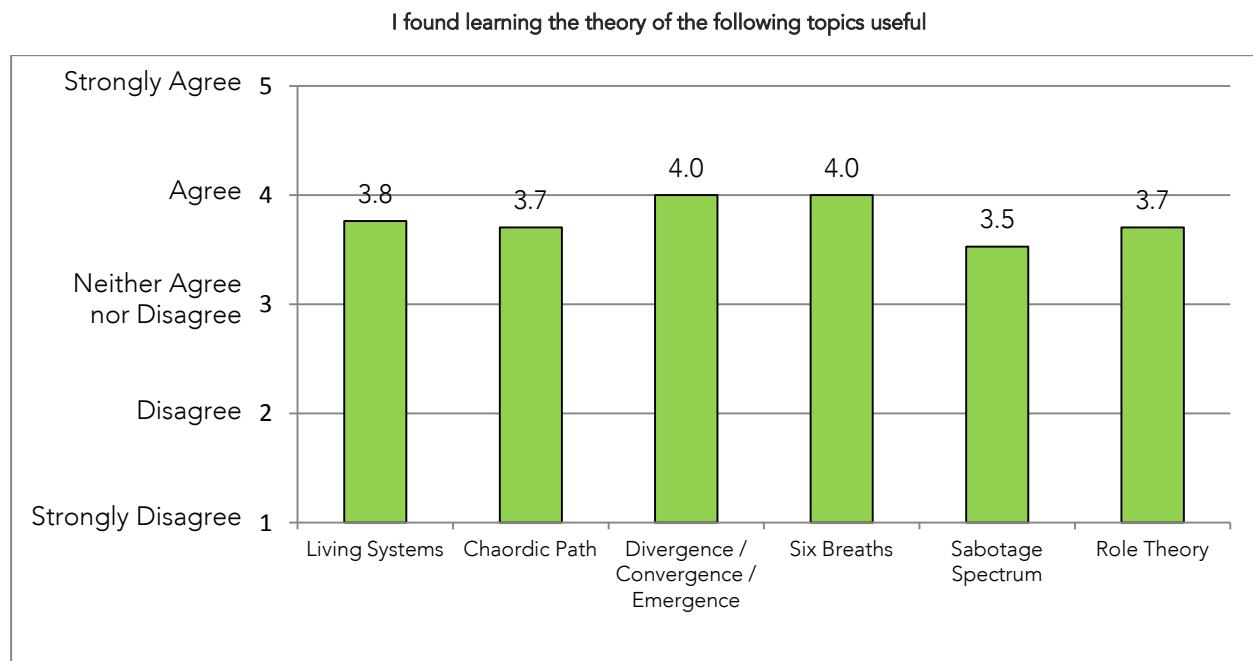
Figure 27: Usefulness of the learning and development activities



15.3 Theory

Participants were asked if they agree with the statement “I found learning the theory of the topics useful” on a scale from one to five, with one being strongly disagree and five being strongly agree. Each topic achieved a rating of between 3.5 and 4.0. This indicates that the process of learning the theory was generally considered useful, but could be improved. Very little qualitative information was provided in support of these ratings.

Figure 28: Usefulness of theory



Some comments suggested that facilitators needed to demonstrate a better grasp of the theory, and spend more time on explanations.

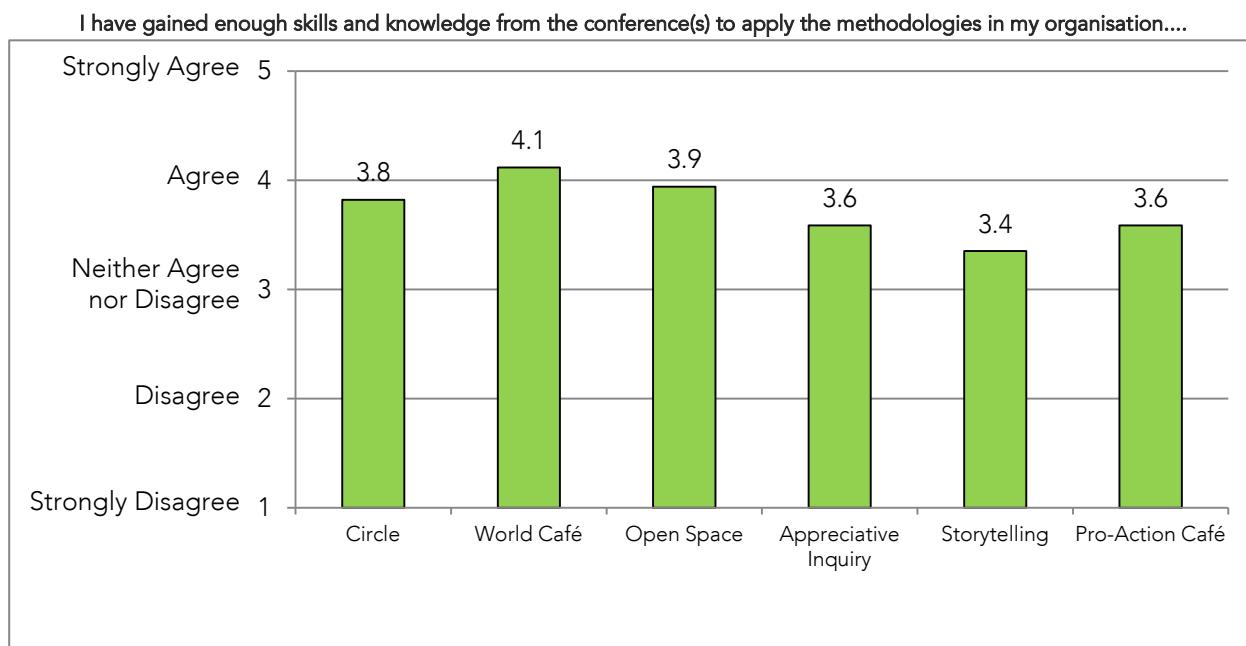
Too much crammed in and not enough time to take down individual hosts comments.

15.4 Tools & Methodologies

Skill Level to Apply Methodologies

In response to the question “I have gained enough skills and knowledge from the conference(s) to apply the methodologies in my organisation”, 71% either agreed or strongly agreed. A further 29% provided a neutral answer. Apart from the storytelling component, scores indicated a general agreement that participants had learnt enough to be able to apply the tools in their respective organisations.

Figure 29: Planning to use the tools and methodologies in my organisation



Some participants commented that they would like to understand more about the “ins and outs” of the particular methodologies, and would like more practice first. One respondent recorded a particular adverse reaction to the storytelling exercise and expressed a strong view that this needs to be delivered differently.

Balance between Theoretical and Experiential Learning

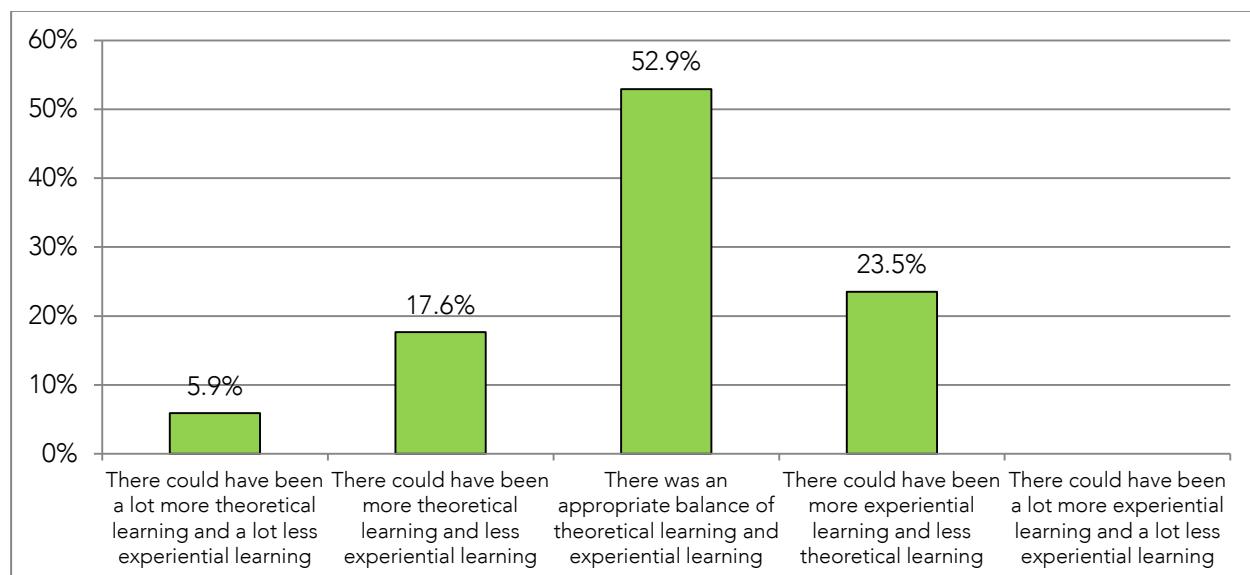
When asked whether the program struck an appropriate balance between theoretical and experiential learning, 53% agreed that the balance was appropriate. Those that felt the balance could have been changed tended to favour an increased emphasis on experience, with 24% of participants responding in this way.

Though there were no emergent themes, comments suggested that more linkages should have been shown between the theory and practice, and that, because too much time was spent talking about theory, participants needed to "do it 'one more time'" to improve learning outcomes.

The remaining 23% felt that more theory was needed, with 1 respondent stating that much more theory and much less experiential learning would have improved delivery.

Figure 30: Balance between theoretical and experiential learning

Was the program balanced between theoretical learning and experiential learning?



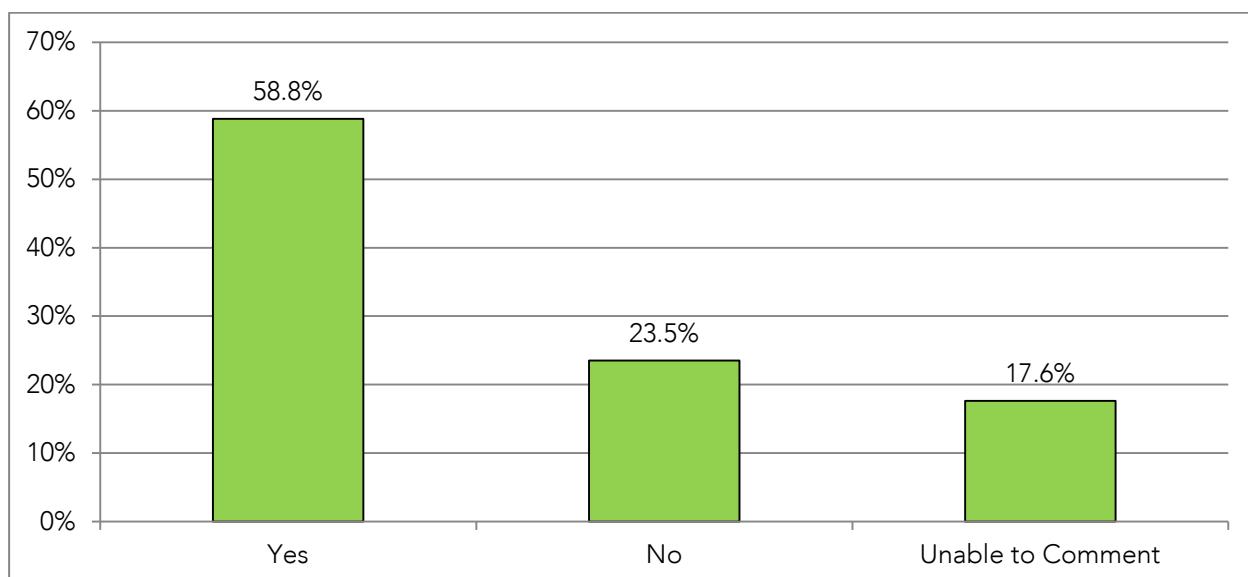
15.5 Conference Logistics

Brochure Language

59% of respondents agreed that the language of the conference brochure accurately portrayed their experience. Of the remaining responses, 24% indicated that the brochure did not accurately reflect their experience of the conference, while the remainder were unable to comment.

Figure 31: Language of the brochure

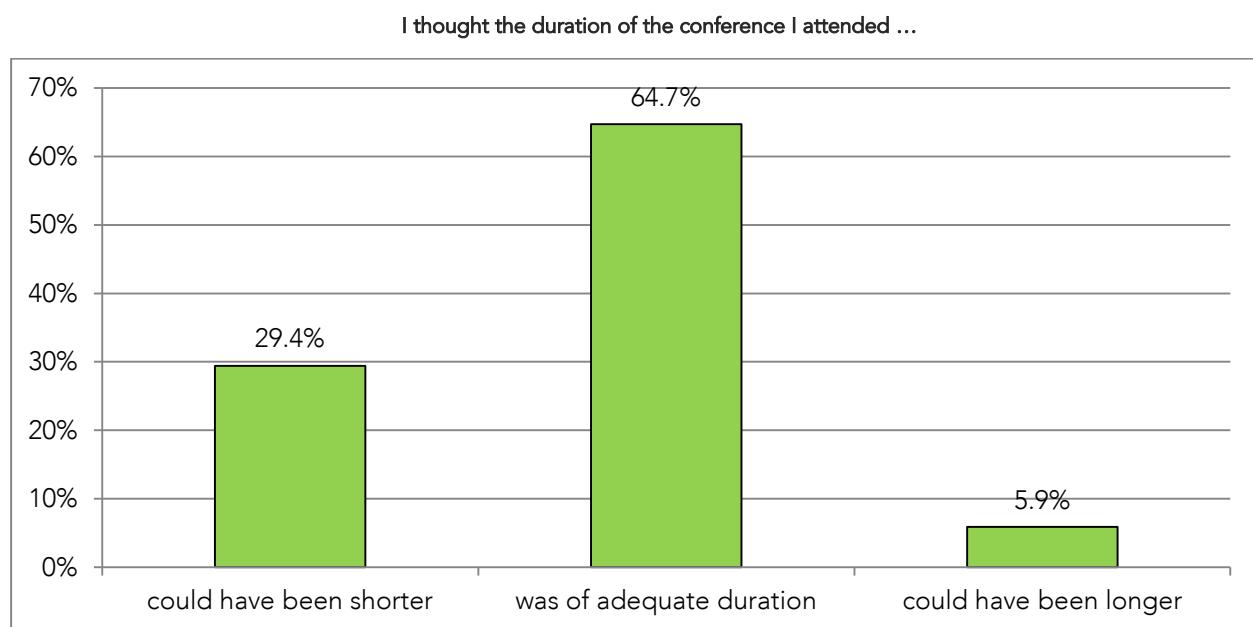
Thinking back, did the language of the brochure accurately portray your experience of the conference?



Length of Conference

The duration of the conference was adequate for 65% of respondents. A further 29 % felt that the conference was too long, while 1 felt that it was too short. These results were generally reflected in the comments.

Figure 32: Duration of conference



While there were no consistent themes in formative suggestions, other comments indicated that there was too much content included in three days. Some respondents felt that the training was "very full on" with some ideas and theories not explained as well as they could have been.

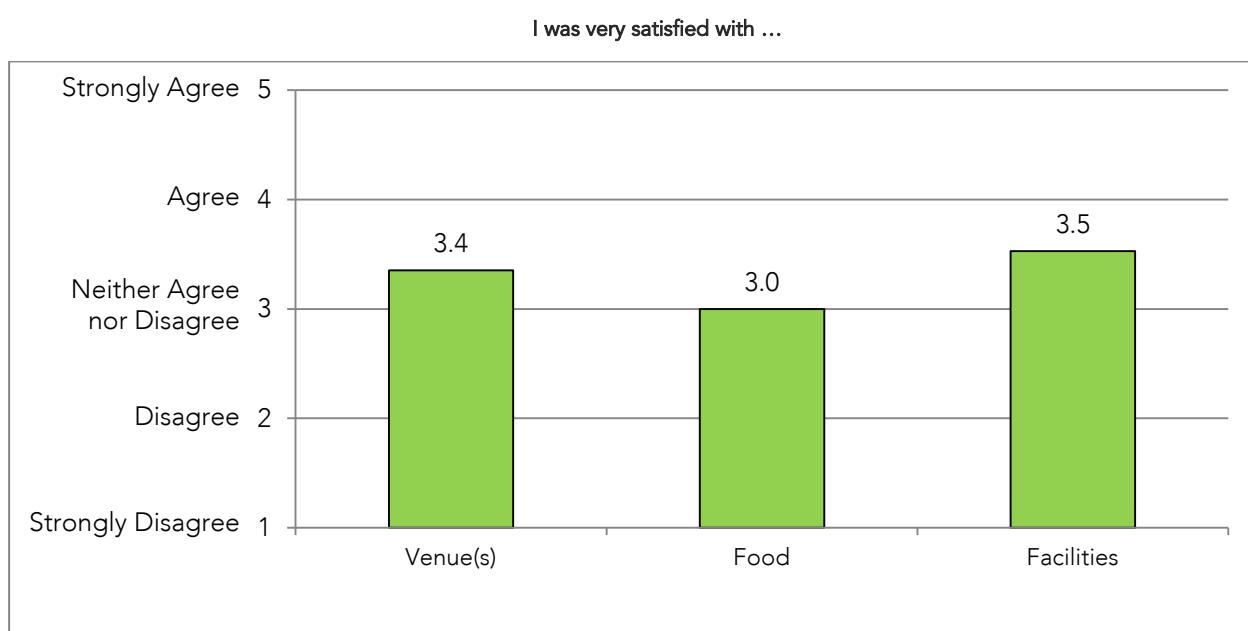
"I would have liked to have some extra time (a whole other day) to digest all of the new information. The entire event and new learning were quite overwhelming and there were too many new strategies and ideas to explore."

Venue, Food, Facilities

When asked to rate their satisfaction with the venue, food and facilities respondents generally provided an overall score of between 3.0 and 3.5, indicating that participants were generally neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with these aspects of the conference.

"Breakfast was truly awful, but the rest of the meals were great. It's a lovely venue, I like that it's not too flash! Having lots of space to move around is terrific."

Figure 33: Venue, food, facilities



15.6 Hosting Team

When asked to rate the hosting team, respondents generally indicated they were satisfied with the training hosts. On a scale of between one and five, where one is very dissatisfied and five is very satisfied, the hosting team achieved mean scores between 3.9 and 4.8. This indicates that, generally, the cohort of participants was either satisfied or very satisfied with the hosting team.

"The training hosts were an integral part of the experience. Their encouragement and support helped me to put myself 'out there' and to take risks."

Figure 34: Satisfaction with hosting team



It should be noted here that some comments indicated that there was a clear disparity between experience levels of the hosts, with some respondents commenting that the more experienced hosts were “propping up” the less experienced.

15.7 Conference Impacts

Generally, people agreed that the tools and methodologies have had a positive impact on their work and organisation. People tended to also agree that the tools and methodologies have had a positive impact on their community and their life.

Figure 35: Positive impact from the conference



15.8 Strengths of Conference

Respondents generally felt that the opportunity to learn new methodologies and different ways of working was a particular highlight. Participants also enjoyed being able to practice these new tools within a group environment. Other comments indicated that participants enjoyed the overall pacing of the event, while others enjoyed the blend of theoretical and experiential learning.

"Learning about a new way of approaching my work, my relationships and my community and being able to practice these techniques."

15.9 Suggestions for Improvement

General comments reflected a view that more information needs to be given to participants about what to expect from the conference.

"More information on what to expect, and perhaps more experienced facilitators for tricky parts of the training."

Other comments indicated that people would like more time to think about and digest the material. People should also be given the opportunity to leave the room during the storytelling and appreciative inquiry sessions, as some people found these quite confronting and invasive. People also felt that there should be less "spiritual influences". Other suggestions for improvement related to logistical issues such as the venue.

16. Post-Conference Questionnaire: August 2011 conference

This chapter contains the evaluation report of the August 2011 conference, based on the responses to a post-conference survey.

16.1 Respondent Assessment

Response Rate

Overall, 41 participants attended the conference and 19 responses were received to the survey. This is an overall response rate of 46%.

Overall Satisfaction

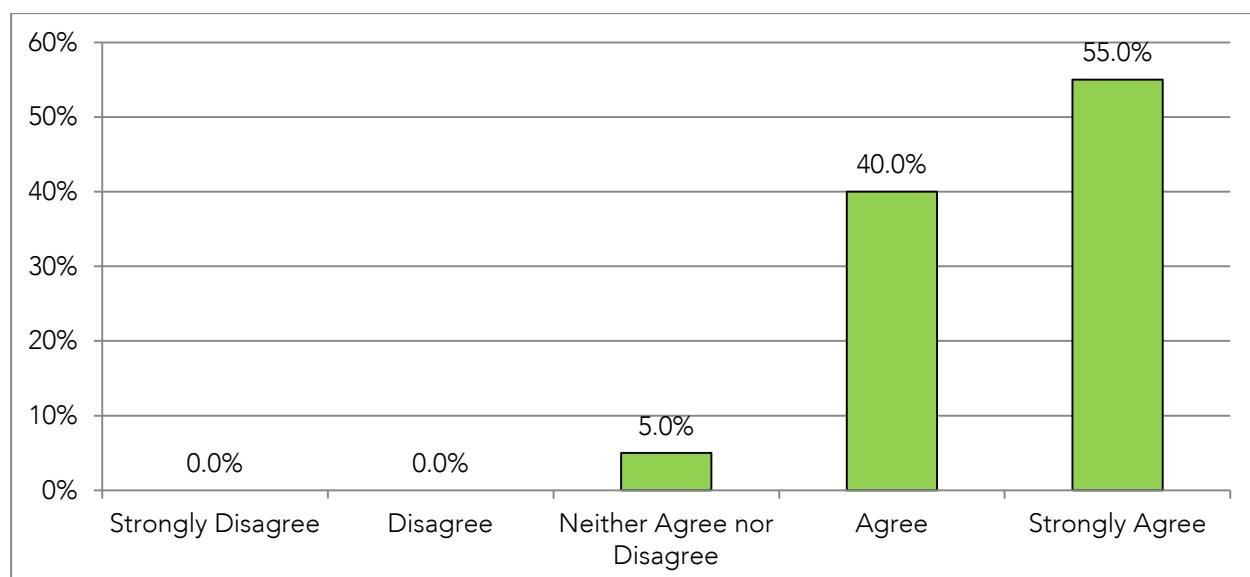
Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction of the Art of Hosting (AoH) conference. In response to this question, 95% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they were very satisfied with the AoH conference. The remaining 5% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Comments from participants generally reflected these results.

"This was life changing, not just in a professional sense, but personal as well."

Figure 36: Satisfaction with the Participatory Leadership Conference

Please rate your agreement to the following statement: I was very satisfied with the Participatory Leadership conference.



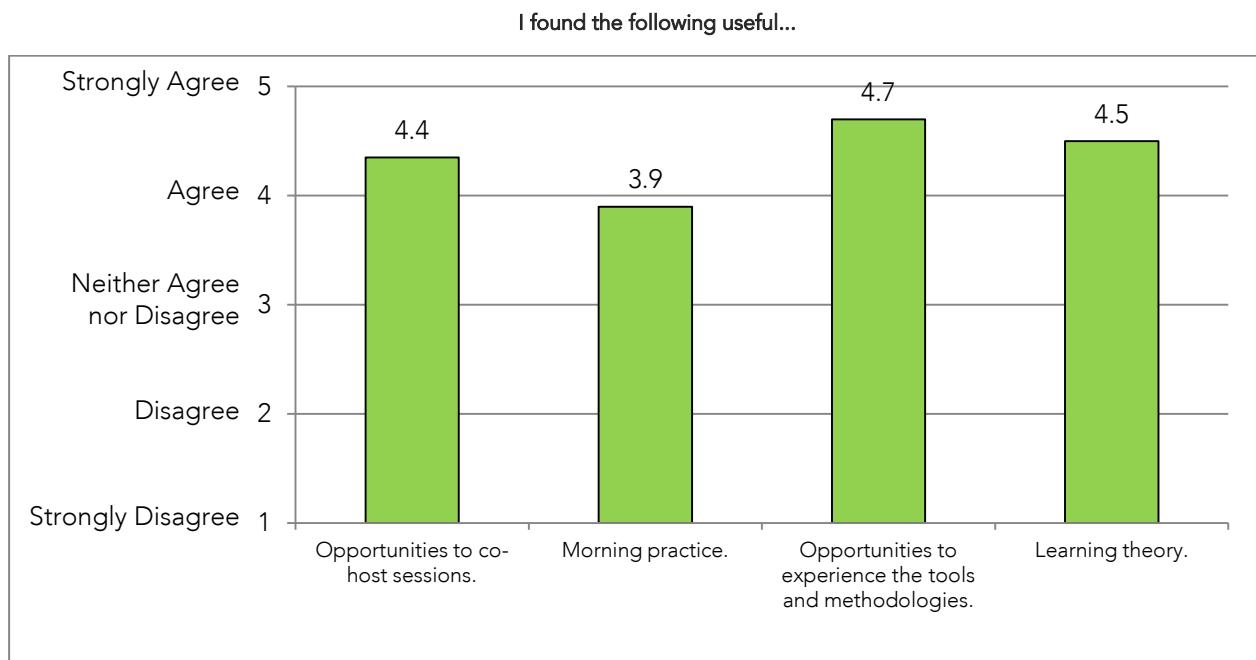
16.2 Program Design

The design of the conference provided opportunities for participants to learn theory, experience the tools and methodologies, practice personal reflection time, co-host sessions, work with their teams and attend morning practice.

All respondents found the opportunity to experience the tools and methodologies useful, while 95% of respondents found learning the theory useful. Finally, 95% found the opportunities to co-host sessions useful, while 75% found the morning practice useful.

"A good mix of learning methodologies, appreciated the variety, helped keep me interested."

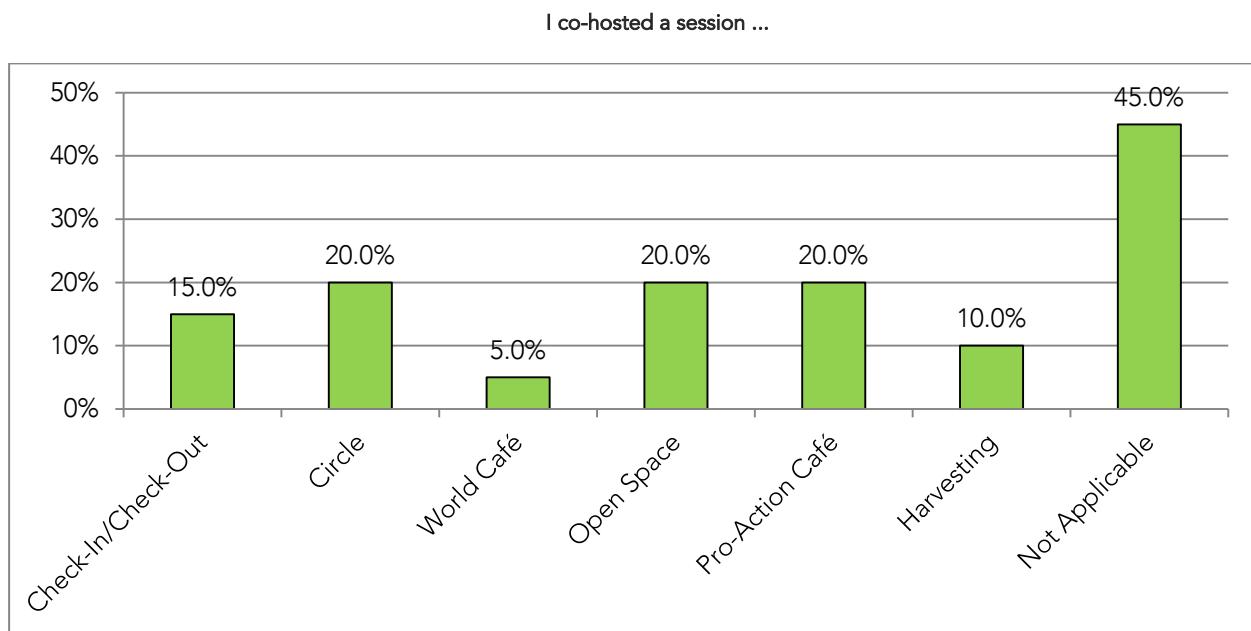
Figure 37: Usefulness of the learning and development activities



16.3 Participation

Participants were asked whether they co-hosted a session. 45% of participants did not co-host a session. Pro-Action Café, Circle and Open Space were the most commonly co-hosted session, with 20% of participants co-hosting each of these.

Figure 38: Co-hosting sessions



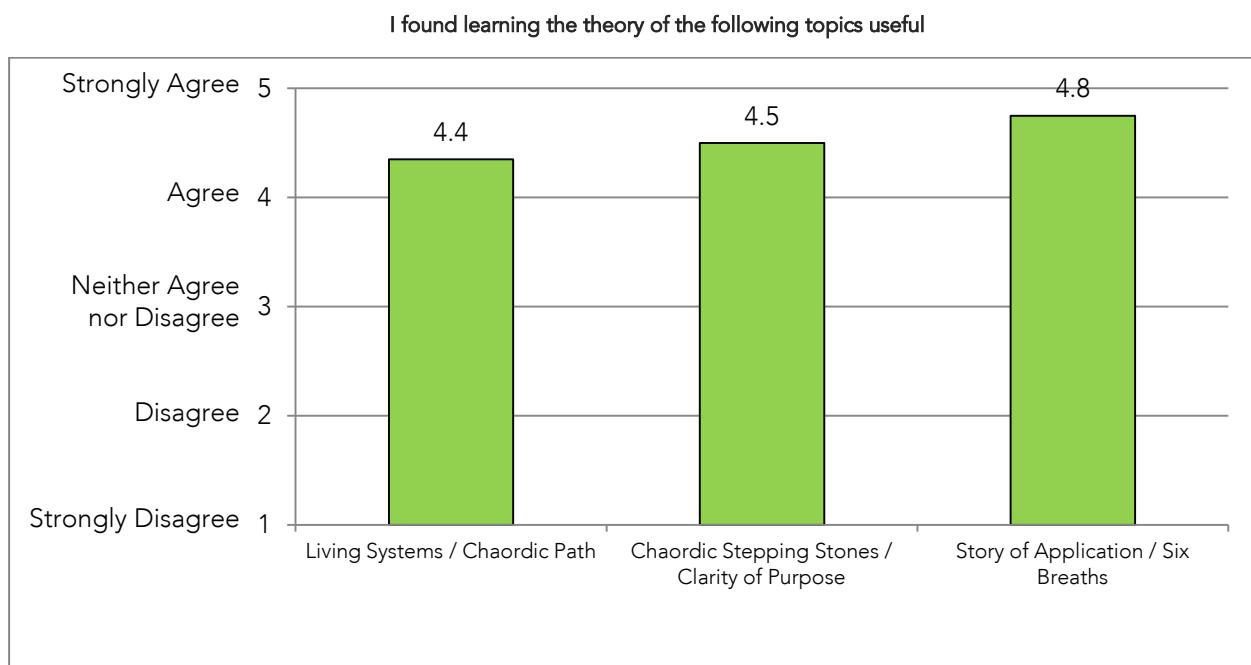
Please note that these percentages do not add up to 100% because respondents could choose multiple responses.

16.4 Theory

Participants were asked if they agree with the statement "I found learning the theory of the topics useful" on a scale from one to five, with one being strongly disagree and five being strongly agree. Each topic achieved a rating of between 4.4 and 4.8. This indicates that the process of learning the theory was received very well by participants.

"I find story telling the most powerful learning style for me, I also liked the highly visual elements and the complete absence of overheads!"

Figure 39: Usefulness of theory



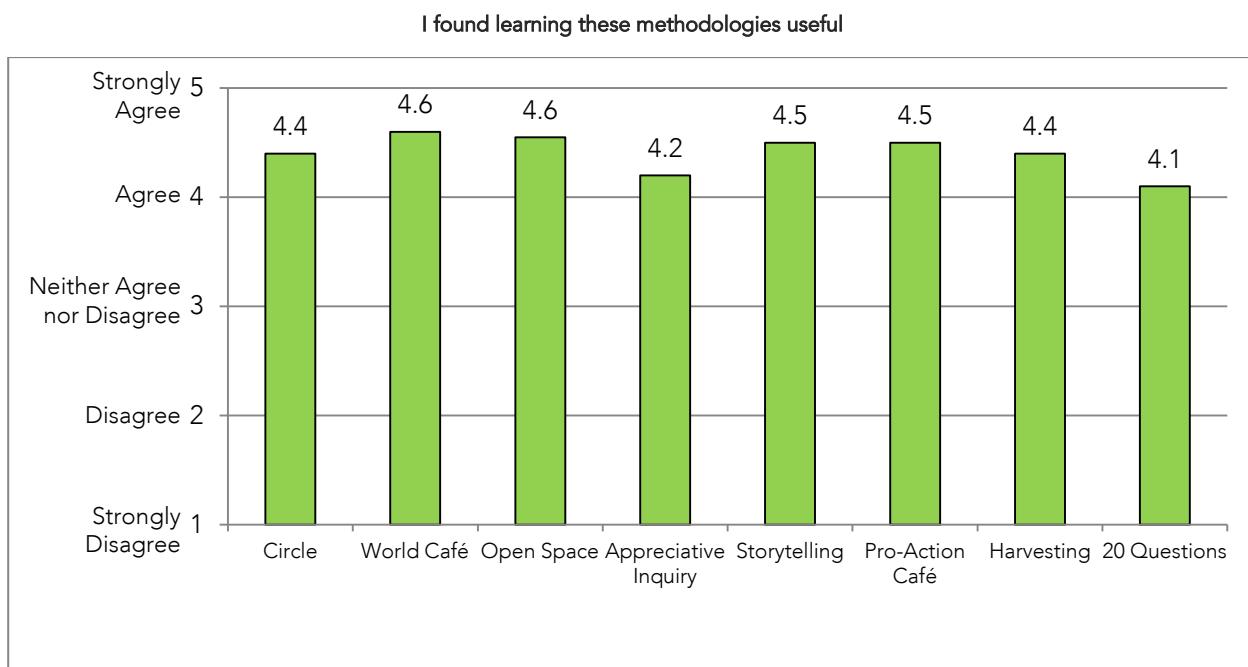
16.5 Tools & Methodologies

Learning Methodologies

When asked whether they found learning the methodologies useful, participants generally provided scores of between 4.1 and 4.6 (out of a maximum of 5). This indicates strong to very strong agreement with the statement "I found learning the methodologies useful ...".

"Have already tried a few of these back in the workplace with good results."

Figure 40: Learning methodologies



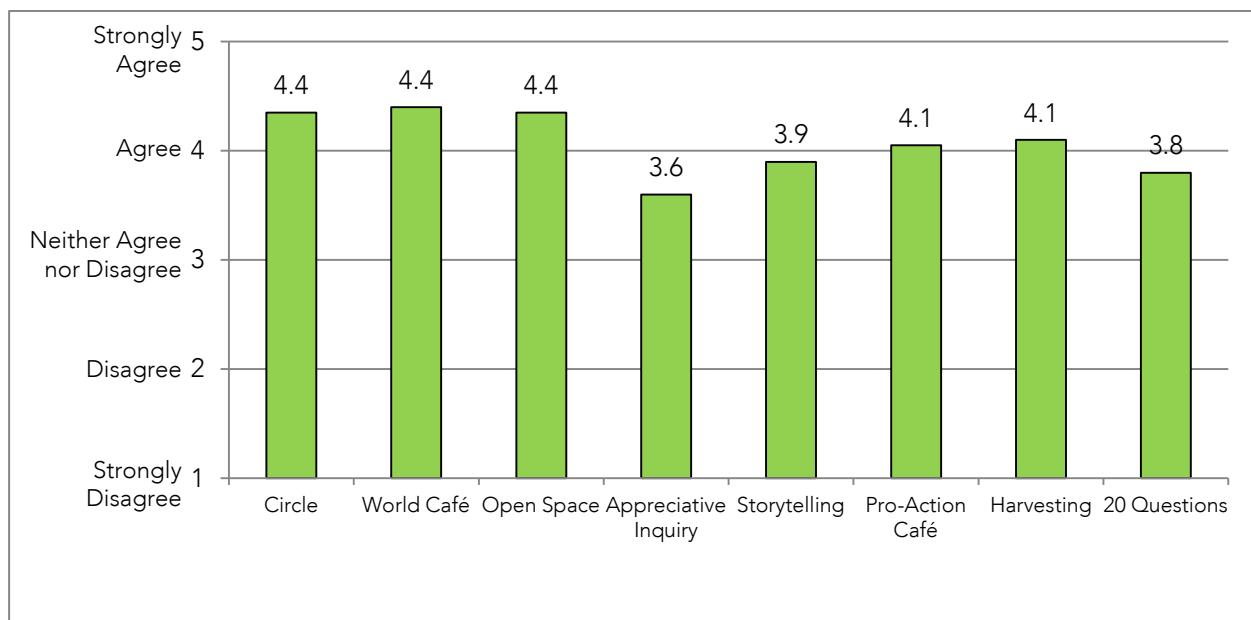
Application of Methodologies

For each methodology, participants generally had different responses as to whether they had learnt enough to apply it in their organisation. These responses are as follows:

- 95% of respondents felt that they had learnt enough to apply Circle, World Café and Open Space in their organisations.
- 80% felt that they had learnt enough of Harvesting and 20 Questions to apply them in their organisations, however 10% disagreed that they had learnt enough of the latter to apply it.
- 75% felt that they had learnt enough of Storytelling and the Pro-Action Café to be able to apply it in their organisations, although 5% had not learnt enough.
- 70% felt that they had learnt enough of Appreciative Inquiry to be able to apply it, but 10% disagreed that they had learnt enough.

Figure 41: Planning to use the tools and methodologies in my organisation

I have gained enough skills and knowledge from the conference(s) to apply the methodologies in my organisation....

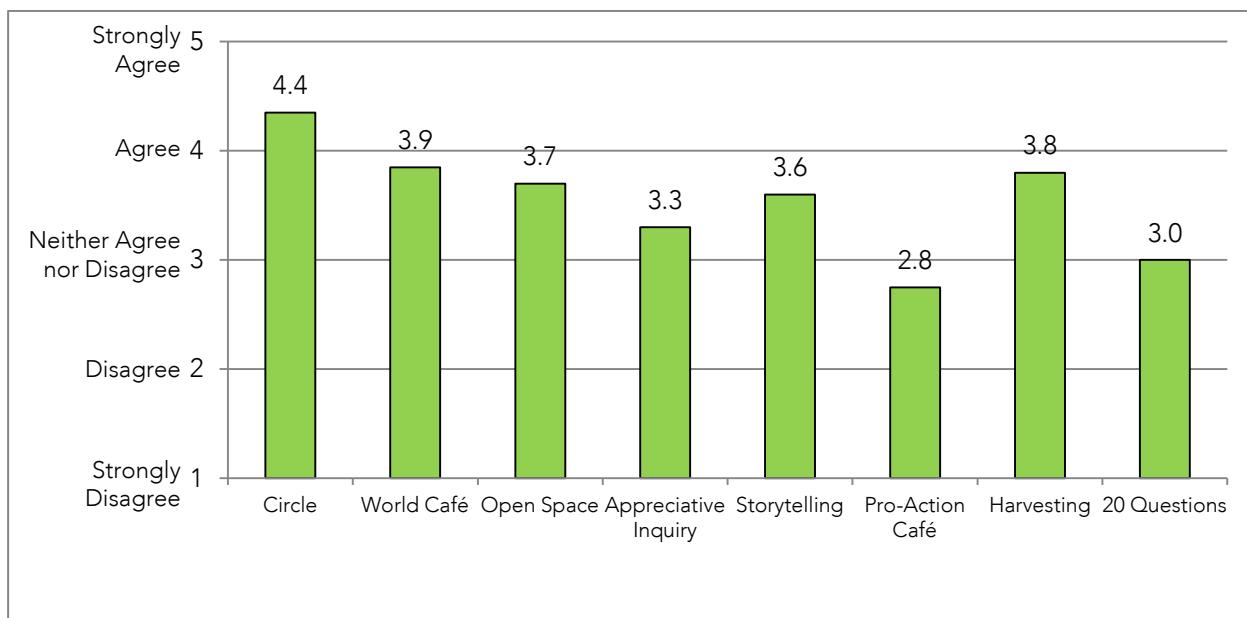


When participants were asked whether they had actually applied the methodologies in their organisation, response scores ranged between 2.8 and 4.4, where a score of 5 indicates a strong agreement with the statement "I have used the following methodology in my organisation", and a score of 0 indicates strong disagreement. The most commonly used methodology was Circle, followed by World Café and Harvesting. The least commonly used methodologies were Pro-Action Café, 20 Questions and Appreciative Inquiry.

"Professionally: World Café planned for November; Am currently considering a large Open Space conversation in December. Personally: Have started a small conversation in my own community with a half dozen people to discuss the idea of hosting a local conversation using either WC or OS."

Figure 42: Actual use of tools and methodologies

I have used the following methodologies in my organisation....



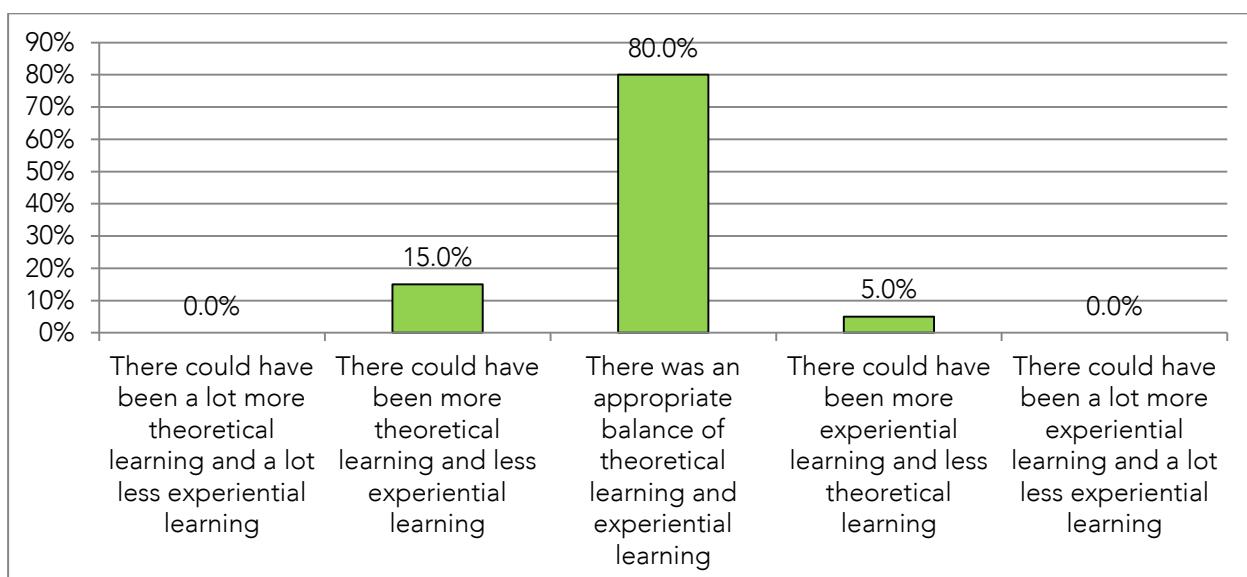
Balance between Theoretical and Experiential Learning

When asked whether the program struck an appropriate balance between theoretical and experiential learning, 80% agreed that the balance was appropriate. Those that felt the balance could have been changed tended to favour an increased emphasis on theory, with 15% of participants responding in this way. One participant would have preferred more experiential learning.

"I think the balance was great!"

Figure 43: Balance between theoretical and experiential learning

Was the program balanced between theoretical learning and experiential learning?



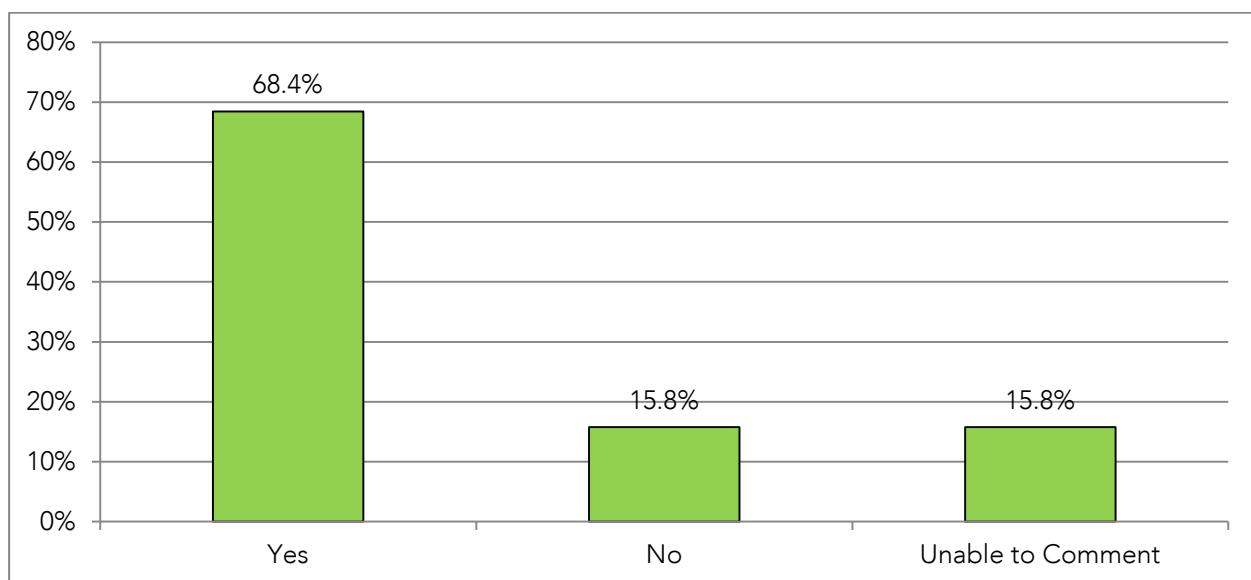
16.6 Conference Logistics

Brochure Language

69% of respondents agreed that the language of the conference brochure accurately portrayed their experience. Of the remaining responses, 16% indicated that the brochure did not accurately reflect their experience of the conference, while the remainder were unable to comment.

Figure 44: Language of the brochure

Thinking back, did the language of the brochure accurately portray your experience of the conference?



Length of Conference

Comments generally reflected a view that more "down time" was needed to process and absorb the information and that shorter days would be beneficial (if the overall length of the conference were increased).

"Thought we needed more 'down time' - opportunity to have some time out."

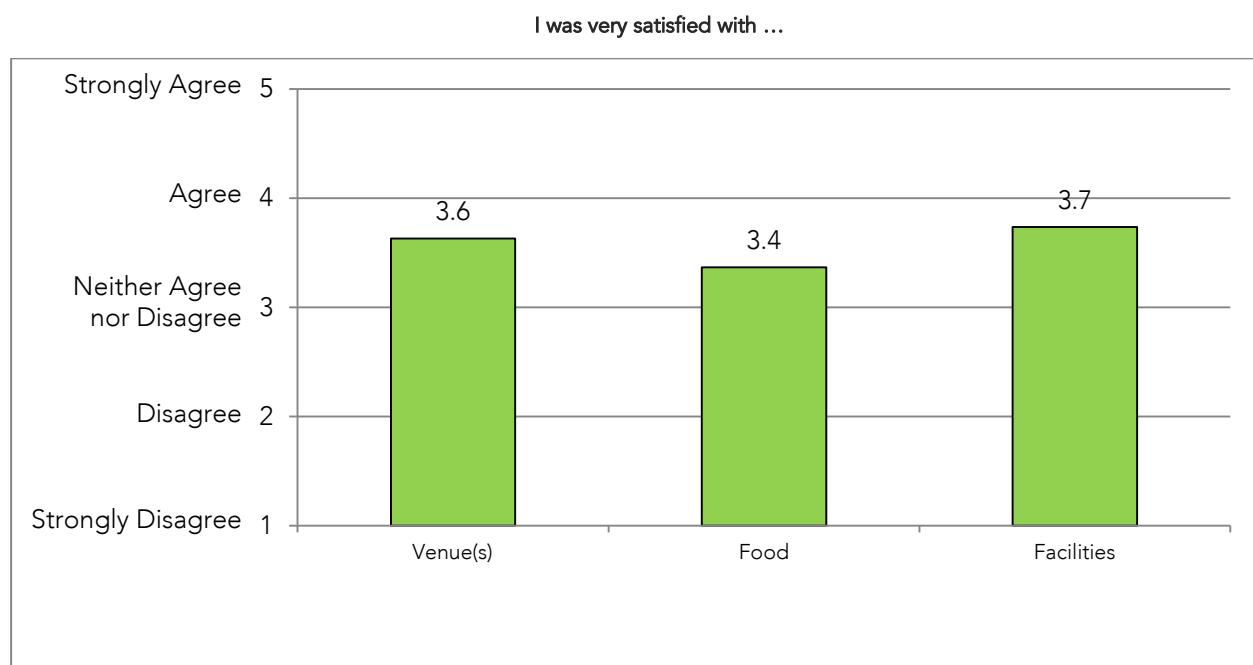
One participant made a request not to have future AoH conferences on the weekend, as this made it difficult for parents.

Venue, Food, Facilities

When asked to rate their satisfaction with the venue, food and facilities respondents generally provided an overall score of between 3.4 and 3.7, indicating that participants generally either thought these aspects of the conference were "very satisfactory" or had a neutral stance. This latter result indicates that these aspects of the conference could be improved.

"Venue - a bit chilly, otherwise great that located in the a nice setting, relatively close to Melbourne, good spaces, very clean and comfortable"

Figure 45: Venue, food, facilities

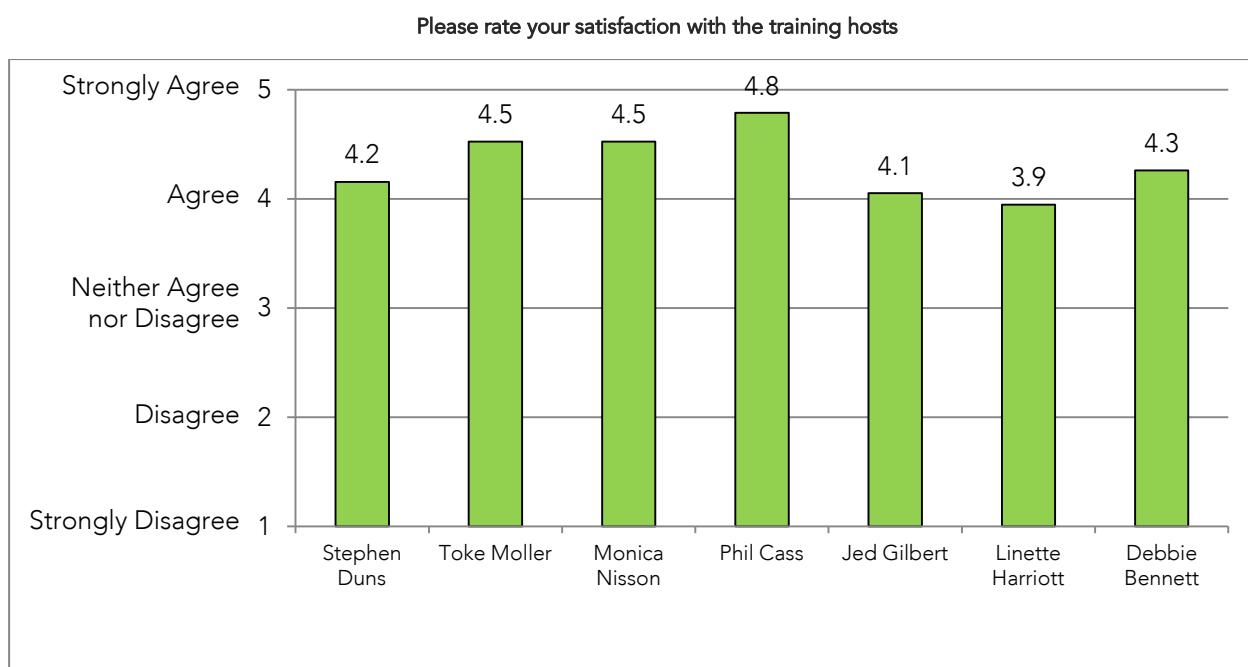


16.7 Hosting Team

When asked to rate the hosting team, respondents generally indicated they were satisfied with the training hosts. On a scale of between one and five, where one is very dissatisfied and five is very satisfied, the hosting team achieved mean scores between 3.9 and 4.8. This indicates that, generally, the cohort of participants was either satisfied or very satisfied with the hosting team.

"Great team, all with different strengths and things to add to the experience. I found all of the hosts to be very skilled, knowledgeable, genuine and caring in their approaches."

Figure 46: Satisfaction with hosting team



It should be noted here that some comments indicated that there some hosts needed to take a less "academic" approach to delivering the training, with more time spent on facilitating discussion rather than "delivering a lecture".

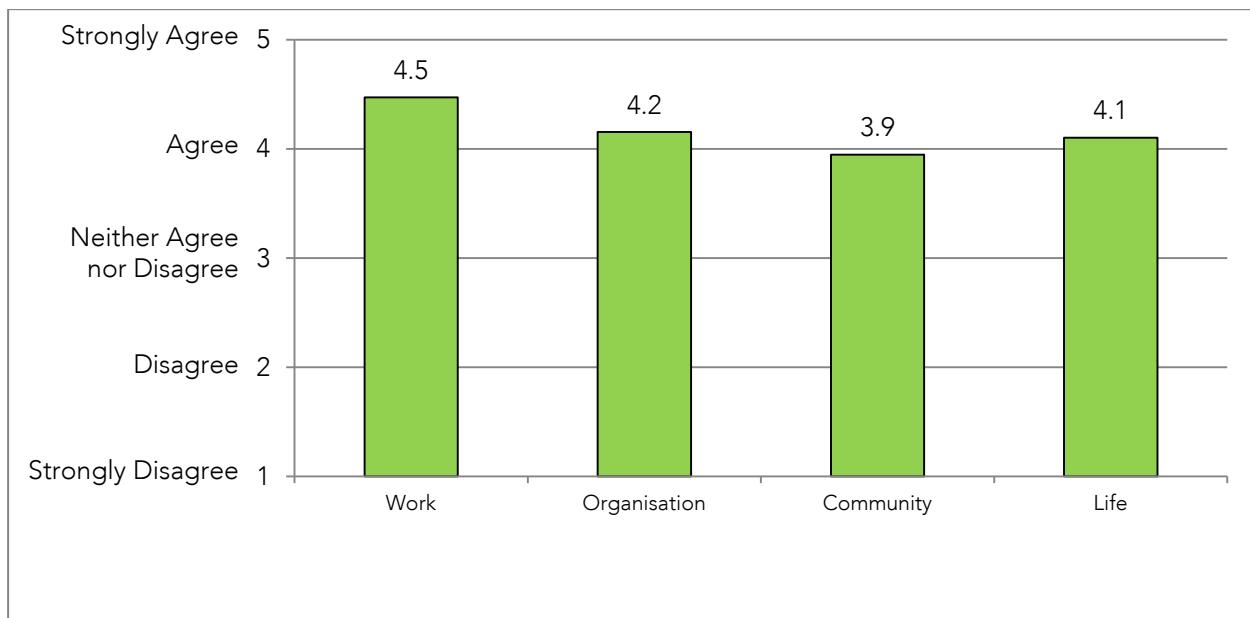
16.8 Conference Impacts

Generally, people agreed or strongly agreed that the tools and methodologies have had a positive impact on their work and organisation. People tended to also agree that the tools and methodologies have had a positive impact on their community and their life.

"I am actively looking for opportunities in all spheres in which to apply the methodologies and already have a couple in play. Cool huh?"

Figure 47: Positive impact from the conference

I think the tools and methodologies I learnt have had a positive impact on my...



16.9 Most Valuable

Respondents generally felt that the opportunity to see the new methodologies in action was particularly valuable. Participants also enjoyed the feeling of community that the conference created. Other comments indicated that participants enjoyed the general tone of the conference and "learning alternative ways to communicate".

"Getting access to a number of tools that were personally quite powerful and inspiring and coming away with the confidence to try them."

16.10 What Stood Out

Participants commented that learning the tools and methodologies stood out most, particularly Circle, World Café and Pro-Action Café. Participants were impressed by the

process of harvesting important conversations in new and dynamic ways. Some people also found it valuable to see how the tools were used in practice.

"That these tools and processes are useful for getting better outcomes from conversations. Using conversations to get these outcomes takes time and planning and the right choice of tools and processes. That this is as much art (A creative process that is practiced) as science (Methodology)"

A number of people also responded well to Phil Cass, noting that he is an "incredibly dynamic speaker".

Phil Cass - how inspiring and motivating he is.

16.11 Suggestions for Improvement

General comments reflected a view that more time should be provided to participants for them to understand the material and "to reflect" on it.

"More time for understanding methodology as we could not participate in each discussion and workshop, smaller groups for activities."

A few comments suggested that follow up sessions would be beneficial.

"Follow-up being offered. I think that there could be a range of things offered that would assist people to consolidate their practice to assist with the tendency for people to go back to business as usual practices. I have spoken with colleagues who have previously undergone the training who have said that they have been too shy to introduce the methodologies for fear of ridicule."

Other comments indicated that having a large group from a particular sector (i.e. health services) limited the ability of participants from other sectors to engage with the material. Other minor suggestions included having an outdoor circle; changing terms such as "harvesting" and "guardian"; and inviting guest speakers who have already been through the training.

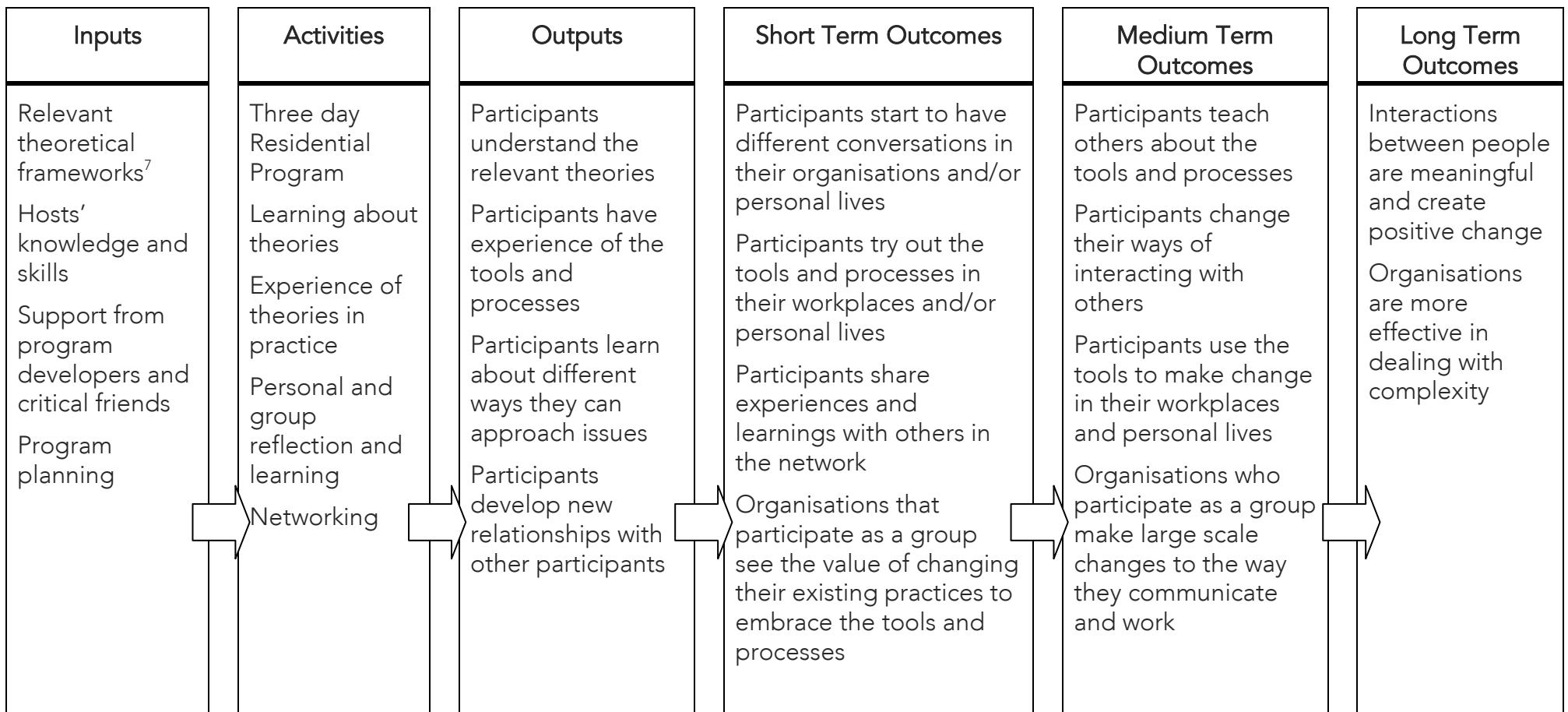
16.12 Participant Advocacy

All participants said that they would recommend the AoH conference to others. Generally, people responded that they would recommend the process to their colleagues, or people working in similar organisations. A few people commented that they would recommend it to people in leadership positions. One person commented that they would recommend it

to "everyone", while another said that they would recommend the course to "anyone who is interested in change for a better organisation &/or a better world".

Additional comments generally provided praise to Success Works and the hosts for running this training.

Appendix A: Project Logic



⁷ Relevant theoretical frameworks include Appreciative Inquiry, Theory U, Circle, World Café, Open Space Technology.

Underlying assumptions, to be tested during the evaluation process:

- The Art of Participatory Leadership training is well planned
- The workbook is adequate and supports learning
- Residential conference style approach achieves an intensive learning experience and is more effective than non-residential
- The environment contributes to the experience
- The maximum number of participants is 50 after which the learning diminishes for participants
- 3 day residential is the best delivery mode
- Residential conference style builds networks, relationships and a sense of community
- Pre-conference questions and communication assists planning and sets the scene for participants
- The group requires diversity to be successful

Appendix B: Evaluation Questions

Outputs

1. To what extent did you participate in the Art of Participatory Leadership conference?
2. To what extent do you understand the concepts?
3. To what extent did you meet people?
4. To what extent do you have knowledge and experience of the tools?

Outcomes

1. To what extent have you started to have different conversations as a result of this training?
2. To what extent have you used the tools?
3. To what extent do you network with participants?
4. To what extent is your organisation experimenting with the tools?

Assumptions

1. Is it correct that the Art of Participatory Leadership training was well planned?
2. Is it correct that the tools and resources were adequate and supported participant's learning?
3. Is it correct that the mode and environment achieved an intensive experience?
4. Is it correct that the environment contributed to the experience?
5. Is it correct that the maximum number of participants should be no more than 50 after which the learning diminishes for participants?
6. Is it correct that residential conference style builds networks, relationships and a sense of community?

7. Is it correct that the pre-conference questions and communication assisted planning and set the scene for participants?
8. Is it correct that workplace groups participating together produces change in the relevant organisations?
9. Is it correct that the group required diversity to be successful?

Appendix C: Live Evaluation: Participant Questions at the End of Day 2

Application – 38

How to start

- Where do we start/pickup at our workplace?
- Where to now?
- What structures/processes do we need in place to start the change process?
- Moving from training to doing? On a scale.
- Examples of how things were done in the workforce.
- How can I apply these tools within my workplace?
- Getting started with a change lab – not how to do it but [getting] it up and getting buy in.
- How to operate as a CEO in a network learning [an] organisational paradigm and how to be “allowed” to [do it]?
- What are the right conversations to have and who are the right people to have them with?
- How can you identify/measure “readiness”?
- What discussions would be relevant to hold that would be beneficial for the team?

Invitation

- How do I gather those people who are and have emotions/connections to by burning questions?
- What is the most intriguing, inquisitive and hopeful questions that I can use to invite people into the conversation?

Creating buy in and overcoming resistance

- How can the methodologies be applied to the workplace with limited resistance?
- Strategies for dealing with resistance?

- How do you adjust negativity and resistance?
- How can I dispel the cynicism about “hosting” at [my organisation]?
- How will I trust the people who I think want to take the organisation in an unhelpful direction to see the light?
- How do we get a whole organisation on board?

Communication

- Debrief, organisationally – how can I encourage buy in?
- How do we ‘hold’ people back at the office who haven’t been at the training?
- How do I go about delivering the experience back to staff who haven’t been on this journey? The challenges!!! The judgements???

Language

- What language could I use to interpret these tools successfully?
- Language?
- What’s the right language? Is it different for Australia?
- Is it really the language? Or is that an excuse for conscious incompetence?
- Has anyone had experiences of using these practices using different ‘language’?
- What other word for “harvesting” can we use?

Working within the existing hierarchy

- How do you do this work without threatening the executives?
- How do you do this and help others (leaders) not feel out of control?
- How to bring together the executive and operational levels of different organisations?
- How to use this learning to lead change in partnership?

Mandate

- Can you shift the system without a mandate?
- How can individuals affect change without a mandate?
- How do you create a mandate?

Effective use of methodologies

- How do I keep trusting in the people and the processes, even though I'm at my own level of expertise?
- How do I take these tools and use them effectively?
- How do I measure success of methods in workplace?

Questions about the methodologies - 12

- Which technology, which moment?
- When is the most appropriate time to use methods?
- What methodologies are best used for which outcome?
- How do I know which "tool" is right for what occasion or curiosity?
- Are there principles around how check-in and check-out should work?
- Ideas for check-in / check-out?
- How can one shift the bottom of the U a little quicker?
- How to use these tools in a remote environment?
- Research/evaluation/communication consultation – when purpose is not open or to be co-created, how/when/whether to use methods?
- Is there a specific process for group harvesting that can act as a starting point?
- Once we get to the stage of harvesting, what do we do with the conversations?
- How long do you let silence go?

Support for continued learning and sustainable practice - 10

- How to tap into a support network?
- What support is there post this 3 days to ask questions, get ideas, on how I am using all the tools?
- What am I going to do to keep myself as focused as I am now in 3, 6 and 9 months time?
- What support can I offer post training?
- How do I take this to my workplace with support given I am the only one from my organisation?
- How do I deepen my knowledge and skills of Art of Hosting?
- How to be part of a community of practice, if one?
- How much can we make this change sustainable?
- Will our organisation continue to host after I'm gone?
- How can these methodologies be sustainable?

Questions about the training and its teaching - 8

- Should we spend more time on personal practice in the training?
- Can we ask for 4 days to experience this work further? (it would allow another World Café or Open Space)
- Is there a simpler, more elegant way of providing this training?
- "group think" or "collective wisdom"?
- What is the purpose of [my organisation] investing in the Art of Hosting and Harvesting?
- How do we get organisations to send people from all levels of the hierarchy to the AoH training?
- Who owns hosting? Who should own? Who stewards?
- How do we bring these 'technologies' into a single methodical practice?

Personal questions - 6

- How far am I going to let myself go with this?
- Can I afford to take the risk of NOT thinking and practicing and questioning and learning in these ways?

- Changing thinking of my team! Trust!
- Where from here now? For me!
- What can't we achieve when we tap into people's insight, goodwill, energy and creativity?
- Do I have the courage to work through why/how the world needs me?

Ungrouped questions

- When can I uncross my legs and go to the loo?
- Where do I sit within my organisation?
- How can I best serve clients who are determined to take short cuts?

Appendix D: Live Evaluation: Landscape, Insights and Challenges

Figure 48: First half of landscape (continued on next page)

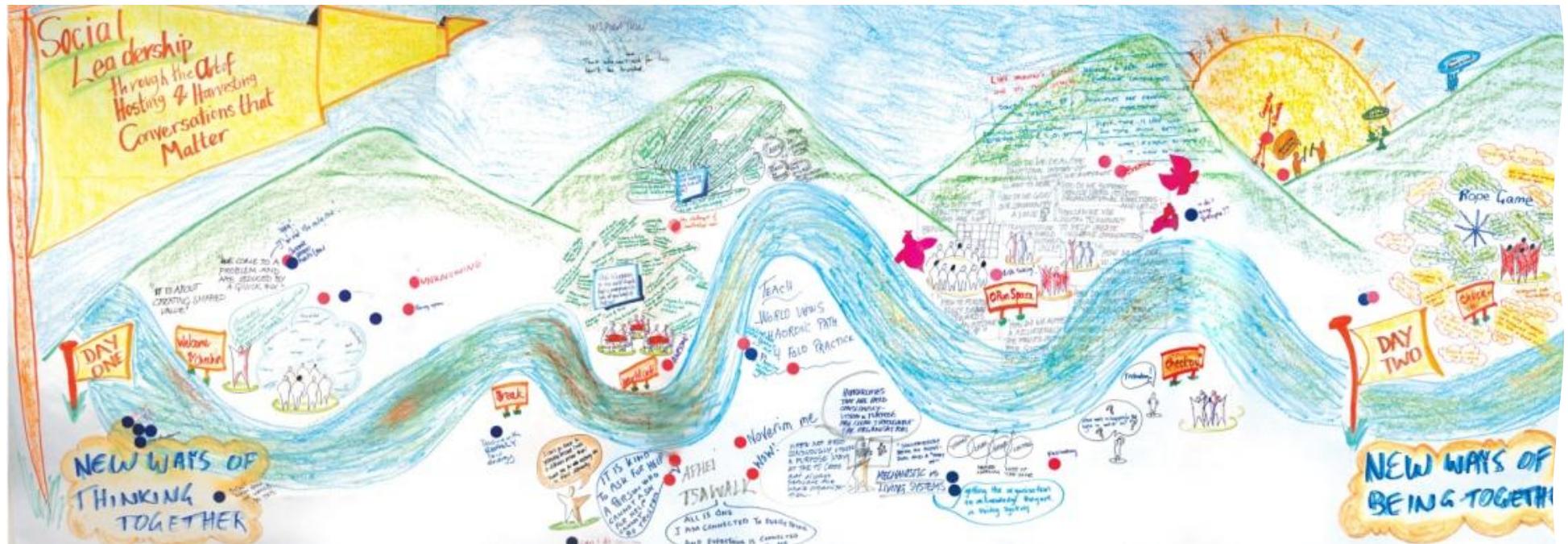


Figure 49: Second half of landscape (continued from previous page)



The table on the following pages outline the activities undertaken and noted on the landscape, as well as the number of insights and challenges noted by participants alongside those activities. Where participants have noted a comment, these have also been included.

Activity	Insight	Challenge
Day 1 – “New ways of thinking together” • Framing and welcome • Teaching: Theory U	0	0 5 <i>Not sure I can do this</i> <i>Didn't know how we would do this</i> <i>Fear of unknown</i> <i>Holding my breath</i>
• Methodology: Circle – for check-in	4 <i>Unknowing</i> <i>Being open</i>	4 <i>Confronting</i> <i>Organic process needs time</i> <i>Dealing with really low energy</i>
• Methodology: Word Café	2 <i>The challenge of leadership now</i> <i>Awesome</i>	0
• Teaching: Living Systems, Chaordic Path and Four Fold Practice	2 <i>It is kind to ask for help, a person who cannot ask for help cannot be trusted</i> <i>I can't go back to yesterday because I was a different person then! Thank you for teaching me to think differently.</i> <i>All is one, I am connected to everything and everything is connected to me.</i> <i>Walking on that edge is what I love</i>	6 <i>Can I do this?</i> <i>Noverim me (sic)</i> <i>Staying on that edge</i>

• Teaching: Living Systems	1 Fascinating	2 Getting the organisation to acknowledge they are a living system
• Methodology: Open Space Technology	3 Risk taking Breathe	1 How do I engage people? Frustrating What needs to happen for the light to switch on?
• Check-out	0	0
Day 2 – “New ways of being together” • Optional Morning Practice (Meditation, Warrior of the Heart Dojo (Aikido), Morning Walk)	1 Grounded/connection to universe Finding balance	0
• Check-in (with intelligent game: rope game)	2 Trusting myself <i>In the ‘flow’ / common purpose / creating synergy</i>	1 Trusting myself
• Methodology: Appreciative Inquiry Interview	2 Something I was missing JFDI (just f***ing do it)	4 The f***ing bells WTF? (what the f***?)
• Methodology: Appreciative Inquiry Storytelling	1 Vision of a field of tall poppies	0
• Reflective Time (note: not	0	0

marked on landscape)		
• Teaching: Chaordic Stepping Stones, Clarity of Purpose	4 <i>So important Makes so much sense Of the individual level</i>	3 <i>Falling asleep Need to hear more, understand better The burning question</i>
• Methodology Café	2 <i>Little helpers Identifying ownership clarifying of the process</i>	3 <i>Asking right questions Need for detail! (my)</i>
• Collective Harvest (utilising Circle)	1 <i>Spreading the harvest load is possible</i>	4 <i>Can I really change these people? Low energy / overwhelmed. We can do more of this at home</i>
• Check-out (physical: catch the finger)	1 <i>New connections, sharing fun</i>	0
• Optional evening activity: The Success Works story, collective story harvest		2 <i>Lack of emotion</i>
Day 3 – “New ways of working together”	1 <i>Revelation of my purpose</i>	0
• Check-in	0	0

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Story of Application: Columbus, Ohio story, collective story harvest 	<p>17</p> <p><i>Collective intelligence People power Learn about teaching Very inspirational</i></p> <p><i>Amazing, was in awe of the potential possibilities we bring to this world</i></p> <p><i>Inspiring Value of people power Insight and inspiration Motivational, inspiring You can change the world Potential of the powerful tools Motivational change can occur Inspirational and beautiful, left me speechless It really works Real life example of how it works</i></p>	<p>0</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching: Six Breaths of Design 	<p>2</p> <p><i>Pre-jект to the pro-jект !?</i></p>	<p>2</p> <p><i>How? !?</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Methodology: Pro-Action Café 	<p>6</p> <p><i>I'm courageous I will make time to breathe</i></p>	<p>4</p> <p><i>Really taking up stepping up to my call</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Methodology: 20 Questions 	<p>7</p> <p><i>I can use this Participation really matters It's a way of being... (open)</i></p>	<p>6</p> <p><i>Taking this learning of past three days back to the workplace, challenging but inspiring Me!</i></p>

		<i>What value do I add? Letting go of ideas Both bloody hard work but very productive</i>
• Methodology: Circle – for check-out	2 <i>Energy levels I can use this, very excited</i>	0
Totals:	61	47

Appendix E: Literature Review Reference List

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