

# WORLD CAFÉ – METHOD

The idea behind the world café method is to bring participants together in small groups at different tables to discuss important themes. Everyone's input is encouraged and appreciated, and all ideas are documented. Participants sit down at each table to discuss the different themes.



You can use this method with large teams (of about 20 to 40 participants) or with employees who together represent the entire organisation (a heterogeneous group with many different profiles).

## MATERIALS

- 3 to 5 tables for 4 to 8 participants each
- Large sheet of paper that can be placed in the middle of the table for writing down ideas
- Pens / (colour) pencils / (marker) pens / etc.
- **NOTE:** You can put the ideas down on the sheet of paper directly, or you can write them on post-it notes that are then applied to the paper. The advantage of using post-it notes is that you can cluster and rearrange the ideas as discussions progress.

## TIMING

- Each round of discussion will take about 20 to 30 minutes
- When some rounds have already been completed, the next round may take a little less time
- Plan 2 to 3 hours in total



## METHOD

- Break all participants into smaller groups. Make sure there are at least 4 participants at each table. Each group starts at a different table. After each round, each group will move on to new table.
- A specific theme is discussed at each table. In this case, they can be the themes that emerged from the needs analysis. Some examples are communication, flexibility at work, stress management and physical health at work. Alternatively, the tables can also reflect the level at which action could be taken: individual, team and organisation.
- Each table has a host, who stays there when the other participants move to another table. The host moderates the conversation. They welcome new participants at the table and share the most important insights and themes from the previous rounds. The host can be someone from the working group, or it can be a volunteering participant. Make sure that the host is known from the start and that the host receives the right instructions.
- Groups of participants discuss the theme of that particular table in each round. Everyone is encouraged to contribute. The host makes sure that the contributions are also noted on the large sheet (with or without post-it notes).
- After 20 to 30 minutes, the conversation will be concluded at each table and the participants can move on to another table. At the next table, a summary of what has already emerged is first given. The new group can then add ideas.
- When all groups have visited all the tables, the most important insights can be shared with the larger group. This is best done by the host of each table. Of course, the other participants can still add to this.
- At the end, thank all participants for their valuable contribution.
- The working group can use the ideas and insights from the working group to derive specific actions.