Adaptation, Flexibility and Community leadership

We are at the last circle, the last round of smiles, nodding, rising of arms with hands waving appreciation and gratitude. Agreement rises and diffuse gently as a low paced tide.

The event has flown seamlessly with everyone contributing to its magic. Folks have stepped up as needed. Participants, facilitators, interpreters, volunteers, logistic and resource team everyone feel ownership and name the belonging ... Even staff at the venue share praise.

How have we arrived here?

Humbleness, patience, trust, care, wisdom and ... discipline toward a lot of practical little recurrent tasks distributed across time to weave and help fill-in distance of places, diversity of time-zones, multiplicity of languages and experiences, visible and invisible privileges, declared and hidden powers.

All milled, digested and spun through the continuum of clear, documented and documentable slow direct (individual and collective) communication threads.

Heart warming events do not shy away from discussion, disagreement, asking questions, push back, maintaining of repetitive administrative tasks (emails, minutes, agendas, ... handouts, repositories, workflows).

If we are all remote, it is an infrastructure that provides everyone with accessible, curated documentation and connection that is part of the kernel that builds the magic retribution of the closing circle.

Yet everything should be movable, changeable, adaptable as nothing in life is fixed so events build themselves through space, time, context, adjusting to the messy lives and circumstances of everyone involved.

If the beginning of an event see (depending on the methodology and the culture of the convener) the adoption of a workplan shaped as an xls file, a visual board, a presentation. It is not the workplan that will make the magic. Magic will come from folks working together renewing their agreements time and time again until the last participant has reached home.

Folks are all who have a stake into the event:

- convener (a person, a collective, an institution)
- consultants (a person, a pair/team, an institution) contracted by the convener with specific mandated supporting roles

- the community
  - local partner (a person, a pair/team, an institution) knowing and living the place, ensuring connections, relationships, language
  - facilitators (a person, a pair/team, an institution) members of the community with skills, competences, knowledge, connections, relationships, language
  - advisors (a group of trusted folks) to guide understanding of themes, issues, priorities, fears, needs, and again connections, relationships, language
  - participants.

The community leads the way:

- advisors, facilitators and local partners shared vision and understanding with the larger community of participants are the most vital ingredient for the event to bloom
- the convener shares a vision with the community, provides and administer means such as financial resources, keep themselves in check (power and privilege) and practice accountability to both the consultants and the community
- folks, team hired as facilitators of the overall process and of the technical infrastructure (consultants) share vision with both the convener and the community and are tasked with facilitating and holding the natural tensions, disagreements that emerges during the implementation across time and spaces (infrastructure). They role is to support the creation of a "*shared feasible vision that bring together the skies of expectation with the reality of what need and can happens*". Their role is to make easy for all actors across the entire period of engagement to contribute, share inputs and make decisions with a special attention to all members joining the process and representing the community.

Time is not a variable! Forced timeline does not make participatory events. Timelines by their nature tend to expand not to contract. If you plan it, it will take two weeks, add a buffer zone of one more.

Your event is not the only event in the lives of the community. Their ecosystem is an unknown and deserves time. Your systems, administration, technical tools for many of them are an unknown and deserve time. Communication is a quicksand of assumptions, personal trauma and second and third spoken language that deserve time.

Time should always be measured by the pace of the slowest not the faster.

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