GROUP DYNAMICS AND LEADERSHIP

Whenever we think about groups, we tend to consider what a group does, i.e. the content, without paying much attention to the process or how the group is achieving the objectives.

There are good group processes and bad group processes. Good preparation beforehand contributes to a good group process.

WHAT IS A GOOD GROUP PROCESS?

- Everyone participates positively in the work, able to share their relevant insights, ideas and experience.
- Suggestions are judged on their merit rather than on the status of the speaker. Every contribution is valued by first being responded to with empathy.
- The person with the most experience of the task or subject being dealt with plays an active role, but neither that person nor any other dominates the group. Each person takes full responsibility for what happens.
- At the end of the session, everyone feels satisfied with the group progress and with their part in it.
- The group has a strong identity and good cohesiveness.
- The results are the best possible; the group is effective.

WHAT PREVENTS A GOOD GROUP PROCESS?

- People who dominate the discussion, making it difficult for others to take part.
- Discussions which become a dialogue between some participants, preventing the full participation of all.
- Constant interruptions—people should be able to complete what they have to say. • Over-intellectual or alienating language or behaviour.
- Repetition of points or ideas already covered.
- Gender dynamics. Relative participation of women and men.
- Some members of a group may have very clear and strong views on a particular subject, which may at times make it difficult for those who haven't formed clear views to develop their own. There should be sensitivity to this, and space for all to explore new ideas.

WHAT HELPS A GROUP PROCESS?

- Suitable size
- Openness and honesty. Even in the face of conflict.
- Group members need to feel safe, accepted, relaxed. Then people will share, test out their ideas, etc.
- Realistic expectations. Not too high, not too low.
- Non-verbal communication: encouraging smile, nod of approval, laughter in the right place.

- Achieving something. People must feel they have achieved something for the group to be successful. If aim/direction of the group is not clear, however, lack of motivation and achievement could be the result.
- Good leadership: awareness of these forces in the group.

SMALL GROUPS

Discussions in small groups, next to the plenary sessions, are a way of promoting greater participation of individuals during the conference. The variety of participants at a WSCF conference is high: in some parts of Europe people are more used to discussing in a foreign language and in plenary than in other parts. Small groups offer a less intimidating forum for discussion than a large group, in which usually only a few people participate.

People tend to have more time and feel more comfortable in expressing their ideas in small groups. They also allow you to get to know each other at a deeper level.

THE TASKS OF A GROUP:
Generally speaking, a group session consists of the following:

Information:	Giving and asking information and suggestions on topic
Opinions:	Giving and asking opinions
Explanation:	Giving and asking examples
Clarification:	Checking understanding, restating in different ways
Summary:	Summarizing, searching for consensus when needed
Decision-making:	There are different styles of decision making, from a more authoritarian to a more consultative approach

TEAM ROLES:
In every group there must be one of each characteristic to complete the goals. They aren't personality dependant, but rather each person must assume one or another role as they see fit in order to make sure that there is direction, correction, completion and perspective on the task at hand.
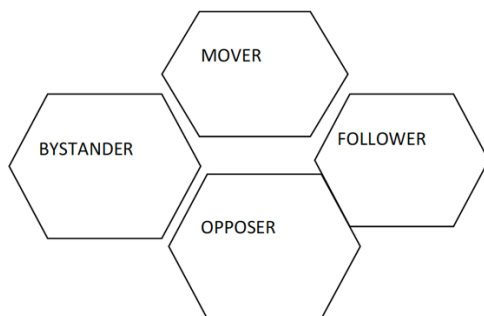
Mover:	Without Movers there is no direction
Opposer:	Without Opposers there is no correction
Follower:	Without Followers there is no completion
Bystander:	Without Bystanders there is no perspective

AUTHORITARIAN

MY DECISION STANDS

TYPE I
ANNOUNCES
DECISION

TYPE II
SELLS
READY MADE
DECISION

TYPE III
PRESENTS DECISION
INVITES QUESTIONS
FOR CLARIFICATION

CONSULTATIVE

TYPE I
PRESENTS
DECISIONS
FOR
DISCUSSION
CHANGE

TYPE II
PRESENTS
SITUATION
GETS INPUT
MAKES
DECISION

TYPE III
CALL ON MEMBERS
TO MAKE
DECISION
BUT
HAS VETO POWER