

EFFECTIVE AND MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT ACROSS BORDERS

LEARNINGS FROM THE LAB



Boundaries, borders, barriers or distance – how do we transcend them and effectively connect people across space and time? We continually learn and refine our facilitation practice, building on experience gained from facilitating hundreds of engagement projects. Some of our processes have connected people across borders or boundaries that were formerly considered barriers to engagement.

Below are six tips you can apply to your next cross-border engagement process. Be brave, big things are possible. Your engagement processes can reach further and be more meaningful than you first thought.



Expand thinking with diverse and divergent voices

Cross-border conversations enable us to contrast and compare with other people working in the same sector, but who come from a different jurisdiction. This can open minds to new ideas that are useful and relevant, but that the organisation or other participants may not have thought about before.



The outside prophet

Sometimes hearing a message from outside your area/organisation is more palatable and digestible than from the known and usual voices. By finding 'experts' that people respect from afar, you can find a way to effectively 'jolt' your project or process in ways that you simply couldn't achieve by hearing from the same inner circle or familiar people.



A problem shared is a problem halved

We all have gaps in knowledge, expertise and experience. By sharing these dilemmas with others, you can lighten your load and build synergies with others in a similar sector. Find ways to discuss what's hard and explore solutions from different angles.



We are more alike than we are different

There are similar issues being faced everywhere. Even if the context is vastly different, the same lessons apply, no matter where you are. Spaces for connection, especially virtually, give us an incredible opportunity to join the dots across the world and problem-solve together.



It's easier than ever to do this

Society's online know-how has reached a new level of proficiency. 'Most' people can get online, are more willing to do so, are more available for online meetings and it is now considered the 'norm'. Why not make the most of this and invite people to participate from across a broader area? Think big, your conversation could go anywhere in the world.



We can cross borders in a face-to-face format

Online engagement offers some efficiencies that help us reach further, and this can feel like the obvious option for a cross-border project. However, you can engage face-to-face across vast distances, and sometimes face-to-face or hybrid (a combination of both) formats are the most appropriate approaches for your issue or community. Designing a process that builds participation from regional areas into a central conversation and brings representatives from each region (for example) is absolutely possible.