

# Reflecting on Factors Influencing Long-Lasting Organisational Effects of Group Model Building Interventions

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## Abstract:

This paper focuses on participatory system dynamics as a platform for improving organisational decision making ultimately enhancing organisational performance. Based on past experiences and projects conducted by the authors, we offer reflections that aim to identify factors influencing the design and process of facilitated modelling interventions to achieve long-lasting effects, highlighting gaps in current literature and outlining a research agenda.

## Learning Points

- 8 One-off facilitated modelling interventions are unlikely to have high impact unless they are part of the organisation's ongoing strategic management processes.
- 7 Follow-up activities should be included as part of the modelling intervention.
- 6 Insights gained during the workshop should be captured and shared with widely if they are to endure.
- 5 Adjust the process depending on the observed group dynamics.
- 4 The method should be made accessible (easy to understand) to all the participants
- 3 The targeted impact of the intervention needs to be clear and the planning should account for medium and long-term activities
- 2 Make a critical assessment of the process bias the facilitator brings to the discussion
- 1 The facilitation team needs to listen to the expectations of the client organisation

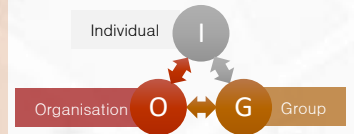
## Group Model Building Interventions

### Long-term Outcome



- ✓ Individual commitment towards action
- ✓ Individual behavioural change
- ✓ Group commitment towards action
- ✓ Changes in the organisational systems (e.g. processes, structures, etc.)
- ✓ Development of new organisational capabilities

### Intangible Output



- I – Ownership of the model
- G – Ownership of problem formulation and actions to be taken
- G – Consensus on problem definition and/or problem solutions
- G – Commitment towards action
- O – Higher chances of successful implementation of solutions
- O – Innovative solutions to complex problems

### Follow-up

"We really did not have a plan for taking actions after the workshop. We got good ideas from it, but we did not act upon them."

"You need someone chasing actions coming out of it, you need people to commit to timelines and deliverables"

### Modelling

"Well probably we needed training on the modelling method."

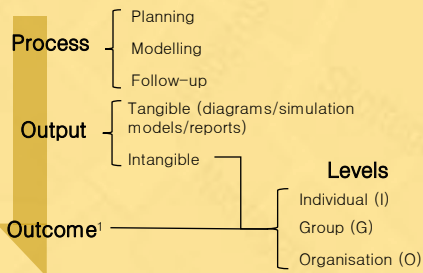
"Particularly for me it would have been good to understand the model you prepared a bit better."

### Planning

- I – Clear expectations about the purpose of the workshop.
- G – Having the right participants in the workshop
- O – Clear articulation of a relevant issue/problem

- I – Learning or mental model refinement
- G – Increased and shared understanding of the problem situation
- G – Mental model alignment among stakeholders
- G – Accommodation of differing positions and expectations
- O – Increased and shared understanding of other beliefs and values, organisational process and cultures

### Conceptual Framework



### Methodology

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>GMB Intervention</b>         | An experiment conducted with two groups in two client organisations using GMB in a controlled setting <sup>1</sup>                                 |
| <b>Post-workshop Interviews</b> | After the workshop participants were asked regarding their perceptions of workshops and the outputs achieved                                       |
| <b>6 years</b>                  |  |
| <b>Follow-up Interviews</b>     | Inspired by the approach of White <sup>2</sup> we asked former participants (n=7) about the impact of the intervention.                            |
| <b>Reflection</b>               | We used the results from the interviews and pasts experiences conducting GMB interventions to reflect about current practices and refine theories. |

### References:

1. Herrera H.J., McCardle-Keurentjes M., Videira N. (2016) Evaluating facilitated modelling processes and outcomes: An experiment comparing a single and a multimethod approach in group model building. *Group Decision and Negotiation* 25.6: 1277–1318.
2. White, L. (2006) Evaluating problem-structuring methods: Developing an approach to show the value and effectiveness of PSMs. *Journal of the Operational Research Society* 57.7. 842–855.