

Case Study – National Lottery Community Fund

Action Learning Associates

The UK's leading provider of action learning and action learning facilitator training.

Established in 1998, ALA are a global expert in this field. They work on bespoke projects within organisations, designing interventions to achieve their objectives, as well as offering open courses that anyone can join.

If you would like a conversation, they would be pleased to help.

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We support people and communities to thrive.

The National Lottery Community Fund

CHALLENGE

With the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the consequence of remote working becoming the norm, even some of the most experienced facilitators at the National Lottery Community fund were struggling to adapt to working online. Some were finding that their personal confidence was impacted, some were finding engaging with groups difficult and others finding the technology a barrier.

There are three groups of learners based across the country who rarely meet face to face.

1. People working internally within the organisation and developing capacity
2. People working externally with organisations and partners
3. The learning and development team who work across the whole organization.

AIMS

Organisation aims in commissioning the work:

- Perimeters of facilitation – recognising that expectations

The National Lottery Community Fund distributes over £600m a year to communities across the UK, raised by players of the National Lottery.

www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk

have changed and that hybrid working is here to stay

- Delivering powerful messages to your audience
- Delivering effective presentations

"Great session, really useful, engaging content and engaged attendees"

- To make working virtually less of a chore
- Helping people in each region get to know each other
- Providing staff with support with learning
- Inducting new staff

METHODOLOGY

Action Learning Associates ran a series of half day programmes.

Attendees were asked what their individual expectations were at the beginning of the programme which enabled ALA to tailor the programme accordingly.

Expectations included:

- To have a better understanding of facilitation skills in order to develop my own practice
- Improved confidence and skills in steering a conversation to produce meaningful outputs
- Confidence and ability to speak to groups in a way where I can convey my point and the audience has faith in me
- Tips and suggestions for effective online facilitation, greater awareness of how online facilitation differs from face to face, learning from others, some tools or resources to use to structure future sessions I'm delivering
- To understand better how people learn and feel when contributing to online sessions, how I can adapt things to meet different needs and generally to improve my confidence in facilitating virtually
- To build my confidence in facilitating large groups of people in a virtual meeting.



Action Learning Associates have many years of virtual facilitation experience, having facilitated virtual action learning sets originally using Skype and then moving on to the Zoom platform. These action learning sets were particularly for multinational organisations or

charities who had members of staff based in a number of countries or cities usually across numerous time zones.

They developed half day programmes early on in the pandemic to assist anyone who wanted to develop their facilitation skills in the virtual space.

Their approach was to make the sessions immersive so they involved people from the outset in sharing their views either together or in break outs and then allowing them to practise their skills during the session.

Key topics included

- what is good facilitation
- how do we transfer this to a virtual space
- what is different with virtual facilitation
- what are some of the benefits and challenges of working in this way
- exploring the technology and feedback tools such as polls and surveys
- handling people dynamics in the virtual space

RESULTS

After attending one or more of the sessions, attendees generally felt more confident facilitating in a remote environment. They appreciated the focus on technology as this was new to many people before the pandemic. They found the practical input sessions helpful and commented that the group size and breakout size was conducive to conversation.

"Using the pre-session forms to shape the session according to peoples aims. More specifically, if people have low confidence, have a session that encourages participation and builds people's confidence."