**HOW TO MAKE A LEARNING EVENT IMPACTFUL**

It is very common to start planning an event by setting *time boundaries, and* then moving on to deciding on which *experts* to invite and what *content* they shall present. For a more impactful event, try instead to shift the perspective to the *participants*. How will the event be useful for them? Formulate intended take-away as proper learning objectives, using a start phrase + the ABC formula.

## How to formulate learning objectives …

**Start phrase**: "After active participation in the session, … are able to …

**A** stands for **Audience**. The first and most important task is to adopt the perspective of the *learner*.

**B** stands for **Behaviour**. What behaviours shall the participant be able to activate as a result of attending your session (and thus need to practice during the session)?

Use observable action verbs, such as *"define, identify, explain, exemplify, discuss, categorize, compare, contrast, analyse, assess, draft, design, propose, suggest, defend, justify, recommend, advocate". For examples of verbs, see Bloom’s taxonomy below.\**

Note that we cannot evaluate what someone *understands* or *appreciates*, as these are unobservable internal experiences. Also keep in mind that the world does not change with increased knowledge or changed attitudes, unless these manifest in things people do or say, in other words behaviours. When working for sustainable development, help people *do* *better*, not just think differently.

**C** stands for **Content**. Now is the time to formulate relevant subject matter content.

Example: After active participation in this session, you are able to:

* *Deconstruct* a problem using the fishbone diagram
* *Identify*new entry points, where you can push for change
* *Prioritise* among identified options where to make your first effort

As a rule of thumb, stick to two learning objectives for a one-hour session. Although this may seem unambitious from a teaching point of view (there usually is so much to say!), it realistically reflects what is possible from a learning point of view and it makes time for learner-centred activities.

As the event starts, help participants to focus their attention by highlighting the learning objectives. Then explain how the given skills will improve their (professional) life, as this will increase their motivation.

## … and how to reach those objectives

The primary learning method, which will allow participants to achieve this goal, is to simply reserve time in your session design for participants to *practice the very behaviours listed*. This way you align the learning *process* with the intended learning *results*. The clever thing with this is that it also enables you to evaluate if participants reached the listed objectives. By using this design, you increase the likelihood that they will apply what they have learned, so long as learning objectives are transferrable into real life behaviours. *"If the trainees do not apply what they learned, the program has been a failure even if learning has taken place." (Donald Kirkpatrick)*

Secondary methods will be quick buzz groups or lengthy in depth discussions, brainstorming, ranking exercises, and other more gamified methods.

**\* Bloom’s Taxonomy:**

