Future Search

**Purposes and results**
- Joint formulation of future vision and strategy
- Plan for implementation of an existing vision or strategy
- Fast action on complex issues that lack a coordination structure

**When to use**
- Problems that cross the borders of the organisation or community
- Developing coalition
- Shared vision is desired, action plan is a necessity
- High time pressure, urgent questions
- An important change is at hand (merger, change of power)

**Group size**
60 – 80 (>80 in serial conferences)

**Participants**
Cross-section of stakeholders

**Length**
16 hours over three days (sleep twice)

**Preparation time**
3 – 6 month, monitoring results of actions during the following 12 month

**Elements**
- Review the past from perspectives of self, organisation or community and society; identify the events, trends and developments shaping the future
- Map the present in all its complexity; identify the prouds and sorries resulting from relations with the institution(s) or issue(s) at hand
- Create ideal future scenarios of the most desirable attainable future, 5 – 20 years ahead
- Find common ground and develop a shared vision
- Develop action plans

**Characteristics**
- Preparation group of participants
- Set format
- Work with mixed table groups and with stakeholder groups

**Conditions for success**
- Get the “whole system” in the room, invite a significant cross-section of all parties with a stake in the outcome
- Explore “the whole elephant” before seeking to fix any part, get everybody talking about the same world; think globally, act locally
- Put common ground and future focus front and centre while treating problems and conflicts as information, not action items
- Encourage self-management and responsibility for action by participants before, during, and after the future search

**Developers**
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