

WHAT IS A GROUP RELATIONS CONFERENCE?

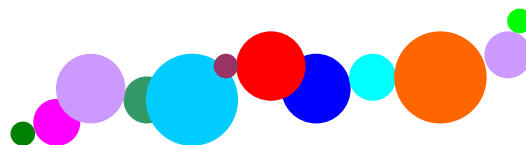
"Changing culture depends upon effective leadership. But are we confident that our leaders know how to create a sense of purpose and direction? How to win ownership for that vision from a critical mass of their people? And then how to inspire them to believe they can achieve? Because that's the task of leadership. **That is what makes leadership different from management.**"

*Michael Bichard
Former Permanent Secretary, Department for Education and Employment, UK*

"Far better than conventional training for actually changing and improving leadership ability."

*Director of Strategy,
TeliaSonera, Sweden*

- A group relations conference is an **accelerated learning experience**. The conference is designed to enable participants to understand in greater depth the factors behind the exercise of effective leadership and to develop further their own **leadership capacities** and **the leadership potential of others**, by generating management **goodwill** and employee **"buy-in"**, and understanding and working with their own and their organisation's **resistance to change**.
- A group relations conference is a **'real time' learning laboratory** where participants can analyse their leadership styles and experiment creatively in expanding their repertoire of leadership skills. Together with conference staff, they can **critically examine different models of organisational functioning and appraise their leadership performance**.



WHO IS THE CONFERENCE FOR?

A group relations conference is for leaders, entrepreneurs, managers, administrators, activists, academics, researchers, consultants, trainers, clinicians, service providers etc. From the worlds of business, finance, politics, government and local authorities, NGOs; health services and social care; education, consultancy, justice, religious orders, lobby groups, agenda-based activisms and environmental organisations. Anyone interested in the nature of groups. Participants come from many different backgrounds, from all over the world (see the list of organisations further on).

WHY ATTEND?

Paying attention to the potential of the minds of their staff **gives an organisation that extra competitive edge** needed to survive and thrive in today's economic climate. The group relations conference, as an experiential event, will provide a space in which to reflect on the life of the organisation and the participants' roles within it. **Benefits** to organisations include:

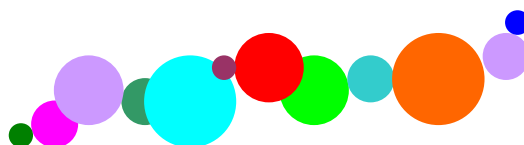
- improved **strategic thinking**;
- more effective management based on **understanding people** as individuals, as members of groups, organisations and the wider society ie in a context; and
- increased capacity to **lead and manage in an evolving context**.

ORGANISATIONS TODAY

- **The nature of work and the organisations through which work is carried out have changed** and continue to change at an incredible rate. It can no longer be taken for granted that leaders and managers share the same vision for their organisation.
- **Hierarchies in many sectors are disappearing** and in their place there are matrices and temporary work teams which are held together by immediate, often short-term aims. New leadership and management capabilities in this context are crucial for future success.
- We are now **on the edge of the 'thinking organisation'**. The greatest assets of any organisation are the psychological and emotional capacities of the organisation's major role holders and the clear role relationships between them.
- Leadership is about **anticipating new realities** and management is about working out how to implement this vision. Leadership in these circumstances has to **find new ways to excite managers and staff**.
- Leadership is about forging and **sustaining a complex network of partnerships** between other sections, departments and branches of an organisation internally and also externally with other organisations: locally, nationally and internationally. The global village is here.

"...and when I wake up every day, I can feel some new clarity in role."

Clinical Psychologist and Organisational Consultant, InTraining, Argentina



THE PRIMARY TASK

To study the development and exercise of authority, role and organisation, through the inter-personal, inter-group and institutional relations that develop within the conference.

METHOD

"I have never learned as much about organisations as whole systems as I did at the Leicester conference."

Director, Corporate Business Development, USA

The group relations conference combines theoretical and experiential (learning through experience) methods of learning on the grounds that **learning is more substantial and lasts longer if all one's senses and faculties are involved**. Hence the group relations conference emphasises both intellectual study through reading and seminars, and the emotional engagement that comes about through **active participation** in the events of the conference.

In addition, the conference includes the study of the role of leadership in **developing future leadership potential** for organisations from amongst existing staff/employees.

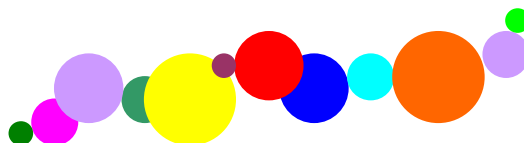
The **ratio** of staff consultants to participants is high, **about 1 : 5**

PHILOSOPHY

“Overall the conference was the **most significant personal professional event** I have attended.”

*Vice President, HR,
Volvo Car Corporation,
Sweden*

- The **strategic and structural dynamics of organisations** can be studied and understood and the knowledge used.
- Group relations conferences aim to **produce leaders with creative visionary potential**, who are also sensitive to the personal and career ambitions of their managers and employees.
- Group relations conferences are unique in **elaborating the conscious and unconscious dynamics** of leadership and management in organisations.
- Group relations conferences facilitate **integration** of intellectual capacity and emotional intelligence, two major areas of human functioning, thereby **enabling leaders to work more efficiently at helping their managers to adapt** to future roles.
- Group relations conferences demonstrate **how to enable** staff/employees to work towards the same vision, modelling leadership, making the theory live.
- The conferences are intensive and allow participants to examine and **question the nature of their multiple roles** as leader/follower **and the place of their organisation** in its evolving context.



VALUES

- Group relations conferences **provide learning opportunities for a new generation** of leaders and managers who seek to improve their skills in developing a vision and fostering creativity in new kinds of collaborative networks.
- Group relations conferences help participants link technology and teams to bring out the best in people, mobilising **co-operative inter-dependency** and creating **collaborative sustainability**.
- Group relations conferences **always deal with a dilemma**: how to build organisations and teams and ensure in the process that different views will be heard.
- Group Relations conferences help participants to **explore the tension** between taking risks and being accountable.
- Group relations conferences **help people to manage themselves well**; to know about and integrate their feelings, values and beliefs with their intellect so as to maximise their own and their organisation's effectiveness.

“I never realized how easily and **how strongly groups set up defences** to avoid the painful realities about their task, their relationships with other groups and their performance.”

*Organisational Development
Consultant, Italy*

TESTIMONIALS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

about the annual Leicester conference and other group relations events

“**a fascinating and truly provoking event**, conducted by the Tavistock Institute team of consultants which engaged me fully with my thoughts and feelings about my organisation, my role and how I exercise my authority; and what needs to be addressed in my senior management team. Your accumulated knowledge and experience was so evident, I never for a moment doubted that we have **the very best consultation available** to us.”

CEO in Public Housing, UK

“Once I start thinking about the conference, I realise that there is a fine web from this conference which has been **layered into my life.**”

Head of Business Development Asia Pacific, Sulzer Pumps, China

“The conference helped me to express myself in plain words, instead of professional language, as an **extremely powerful tool** of communication.”

Nurse, NHS, UK

“I learned that tensions are inevitable in organisations and certain group behaviours, eg the tendency to form silos, seem to exacerbate these tensions. Encouragement by conference staff to reach out across boundaries and be curious about what was happening in other silos, was **a useful way of improving understanding and relationships.**”

Detective Chief Superintendent, Metropolitan Police, UK

“Just wanted to let you know that the conference led to a lot of movement inside myself which I can't walk away from anymore... **It became very clear what my passion really is** and what the reasons are why I was blocking it.”

Manager, GIS Data, Alliander NV, The Netherlands

“I found it **a massively empowering experience**. I certainly learned a lot about myself and understand far more about how organisations work. I am confident that my learning will be invaluable in many aspects of my life and career going forward.”

IDEAs Programme Director, Welsh Assembly Government, Wales

“...I feel like **I have found a place in the world**, in this work, that not only offers a way in which seeing and being seen, hearing and being heard is possible, but also sustainable.”

Minister, St Martins Community Church, Australia

SOME MORE

“Leicester has made me think a **lot more** about what [organisational life] means ... and how we all respond to this and create this atmosphere – **what is externally induced and what comes from us** and how people exercise their leadership and authority including of course myself, in this environment.”

Deputy Chief Executive, NHS, UK

“The quality of the staff and the dynamic combination of groups – with different tasks within the conference as a temporary organisation – **provided great scope for concrete and direct learning...** I especially valued the opportunity to discover emotional links between professional and personal life experiences.”

*Head of Unit, Directorate,
General Education and Culture,
European Commission, Brussels*

“I love the organization of the conference and the physical space of Beaumont Hall...the buildings and the gardens are fabulous! I think so much of the work of learning relies on **re/membering new experiences, their physicality and re/calling their sensory-ness.**”

*Managing Partner,
Williams O'Connell Associates, Canada*

“...the bottom line is that **there has to be a shared will to change and a willingness to take risks** in order to develop relatedness.”

*Deputy Director,
Manchester Museum, UK*

“I would like to acknowledge the wonderful design that is the Leicester Conference, its tried and tested history ... providing containment and modelling authority as I and all of us experimented and grappled with ours. I certainly gained enormously and learned almost at a cellular level. I also had a **whole lot of fun with other mischief makers.**”

*CEO, Southside Partnership,
Ireland*

ORGANISATIONS from which conference members have come:

Industry and Commerce, Germany; South Oxfordshire District Council, UK; The Manchester Museum, UK; Funen County, Denmark; Barnet, Enfield, Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust, **UK**; Sandwell LEA West Midlands, UK; Dublin Inner City Partnership Ltd, Ireland; Cross Boundary Solutions Ltd, UK; Central Organisation of Industrial Employees, Denmark; Eastern Wakefield PCT, UK; Fyns Amt, Denmark; Draiocht Community Development & Training Organisation, Eire; Hay Group, **Italy**; Tavistock Clinic, UK; Instituto Europeo de Psicoterapia Psicoterapia Psicoanalitica, Spain; City of Stockholm Executive Office, Sweden; Melbourne Health, Australia; International Institute for Management Development, Switzerland; Curtin University of Technology, **Australia**; CapGemini Consulting,, UK; H S Amager Hospital, Denmark; Ankerhus A/S, Denmark; Change Management Associates Ltd, UK; Portiuncula Hospital, County Galway, Eire; London Borough of Hounslow, UK; Lambeth PCT, UK; Austen Riggs Center, USA; Work Dynamics, South Africa; AiTC, **Italy**; Metropolitan Police, UK; Hopeworks, **USA**; Henderson Hospital Services, UK; Mind, UK; Manchester Art Gallery, UK; The Development Center, USA; Psychology Hospital in Aarhus, Denmark; Opportunity in Bedrijf and Opp Advies, The Netherlands; Heather Wishik Consulting, USA; Roskilde University, Denmark, Fincantieri SpA, **Italy**; University of the West of England, UK; VECU, The Netherlands; Northern School of Child & Adolescent Psychotherapy, UK; Hackney Learning Trust, UK; The Children's Society, UK; Visionact-Net, Switzerland; ABN AMRO Bank, **The Netherlands**; Swiss Re, **Switzerland**; Aalborg University, Denmark; Central Manchester Children's Hospitals NHS Trust, UK; Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust, UK; Manchester Business School, UK; Monash University, Australia; Berenschot BV, The Netherlands; St Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, USA; Phyleon Centre for Leadership & Change, The Netherlands; Lambeth Primary Care Trust, UK; Creative Leadership Foundation, UK; York Refrigeration, Denmark; Vilnius University, Lithuania; Udviklingskonsulenterne, Denmark; Max Delbrück Centre for Molecular Medicine. Germany; Visa Europe, UK; King's Fund, UK; Praesternes Efteruddannelse, Denmark; National University of Ireland, **Ireland**; University of Quebec, **Canada**; University of Cape Town, **South Africa**; Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust, UK; NCVO, UK; South Essex Mental Health and Community Care Trust, UK; Tavistock Marital Studies Institute, UK; Twizler/PB Group, UK; Arhus Amt, Denmark; Zurich RE, Switzerland; DaimlerChrysler, **Germany**; Ev. Zentralinstitut für Familienberatung, Germany; Fyns Amt, Denmark; Community Health Sheffield NHS Trust, UK; Jyske Bank, Denmark; Degree2 Innovations Ltd, UK; Vejle County, Denmark; Sealanes 1985 Pty Ltd, Australia; London Borough of Islington Social Services, UK; The Gray Partnership, UK; City of Vantaa, Finland; SLAM NHS Trust, UK; Schering AG, Germany; Students Exploring Marriage Trust, UK; Tel Aviv University, Israel; Institut Catala de la Salut, DAP L'Hospitalet, **Spain**; New York University, USA; Camden and Islington Community Health Services NHS Trust, UK; Mary Washington College, USA; Clinica Psichiatrica Università Di Catania, Italy; Amersham and Wycombe College, UK; Wigan and Bolton Health Authority, UK; IMD, Switzerland; Behandlingshjemmet Egevang, Denmark; Ecker Center for Mental Health, USA; Enfield Community NHS Trust and Royal Free Hospital, UK; De Galan and Voigt, The Netherlands; University of South Africa; CMG Telecommunications Ireland Ltd, Ireland; Karolinska Institutet, **Sweden**; Reekum Consulting and Management bv, The Netherlands; MODUL Service AB (IKEA), Sweden; Post Danmark, **Denmark**; Independent, Switzerland; INSEAD, **France**; C/O/N/E/C/T/A **Austria**, Pfizer Ltd, UK; VECU Organisatiebegeleiding, The Netherlands; University of Pennsylvania Health Systems, USA; Shell Oil International, The Netherlands; St Columban's Missionary Society, Ireland; TESI Spa, Italy; Degreex Innovations Ltd, UK; Stokes and Jolly Ltd, UK; R.A.A.K. Consultancy BV, The Netherlands; Women's Therapy Centre, UK; Guardian Newspaper, UK; Ernst & Young, The Netherlands; Familiecentret, Denmark; Holzhauser & Partner, Germany; Suffolk County Council, UK; Austen Riggs Center, USA; The Grubb Institute, UK; RMIT - Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Australia; Sc gfa-ro consultanta impex SRL, **Romania**; Ustredie prace, socialnych veci a rodiny, **Slovakia**; Seattle University, USA; Mphasis Ltd, India; Emcon AS, Denmark; Prism Softech Pvt Ltd; India; Hebrew University of Jerusalem, **Israel**; Foster Care Associates, Scotland; Metso Minerals (Tampere) Oy, **Finland**; Deloitte Consulting, **Chile**; SAKSHI Human Rights Watch, **India**; Nuon, The Netherlands; U4EA Technologies Ltd, UK; D.C. Dept of Health, USA: Mind & Matter Management; The Netherlands; Janine van Oosten Organisatie Advies, Coaching, Counselling, The Netherlands; Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector, UK; SACCS Ltd, UK; Novozymes, France; Innovative Practice Consulting Pty Ltd, Australia; Institute of Management Development and Research (IMDR), India; Bureau Zee, The Netherlands; RZMO Hetadviesnetwerk, The Netherlands; RECKON Community & Organisational Development P/L, Australia; Humber Mental Health NHS Teaching Trust, UK; AFF at The Norwegian School of Economics, **Norway**; Dr. Ingrid's Hospital, **Greenland**; Holy Trinity Parochial church Council, Dartford, UK; National Area-based Development Program, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation & Development, Government of Afghanistan, **Afghanistan**; Columbia University, USA; Psyche Symposia & Coaching, UK; UAB Sanofi-Aventis Lietuva, **Lithuania**; Mbb consulting, Sweden; Vilnius University, Lithuania; Rigshospitalet, Copenhagen University Hospital, Denmark; Sasol Group Services, South Africa; Bundestagsfraktion Bündnis 90 / Die Grünen, Germany; Kehityspiikki Oy, Finland; Prison Services, Israel; Roskilde University, Denmark; Tampere University of Technology, Finland; TAKS (Faroese Tax and Custom Authorities), Faroe Islands; Elektron, **Faroe Islands**; Healthcare Commission, UK; Northern School of Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy, UK; HR, Organisation og Ledelse, Region Midtjylland, Denmark; Zain, **Kuwait**; Cranfield University, UK; GTZ (German Agency for Technical Cooperation), **Mali**; Tilburg University, The Netherlands; Wide Eye Pictures Ltd, UK; University of Pretoria, South Africa; Escape Artists, UK; Hounslow Homes, UK; Utrecht University/Utrecht School of Governance, The Netherlands; Department of Pediatrics, Baylor College of Medicine, USA; Communique AS, Denmark; Stree Sanghshema Trust, India; Methodist Ladies College, Australia; National University of Singapore, **Singapore**; Devon and Cornwall Constabulary, UK; Gartner Deutschland GmbH, Germany; Nicholas Parker Consulting Ltd, UK; Dr Hauschka Skin Care, Inc, USA; Cubusconsult, Austria; HM Prison Service, UK; Center of Psychological and Sociological Research, **Cuba**; Leadership Centre for Local Government, UK; Apple Computer Inc, Ireland; Sulzer Pumps Asia Pacific, **China**; Universidad Peruana de Ciencias, **Peru**; Leviosa Business School, India; InTraining, **Argentina**; University of Illinois at Chicago, USA; Norton Rose, UK

AN EXAMPLE OF A GROUP RELATIONS CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Selected people from your organisation can attend the annual 14-day Leicester conference, residential or a conference can be tailored for your organisation from 1 up to 5 days, in-house, non-residential

Time	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	
9.00 – 10.15	Registration	Large Study Group III	Large Study Group IV	Large Study Group V	Review & Application V	
10.15 – 10.30	BREAK					
10.30 – 11.45	Opening Plenary	Small Study Group III	Small Study Group IV	Small Study Group V	Closing Plenary	
11.45 – 12.00	BREAK					
12.00 – 1.15	Small Study Group I	Inter-Group Event I (Plenary)	Inter-Group Event V (Plenary)	Whole System Event III	Review & Application VI	
1.15 – 2.30	LUNCH					
2.30 – 3.45	Large Study Group I	Inter-Group Event II	Free Time	Whole System Event IV		
3.45 – 4.00	BREAK					
4.00 – 5.15	Small Study Group II	Inter-Group Event III	Whole System Event I (Plenary)	Free Time		
5.15 – 5.30	BREAK					
5.30 – 6.45	Large Study Group II	Inter-Group Event IV	Whole System Event II	Whole System Event V (Plenary)		
6.45 – 8.00	DINNER					
8.00 – 9.15	Review & Application I	Review & Application II	Review & Application III	Review & Application IV		

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EXPLANATION OF THE CONFERENCE EVENTS

Plenaries	The conference opens and closes in plenary sessions. The plenaries further the process of crossing the boundary into and out of the conference. The final plenary additionally allows for studying the process of ending relationships.
Small Study Groups	The Small Study Group consists of up to 12 participants working with 1 consultant. Its primary task is to learn about the dynamics of small groups and the formation of leadership and followership relationships as they happen in the group. It is an experiential 'here-and-now' event in which the behaviour of the group is placed under a high resolution microscope and the group has the opportunity to study its own behaviour as it happens, with the help of consultancy. The rationale for this is that learning, understanding and knowledge lead to change.
Large Study Group	The Large Study Group comprises all the members of the conference working together with consultants. The primary task of this event is to provide opportunities for studying the dynamics of large groups and the processes of cohesion and fragmentation, myth-making and reality-testing as they happen in the group. This is an experiential 'here-and-now' event in which the behaviour of the group is placed under a high resolution microscope and the group has the opportunity to study its own behaviour as it happens, with the help of consultancy. The rationale for this is that learning, understanding and knowledge lead to change.
Review & Application Groups	Review and Application Groups provide members with opportunities to reflect on their experiences of the day and how they are taking up their different roles in the conference. Towards the latter half of the conference, these sessions will focus on how the members hope to transfer their conference learning into their back-home organisations. This is a bridging exercise between the individual's conference learning and post-conference organisational behavioural practice and has 'here-and-now' and 'now-and-then' aspects to it. The focal question will be: what are we learning in the conference ('here-and-now') that can be applied to our roles in our organisations ('now-and-then')?
Inter-Group Event	The Inter-Group event is an opportunity for members to learn about the processes and relationships that form between different groups when they are engaged on a common task. Especially relevant with be learning how to take up representative roles and negotiating and carrying authority on behalf of others. This is an event that combines experiential 'here-and-now' learning with action learning, ie. the putting into action, within the conference, sets of relationships between groups that derive from the experiential learning of the conference.
Whole System Event	The Whole System Event, is, as it says, an event that involves all parts of the conference – groups formed by the members and groups formed by the staff - in learning about relationships between parts and wholes; managing differentials of power and influence; how to keep the whole system in mind when one is working in part of it, especially when the system is large and complex and often unknowable. The event involves 'here-and-now' experiential learning.