

# WHAT IS A GROUP RELATIONS CONFERENCE?

#### THE LEICESTER CONFERENCE:

Task Authority Role Organisation

Perhaps you are seeking inspiration, new perspectives, challenges – an opportunity for making real and lasting change in the life of your organisation. Maybe you want to learn. You want to develop your skills and your potential. You are curious and seek new experiences – and seek to inspire others. Come to the Leicester conference to learn *through* rather than learning about leadership, to talk about what is usually unspoken and difficult to say and to make real change and transformation come about.

A Group Relations conference is an educational event which is based on learning through experience – the design has been developed by pioneers from the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations (TIHR) and other Group Relations organisations around the world, for nearly 70 years. The strategic and structural dynamics of organisations can be studied and understood and the knowledge acquired and then applied by working through the conscious and unconscious dynamics of leadership and management in organisations.

We believe that our conference promotes the integration of intellectual capacity and emotional intelligence so producing leaders who have creative visionary potential, enabling them to work more effectively at helping themselves and their employees / colleagues / clients to adapt to and take on future roles.

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

Director of Strategy TeliaSonera, **Sweden**  The conference is an accelerated immersive learning experience. It is designed to enable you to understand, in greater depth, the factors behind the exercise of effective leadership and followership and to develop further your own leadership capacities and the leadership potential of others, by generating management goodwill and employee "buy-in" and understanding and working with your own and your organisation's resistance to change.

It is a 'real time' learning laboratory in the form of a series of **reflective spaces** where you can analyse your leadership style(s) and experiment creatively in expanding your repertoire of leadership skills. Together with your fellow participants and conference staff, you **examine different** models of organisational functioning and appraise your own and others' leadership performance.

"It was such a privilege and a powerful experience being part of the conference.
Enlightening and full of new experiences that stimulate change"

Business Development, Al Munajem Group, **Saudi Arabia** 



#### WHO IS THE CONFERENCE FOR? Are you:

- wanting long-term inspiration, stimulation, motivation?
- a change agent needing a space to reflect and challenge yourself in a world-class learning environment?
- wanting, considering or taking a promotion?
- feeling constrained or lacklustre in your role?

- newly appointed?
- wondering which path to take?

#### For anyone who is interested in how they and their groups / teams / organisations can work better:

Participants are business professionals, team leaders, entrepreneurs, managers, executives, CEOs, MBA alumni, researchers, administrators, HR professionals, activists, academics, students, consultants, coaches, facilitators, therapists, trainers, clinicians, service providers, story-tellers, decision-makers etc.

"I found it a massively empowering experience 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**  From the worlds of business, government and local authorities, public services, the arts, law, media, consultancy and the armed forces, emergency services, education, finance and politics, NGOs, co-operatives, health services and social care, justice, religious orders, community groups, lobby groups, agenda-based activisms, trade unions, associations and environmental organisations, etc.

Participants come from all sectors, levels, career stages and backgrounds, and are from all over the world (see lists further on).

#### WHY ATTEND?

What differentiates Tavistock approaches from others is **the emphasis we place on unconscious dynamics**, including defences against anxiety. That is, to go beneath the surface of tensions and conflicts in order that our deeper fears and aspirations are worked through and participants feel that they are **adding value to and having more ownership of** the groups they work with, their organisations and the wider communities that they serve.

We believe that this is key to what makes Group Relations conferences **influential and unique in the world of leadership training** and this is what people say they come to us for.

"Leicester rocks and I will definitely recommend it to my colleagues."

> Freelance Interpreter Co-consultant **China**

#### **BENEFITS FOR ORGANISATIONS**

Paying attention to the potential of the minds of staff gives an organisation that extra competitive edge needed to survive and thrive in today's turbulent economic climate, including:

- improved **strategic thinking** across all strata of the organisation;
- more **effective management** based on understanding people as individuals, as members of groups, organisations and the wider society ie in a context;
- increasing capacity to lead, innovate and influence change in an evolving context; and
- a **fast-track** into effective leadership.



## 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 and its wider context

#### **HOW?** THE METHOD

- The conference uses experiential learning (learning through experience) on the grounds that learning is more substantial and lasts longer if all your senses and faculties are involved: through embodying the conference member role. This learning is based on proven Tavistock and other theories.
- It highlights the emotional engagement that comes about through active participation in the events of the conference whilst encouraging subsequent intellectual study.
- It is designed to provide opportunities for learning. By examining, interpreting, reflecting and making sense of experiences in the conference and its events, you develop deeper understanding of your organisation and your role(s) within it.

"I am finding, in my
own experience and in
those of my clients,
the power of
authorising
the self...."
Director, Cresca Consulting
Singapore

"the opportunities to understand others through meaningful interaction both within and outside of the conference was the best learning experience I have had."

Managing Partner
Transcendix. **India** 

- You are invited to take up your own authority to accept what proves useful learning and reject what is not. Through this process, you are able to reconsider the way that collaboration is achieved or not, how power is gained or lost and how your authority is exercised or undermined in the various systems.
  - The conference helps you link technology and teams to bring out the best in people, mobilising co-operative inter-dependency and creating collaborative sustainability.
  - It always deals with a dilemma: how to build organisations and ensure that all the different views are heard. It helps you to explore the creative tension between taking risks and being accountable.
- The conference is concerned with issues of structure and task, and also with the need for participants to use an understanding of themselves in relation to others. Such understanding involves developing a **disciplined attention** to your own experience, **openness** to the experience of others, **tolerance of uncertainty**, understanding and managing **resistance to change** in yourself and others, and the **readiness** to interpret what is happening.
- It is intensive and allows you to examine and question the nature of your multiple roles as leader / influential follower and the place of your organisation in its evolving context.
- It aims to produce leaders with creative visionary potential, who are also sensitive to the personal and career ambitions of their managers and employees. It demonstrates how to enable staff/employees to work towards the same vision, modelling leadership, making the theory live.
- The conference facilitates integration of intellectual capacity and emotional intelligence, two major areas of human functioning, thereby enabling leaders to work more efficiently. It provides learning opportunities for a new generation of leaders and managers who seek to improve your skills in developing a vision and fostering creativity in new kinds of collaborative networks.

"...The conference and my learning from the experience remain at the front of my mind giving me inspiration, encouragement, insight and joy"

Archdeacon of Leicester **UK** 



# **TESTIMONIALS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

about the Leicester Conference

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** 

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** 

> "...It was fascinating to observe how groups were unwittingly affected by their environments, despite their best efforts to prevent that"

Manager, University Customised Programmes Australia "...at the end of the
Conference I regretted
finding it so late in my life /
career though I reflect that I
behaved at Leicester as that
younger me.... I feel richer
emotionally and
professionally"

Managing Director, Accadence **Singapore** 

"I found the power of intention and action.

I found my voice"

Sales Area Manager, Swedbank, **Lithuania** 

"Overall the conference was the most significant personal professional event I have attended"

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

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

Nurse, NHS, UK

www.tavinstitute.org
The Tavistock Institute of Huma



## **SOME MORE**

"a process that started in the Conference and that now is making me re-consider all aspects of my professional, personal and social life"

People & Change Leader
PwC and President, SOLE
Italy

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** 

"...Two weeks at Leicester had an amazing influence on me - I learned so much from my group experiences, especially that abstract thinking is a big improvement on concrete ways of thinking and communicating."

Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist **Iran** 

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

Director Corporate Business Development, **USA**  "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"

Deputy Chief Executive, NHS, UK

conference and the physical space .....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** 

"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** 

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### Some of the **ROLES** which participants have in their organisations:

AHRC Fellow, Wimbledon College of Art, UK; Archdeacon, The Diocese of Leicester, UK; Architect, Emcon AS, Denmark; Assistant Director, Roffey Park Institute, UK; Assistant Programmes Manager, Sir Ratan Tata Trust, India; Associate Director of Development, NHS Tayside, UK; Associate Professor of Management, EDHEC Business School, France; Attorney, Abourezk Law Firm, USA; Author, books, plays, tv scripts, Sweden; Between jobs, Independent, UK; Bishop of Leicester, UK; Board Member, Aegea Saneamento, Brazil; Change Manager, GlaxoSmithKline, Singapore; Chief, Department of Behavioural Health, Blanchfield Hospital, USA; Chief Editor and Programs Director, IDC Radio, EDC Herzliya, Israel; Clinical Psychologist and Organisational Consultant, InTraining, Argentina; Coach and Facilitator, Bridge & Enrich, The Netherlands; Co-Director, Group Analytic Practice, self-employed, Ireland; Consultant Psychiatrist, King Khalid University Hospital, Saudi Arabia; Corporate Controller, TNO, The Netherlands; Chief Director, Business Performance Coaching Australia Pty Ltd, Australia; Chief Executive, NHS Education for Scotland, UK; Chief Scientist, U4EA Technologies Ltd, UK; Dance Artist & Facilitator, freelance, Scotland; Dean of Studies, Peking University, China; Deputy Chief Executive, Nurse, NHS, UK; Deputy Director, Centre for Development Innovation, Wageningen UR, The Netherlands; Director, Maersk Drilling, Denmark; Director, Department of Oncology, Azienda Ospedialiera della Provincia di Lodi, Italy; Director of Press / Media Relations, Diocese of Ely, UK; Doctoral Candidate, The George Washington University, USA; Educational Consultant, HR, Central Region, Center for Competency Development, Denmark; Executive Director, Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts, UK; Finance Analyst, Viacom Media Networks, UK; Founder / CEO, ADHD Foundation of Trinidad and Tobago; Freelance Consultant, Financial planning & risk evaluation, Israel; General Manager, Big Land Company SRL, Romania; Gestalt Therapist, SARL WeyZe Advisors, France; GP - General Practitioner medicine, Yare Valley Medical Practice, UK; Headmaster, Instituto Ballester Deutsche Schule, Argentina; Head of Activity, County Council of Jämtland, Sweden; Head of Business Development, DACH Hub, Zurich Gruppe, Germany; Head of Force Leadership Directorate, Chief Constable, Deputy Chief Constable, Staff Officer, Devon & Cornwall Constabulary, UK; Head of HR, Swedbank, Lithuania; Head of Regulatory Compliance, Barclays Africa, UAE; Head of Special Collections and Research, The Wellcome Trust, UK; HR Director, Pernod Ricard, S Korea; IDEAS Programme Director, Welsh Assembly Government, UK; Industry Sales Manager Europe, Novozymes, France; International Climate Campaigner, Friends of the Earth, UK; Law Student, University of Baltimore School of Law, USA, Lean Academy Manager, H Lundbeck A/S, Denmark; Managing Director, Accadence, Singapore; Managing Director, The Metanoia Institute, Finland; Marketing Manager, Grupo Supermercados Wong, Peru; Methodologist, Ustredie prace, socialnych veci a rodiny, Slovakia; Network Coordinator/Trainer, De Professionele Mens, The Netherlands; Organisational Development Consultant, Investec Specialist Bank, UK; Professor, IMD, Switzerland; Professor for Organizational Behaviour, University of Applied Science / School of Business, Switzerland; Programme Director, Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Program Manager, Ashoka, Germany; Project Manager, Leadership Centre for Local Government, UK; Project Manager, Novo Nordisk, Denmark; Research Fellow, School of Arts & Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India; Regional Director, The National Trust, UK; Retired, USA; Senior Manager, Deloitte Learning, South Africa; Senior Vice President, Learning & Performance, Nomura Bank, UK; South West Area Lead for Offending Behaviour Programmes, HM Prison Service, UK; Staff Chaplain, Ministry of Defence, The Netherlands; Student, Universidad Peruana de Ciencias, Peru; Talent Officer, Vivaki India; Teacher, Summerhill School, UK; Transition Manager, Alliander NV, The Netherlands; Unemployed, South Africa; Vicar, Holy Trinity, UK; Vice President, St Vincent De Paul Society, Palestine; Vice President for Academic Affairs (Registrar), Dublin City University, Ireland; Volunteer International Arts Manager, Escape Artists, UK; Zonal Secretary, Total/Pengassan, Nigeria...



### Some of the **ORGANISATIONS** from which participants have come:

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; AiTC, Italy; Metropolitan Police, UK; Hopeworks, USA; Henderson Hospital Services, UK; Mind, UK; Manchester Art Gallery, UK; The Development Center, 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; York Refrigeration, Denmark; Vilnius University, Lithuania; Max Delbrűck 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; Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vietnam; Twizler / PB Group, UK; Arhus Amt, Denmark; Zurich RE, Switzerland; DaimlerChrysler, Germany; Community Health Sheffield NHS Trust, UK; Jyske Bank, Denmark; Vejle County, Denmark; London Borough of Islington Social Services, UK; Fyns Amt, Denmark; 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; Clinica Psichiatrica Universita Di Catania, Italy; IMD International, Switzerland; Behandlingshjemmet Egevang, Denmark; Bulgarian Institute of Human Relations, Bulgaria; Royal Free Hospital, UK; De Galan and Voigt, The Netherlands; University of South Africa; CMG Telecommunications, Ireland; Karolinska Institutet, Sweden; MODUL Service AB (IKEA), Sweden; Post Danmark, Denmark; INSEAD, France; C/O/N/E/C/T/A, Austria; Pfizer Ltd, UK; VECU Organisatiebegeleiding, The Netherlands; RHR International, Hungary; Shell Oil International, The Netherlands; St Columban's Missionary Society, Ireland; TESI Spa, Italy; Al-Mada Assoc. for Arts Based Community Development, Palestine; Guardian Newspaper, UK; Ernst & Young, The Netherlands; Familiecentret, Denmark; Holzhauser & Partner, Germany; Suffolk County Council, 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; Emcon AS, Denmark; Prism Softech Pvt Ltd; India; Foster Care Associates, Scotland; Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel; Metso Minerals (Tampere) Oy, Finland; Deloitte Consulting, Chile; SAKSHI Human Rights Watch, India; Nuon, The Netherlands; U4EA Technologies Ltd, UK; Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector, UK; Novozymes, France; Institute of Management Development and Research (IMDR), India; Humber Mental Health NHS Teaching Trust, UK; AFF at The Norwegian School of Economics, Norway; Dr. Ingrids Hospital, Greenland; Welsh Assembly Government, Wales; T.E.A.M. bvba, Belgium; Nat. Area-based Development Program, Columbia University, USA; Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation & Development, **Afghanistan**; UAB Sanofi-Aventis Lietuva, **Lithuania**; Rigshospitalet, Copenhagen University Hospital, Denmark; Prison Services, Israel; Roskilde University, Denmark; Tampere University of Technology, Finland; TAKS (Tax/Custom Authorities), Faroe Islands; HR, Region Midtyjlland, Denmark; Zain, Kuwait; Cranfield University, UK; GTZ (German Agency for Technical Cooperation), Mali; Wide Eye Pictures Ltd, UK; Royal Hobart Hospital, Tasmania; University of Pretoria, South Africa; Barclays Africa; Escape Artists, UK; Ministry of Defence, The Netherlands; National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights, India; Healthcare Commission, UK; IKEA, France; INSEAD, United Arab Emirates; Investec Specialist Bank, UK; GlaxoSmithKline, Singapore; Devon and Cornwall Constabulary, UK; Center of Psychological and Sociological Research, Cuba; Universidad Peruana de Ciencias, Peru; Apple Computer Inc, Ireland; University of Nicosia, Cyprus; Dr Hauschka Skin Care Inc, USA; Leadership Centre for Local Government, UK; Leviosa Business School, India; Maersk Drilling, Denmark; Solaris Nutrition, Brazil; Sulzer Pumps Asia Pacific, China; B&K Change, Argentina; Covenant University, Nigeria; Centre for Development Innovation, The Netherlands; Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, Iran; City University of Hong Kong; King Khalid University Hospital, Saudi Arabia; The ADHD Foundation of Trinidad & Tobago; Pernod Ricard, S Korea; Glia Leadership Consulting, Malaysia ...



## AN EXAMPLE OF A LEICESTER CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Day 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14
7.30 Breakfast							8.00 - 9.00	8.00 - 9.00						
8.30 - 10.00		LSG	LSG	LSG	LSG	LSG			LSG	LSG	LSG	LSG	WSE Plenary	RAG
10.00 Coffee														
10.30 - 12.00		SSG	SSG	SSG	SSG	SSG		LSG	SSG	SSG	SSG	SSG	RAG	Closing Plenary 2
12.00 Lunch	Registration													Farewell Lunch
1.15 - 2.45	Welcome Lunch	IGE Plenary	IGE		IGE	Plenary before the break		ssg	WSE	WSE	WSE			
2.45 Break														
3.15 - 4.45	Opening <b>Plenary</b>	IGE	IGE	IGE	IGE Plenary	RAG		ERE	WSE	WSE	WSE	WSE	Closing Plenary 1	
4.45 Tea														
5.15 - 6.45	<mark>SSG</mark>	ERE	ERE	ERE	ERE			WSE Plenary	ERE	ERE	ERE	WSE	RAG	
6.45 Dinner														
8.00 - 9.30	RAG	RAG		RAG	RAG			WSE	RAG	RAG		RAG		

See **KEY** on next page



## **KEY TO CONFERENCE EVENTS**

Plenaries:	The conference opens and closes in plenary sessions involving all parts of the conference. The plenaries further the process of crossing the boundary into and out of the conference and each event. The final conference closing plenary also allows for studying the process of ending relationships.
SSG: Small Study Groups	Each 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.
<mark>LSG</mark> : Large Study Group	The Large Study Group comprises the whole conference membership working together with 2-4 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, through the exploration of the myths, beliefs, assumptions, identities and dreams that emerge. This is an experiential 'here-and-now' event in which the group has the opportunity to study its own behaviour as it happens.
ERE: Embodying Role Event	The Embodying Role Event involves all parts of the conference and is an experiential 'here and now' event where everyone collectively can develop mindfulness: an awareness of internal states and feelings, allowing them to have greater access to embody their creative, intellectual and emotional selves. It is an opportunity to experience how mind / body / spirit are interwoven and how calm energy can be generated to feel and think more clearly.
IGE: Inter-Group Event	The Inter-Group Event is an opportunity for participants to learn about the processes and relationships that form between different groups when they are engaged on a common task. Especially relevant will 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.
WSE: Whole System Event	The Whole System Event involves all parts of the conference – groups formed by the participants 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.
RAG: Review & Application Groups	Review and Application Groups provide opportunities for participants to <b>review</b> and reflect on their experiences of the day and how they are taking up their different roles in the conference. In the latter half of the conference, these sessions will focus on <b>application</b> - how participants 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 is: what are we learning in the conference ('here-and-now') that can be applied to our roles in our organisations ('now-and-then')?