METHOD	1-2-4-ALL

Area of CoP Activity:	Learning and Developing Practice
CoP Lifecycle Phase:	Inquire Design
CoP Success Factor:	Community Interaction Sharing Best Practice
EIGE Step:	Step 1: Getting Started
Group Size:	Unlimited
Difficulty Level:	👑 👑 👑
Time Needed:	🕐 🕐 🕐
Facilitator Preparation:	📖 📖 📖
Participant Preparation:	✏️ ✏️ ✏️
Description:	The 1-2-4-All activity engages every individual in searching for answers. The size of the group is not important for this activity. The knowledge and imagination that exists in unknown places can be explored.
More Information:	www.liberatingstructures.com/1-1-2-4-all www.vimeo.com/93869810

ADAPTABLE ONLINE

1-2-4-ALL[1]

Short description

The 1-2-4-All activity engages every individual in searching for answers. The size of the group is not limited for this activity but should be considered when preparing. The key advantage of this method is that we can explore the knowledge and imagination that exists in unknown places or which is yet unseen or undetected by deeply thinking about an issue or a topic solely and together.

When to use

This method is especially helpful to generate new ideas but also to build consensus. By exchanging knowledge and information between various people more knowledge can be generated and new perspectives on an issue come up. It also helps finding different approaches and solutions to tackle a problem by thinking together on the same topic and combining ideas and knowledge.

How to

A: Brief explanation

This method is based on an issue that is presented in the beginning of the meeting / conference etc. Then, everyone takes some time to write his or her ideas / thoughts on the presented issue/ topic down. In pairs (or small groups, depending on the size of the overall group) the ideas are being shared. In this conversation they may find some mutual themes, new ideas can emerge from the conversation, or their ideas may fit together in a synergy. Each pair then joins another pair (or small group) to discuss the ideas. The discussion in a group of four also facilitates learning and knowledge exchange as well as developing new ideas. After this step, all participants return to a discussion in the whole group and to share their main findings/ ideas.

B: Detailed step-by-step guide

1-2-4-All starts off by asking a question related to the previous presentation of a problem/ issue, or a proposal/ plan/ project that has been suggested. There is no limit on how many people can form part of this activity. However, it is important to keep that in mind when planning this activity because there are things to consider e.g. if there is enough room for all the participants to pair up. The ideas and insights of the participants can be recorded on paper. Everyone can participate and is equally expected/invited to contribute. When working in groups of four it might be helpful to appoint a spokesperson that takes notes and presents the main findings in the plenary part of this activity.

This activity starts off with everyone working and brainstorming alone on the presented topic. Next, they pair up and discuss what they have come up with when thinking on the topic alone. It is helpful to write down the main findings, agreements, disagreements, problems etc. to share with the group they are joining next. After working in pairs, they join another pair and, in the end, the whole group works together and the main insights of the work in groups of four are being shared. If the overall group is large it is possible to change it into 1-3-6-All.

The process of the activity can be described as follows: Each participant starts out by reflecting quietly on a shared experience, challenge or task that has been presented in the beginning. This reflection is based on questions like: What ways and possibilities do YOU identify/have in mind to support making progress regarding the broached issue? What ideas do you have? The next step is to develop and discuss ideas in pairs on the basis on what each participant has been working on in the self-reflection phase. Those ideas will be shared and further developed in groups of four (two pairs). The activity finishes in asking which of the ideas that have been discussed was the most prominent one? Every group presents the idea that they find is the most important. If there is enough time, it doesn't have to be limited to just one idea. Especially when the group is big, it is important to limit this part. It is also helpful to ask them to only share new ideas if another group has already presented the same finding. This cycle can be repeated if necessary. The 1-2-4-All activity can also end in the whole group discussing the different ideas/strategies. For the success of this activity and in order to follow through with it until the end, it is really important to keep track of the time and to communicate it clearly to the participants.

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[1] Adapted from Liberating Structures, http://www.liberatingstructures.com/1-1-2-4-all/.

Additional ideas / information:

- If the group is very large it might help limiting the number of the ideas that are being shared and to include maybe only the top 4 choices into the discussion. On the other hand, it really depends on what the users of this method want to achieve: If the goal is to get new input and as many ideas as possible a limitation would be hindering. But if the goal is to agree on something or to find a solution for one issue then a limitation can be helpful.
- When limiting the number of shared insights, it should not be something that has already been said but a new idea or perspective.
- Using an alarm could help managing the time for the different stages of this method.
- When working in the groups of four it might help to appoint a speaker (especially for presenting the results of the group work).
- Video discussing the advantages https://vimeo.com/93869810

This activity can be adapted to online use relatively easy. Without making big changes this method can also develop its full potential when used virtually. There are still a few things the facilitator needs to keep in mind and take care of:
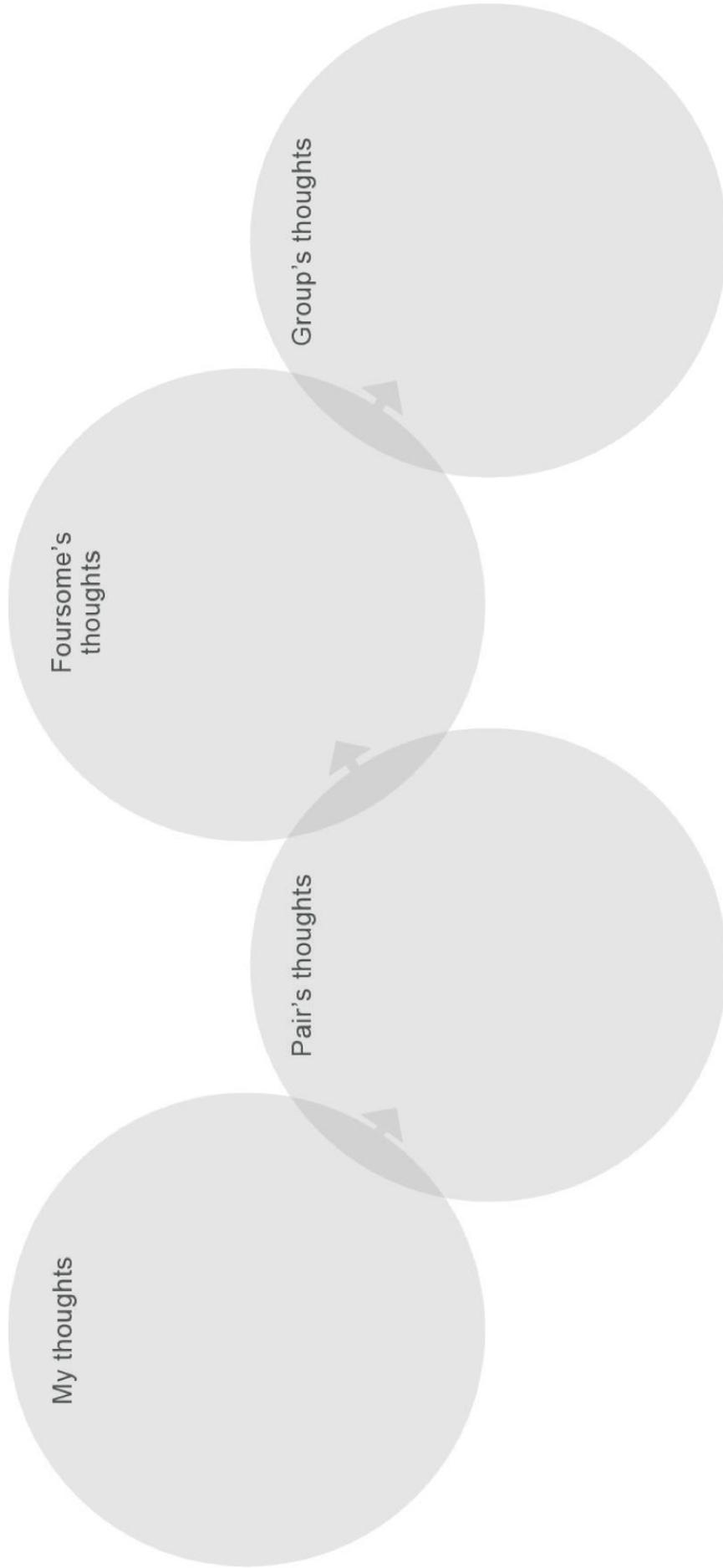
- For this method it is important to provide clear guidance on the time that is available for each step of the method.
- Overall, it might be helpful to plan more time for this activity if it is done virtually. It takes time to set up breakout rooms and to get everyone back to the plenary. This is time that you don't need when working with this activity face-to-face but that should be considered when adapting it to virtual use.
- It is always helpful to make oneself familiar with the application that is being used for the meeting because otherwise that can take up too much time.
- To conduct this activity online, an application is needed that allows the facilitator to split up the group in breakout rooms for group work such as Zoom, GoToMeeting, Vispa, Whereby and BigBlueButton.

What opportunities do YOU see to move forward?

Equal time and opportunity for everyone

1-2-4-All

Thinking Together

Self
pairs
fours
whole group

1 min alone
2 mins in pairs
4 mins in foursomes
5 mins in whole group

Face to face in pairs and foursomes

Template

1-2-4 ALL

My thoughts

Pair's thoughts

Foursome's thoughts

Group's thoughts

REFERENCES

Liberating Structures – Innovation durch echte Zusammenarbeit. 2019. Available from: https://www.liberatingstructures.de/.