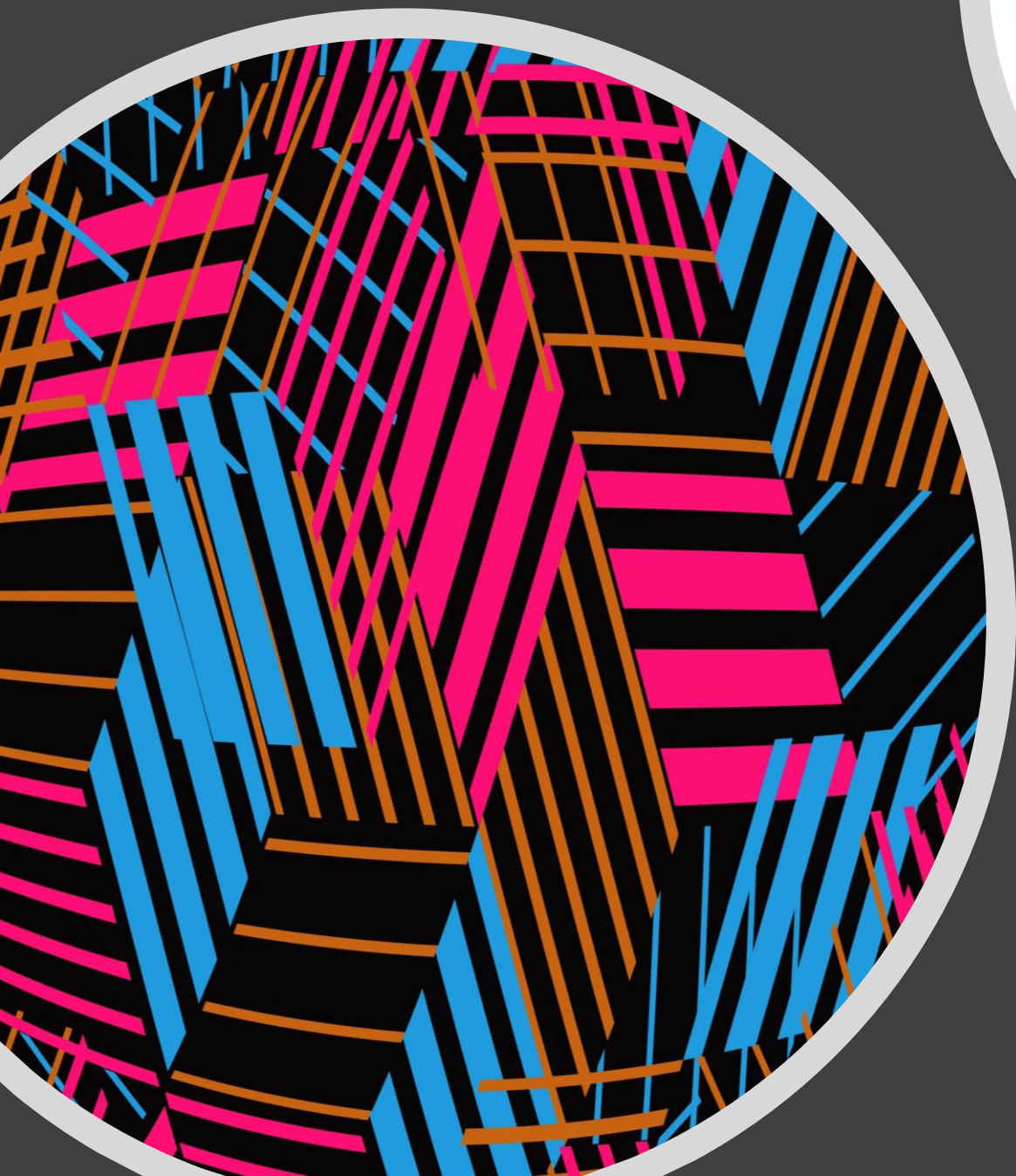


# Co-creating your communities of practice

## Toolkit

Communities of Practice in HE  
on behalf of ODHE Network

August 2021



## About this toolkit:

This toolkit aims to guide and inspire you through the process of setting up and sustaining communities of practice at your institution.

It is in the format of a slidedeck to provide you with resources that you can use or adapt for your own purposes.

You will also find links to ongoing peer support via 'Communities of Practice in Higher Education'.



# Working definition

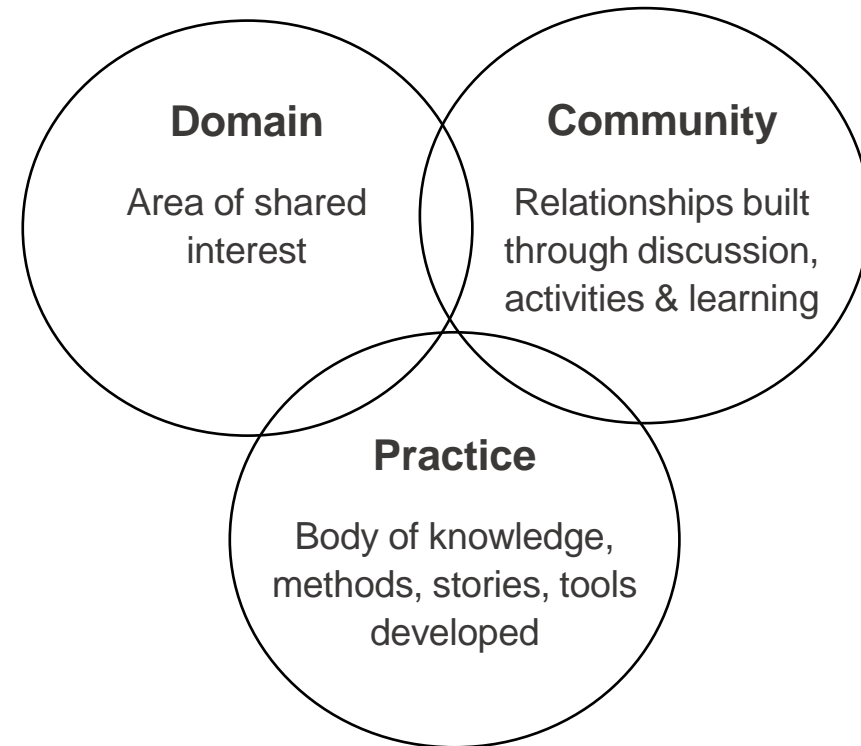


## A Community of Practice or CoP is:

“a group of people who perform similar functions and share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly”\*

[Watch Etienne Wenger](#) (2.47 mins)

[Read an introduction](#)



\*<https://wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/>



# Benefits of a CoP



**Facilitate and enable non-directed personal & professional development**

- Access additional knowledge, expertise and network.
- Allow colleagues space in which to test the application of their learning and build confidence (“70-20-10” model).
- Provide opportunities to share information, generate new knowledge, initiate projects that resolve issues and deliver tangible results.

**Enhance and align strategic capability across the University**

- Help establish cross-institutional synergies and learning.
- Facilitate timely information sharing on policy and use collective knowledge of the community to create better practices.
- Creating ‘meaning’ in work to improve employee engagement.



**(not an exhaustive list!)**

# How a CoP is different



	What's the purpose?	Who belongs?	What holds it together?	How long does it last?
<b>Community of practice</b>	To <b>produce</b> , extend and exchange knowledge and to develop members' capabilities	Members who select themselves	Passion, commitment and identification with the group's expertise	As long as there is interest in maintaining the group, the subject and the learning
<b>Formal work group</b>	To deliver a product or service	Everyone who reports to the group's manager	Job requirements and common goals	Until the next organisation
<b>Project team</b>	To accomplish a specific task	Employees assigned by senior manager	The project's milestones and goals	Until the project has been completed
<b>Informal network</b>	To collect and pass on business information	Friends and business acquaintances	Mutual needs	As long as people have reason to connect



# CoPs in practice






<b>Purpose</b>	A group of people that share an interest and come together to fulfil shared goals
<b>Membership</b>	<b>Voluntary:</b> Colleagues self-select to participate and contribute
<b>Organisation</b>	CoPs can emerge or can be intentionally established. They can be self organising or supported by the organisation.
<b>Activities</b>	<b>CoP identify priorities</b> that are within/on the edge of the 'sphere of influence' of the community to progress and complete. These might be project based (usually with support from the Sponsor) or activities (share good practice/new ideas e.g. lunch&learn)
<b>Sponsorship</b>	A <b>CoP Sponsor enables</b> alignment where appropriate; <b>promotes</b> and celebrates success and; <b>values CoP autonomy</b> (they do not direct activity)



# How responsibilities can be shared across different roles



	Sponsor	Community Lead/s	Project/Activity Lead/s	Members (active or occasional)	Change & Continuous Improvement/ Equiv. Team
Purpose	Tie the CoP and the benefits to the University's strategic objectives	Lead CoP and enable CoP organisation, communication and information sharing	Lead projects/ activities (objectives) to enhance practice around priorities identified by members	Participate and share knowledge and experiences. Contribute to prioritisation of projects/activities	Enable CoP set up: find the energy, identify the sponsor, facilitate workshops, support launch
Delivering objectives	Work with CoP Lead/s to support Project/Activity Lead/s and any other roles identified.	Support Project Leads and members in delivering objectives	Enable team approach to delivery of objectives through members and other colleagues	Contribute to problem solving and ideas generation	Facilitate CoP connections intra/inter University
Celebrating impact	Advocate acceptance and recognition for the community – promote success!	Manage links with Sponsor & Change/CI Team, on behalf of the CoP	Lead and promote impact and continuous improvement in CoP	Promote and contribute to continuous improvement in the CoP	Provide ongoing support to CoP in running and renewal
Reviewing and renewing	Measure and evaluate the community's contributions to University objectives	Support evaluation of CoP and renewal	Support evaluation of projects/activities and contribute to CoP evaluation and renewal	Identify ways to enhance CoP effectiveness e.g. ways of working, promotion.	Measure and evaluate the community's contributions to University objectives
Resourcing	Allocate budget and resources for the community				Allocate budget and resources for the community

# Types of contribution



Support to colleagues

Contribute to skills development

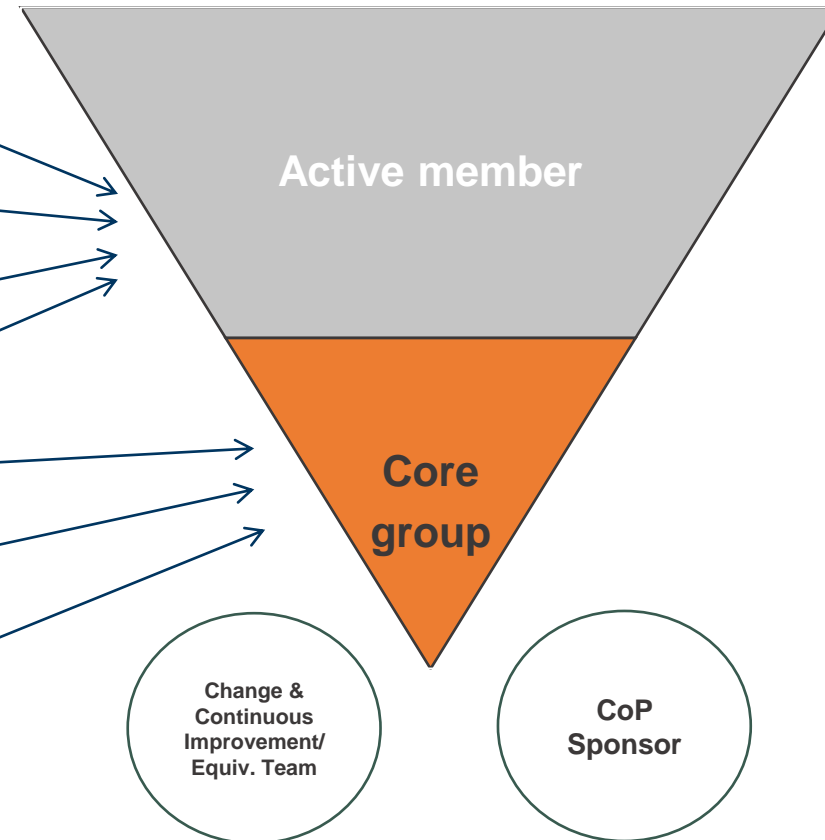
Contribute to projects/initiatives

Co-lead projects/initiatives

Provide logistical/planning support

Co-lead

## Type of contribution



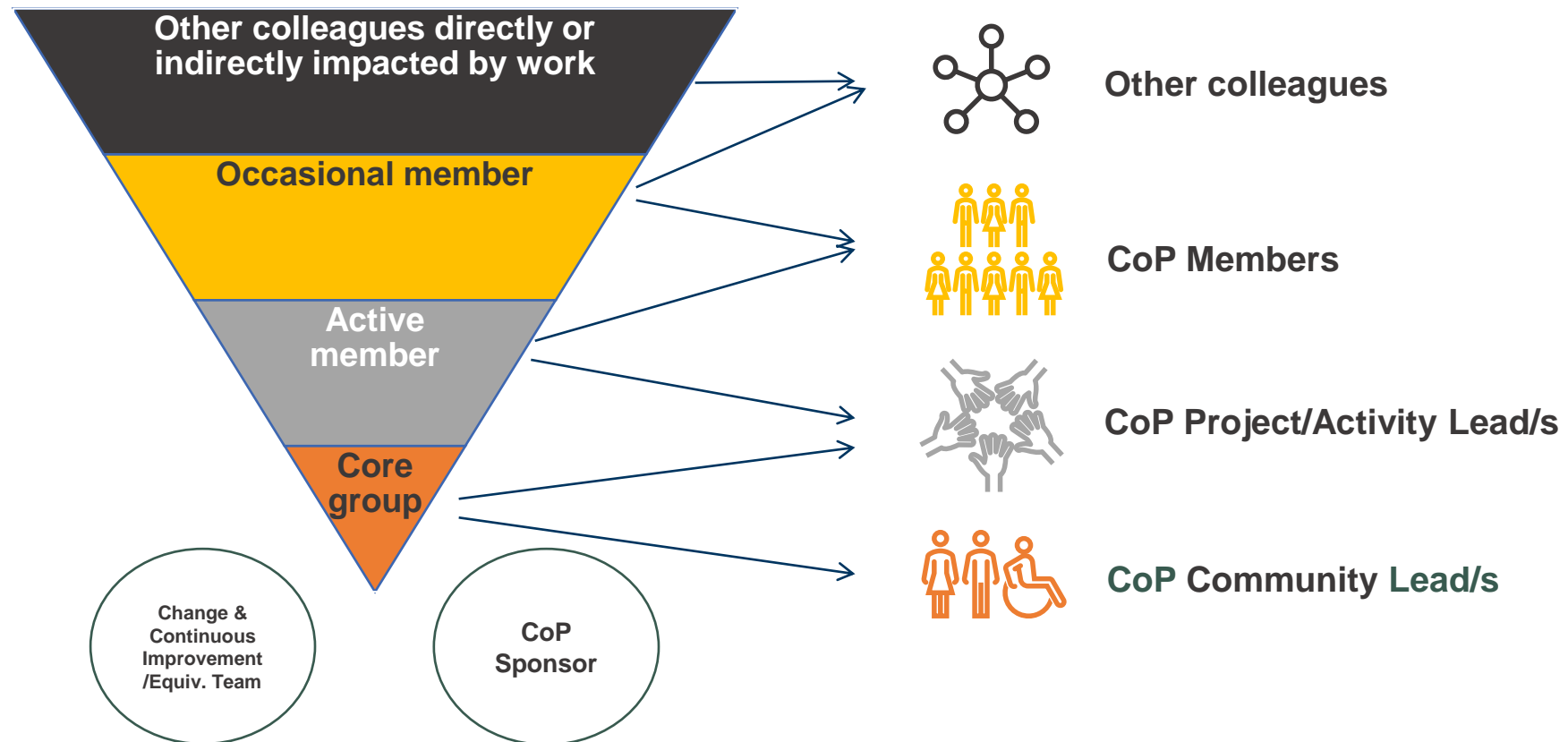


# Contributions & roles



## Type of contribution

## Typical roles



# Examples of contribution



## Project/ Activity Lead

I was really interested in exploring the concept of leadership as a role that all staff can contribute to, not just those in senior roles. I am working with colleagues from across the University on developing case studies of leadership in practice. This has really helped my confidence in my own leadership ability.

## Member (Occasional)

I don't have much time at the moment, but I'm keen to read about the work of the Community and when I can I attend a learning event. I have promoted the Community to other colleagues who have been able to participate. I hope next year, I'll be able to contribute more directly and include it as part of my PDR objectives.

## Member (Active)

I've been able to attend learning events and recently become involved in one of the projects. My line manager has been really supportive and I've enjoyed learning from other members of the Community.

## Community Lead/s

I've got really good organisational skills and I'm passionate about developing good L&M at the University. I work in partnership with the other Leads – I take more of a role in organisation and communication, whilst they are taking more of a lead on the content of the learning programme and keeping oversight of progress on projects.



# Types of activities



## Delivery

Design & delivery of programme of learning e.g. lunch & learn

Design & delivery of projects/activities

Responding to opportunities

Evaluation of participation and impact

## Decision making

CoP planning process  
Enabling feedback and reporting back on decisions

Using evaluation data to enhance  
Community impact

Enabling alignment with Sponsor and other CoPs internally (& externally)

## Communications

Informal and formal comms internally & externally to CoP

Launch event

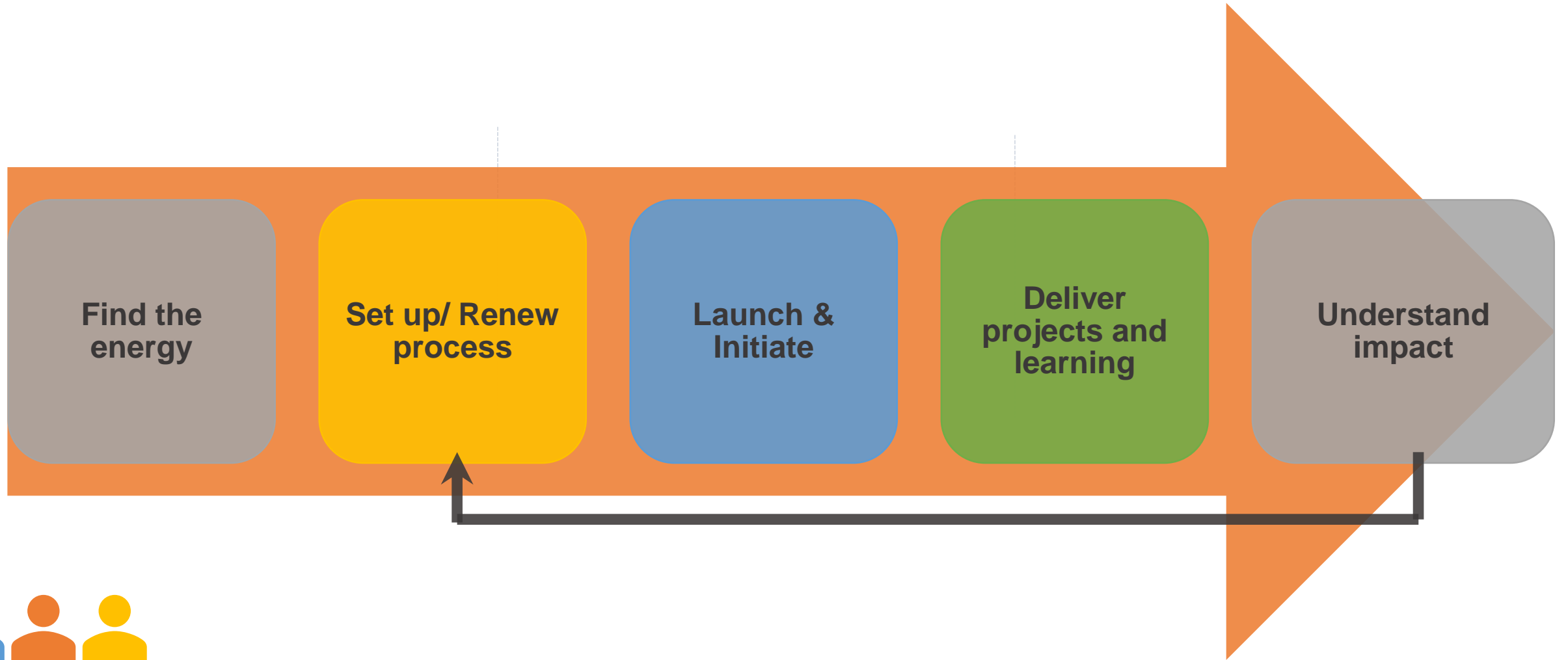
Awareness raising

Promotion of activities

Celebrate success



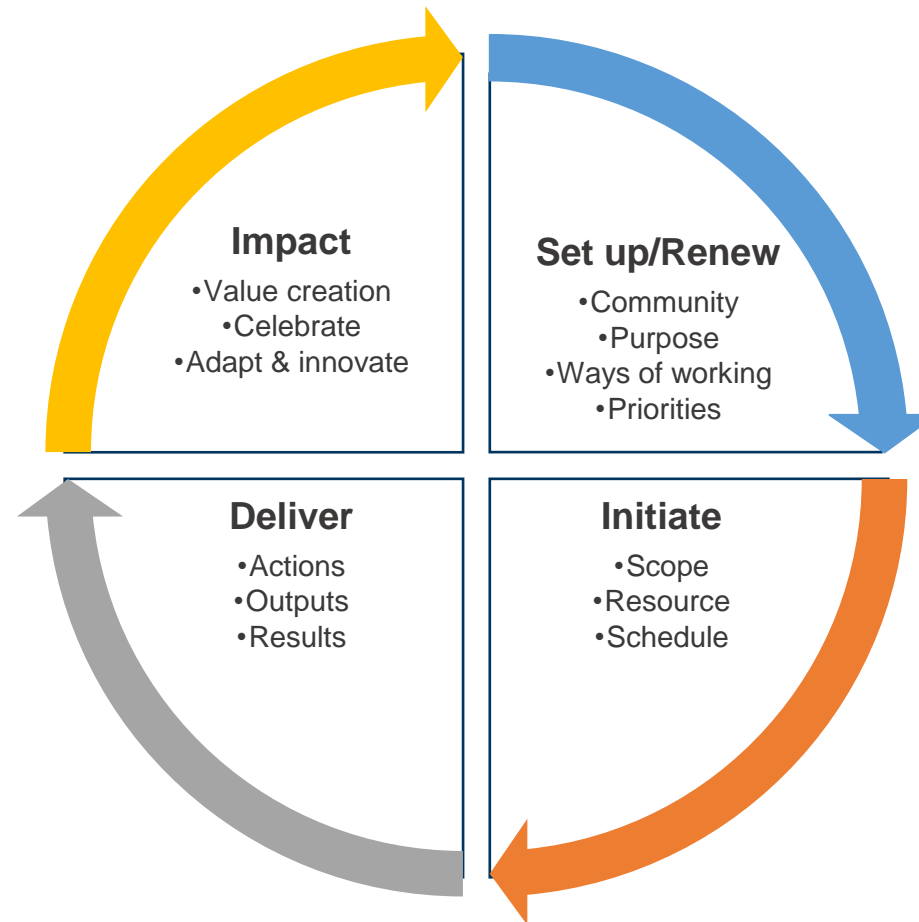
# Roadmap



# Case study: University of Glasgow



## CoP Lifecycle

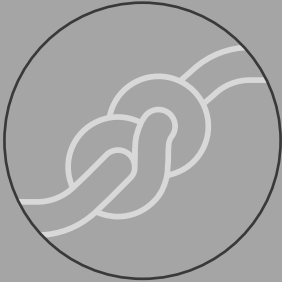




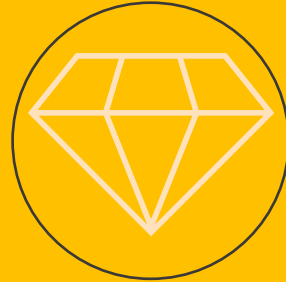
# Consider the critical success factors



**Executive sponsorship**



**Alignment with strategic goals**



**Clarity of purpose and vision**



**Commitment to the reciprocity of peer learning**



**Intentional co-creation and nurture of shared values**



**Diverse membership**



**Regular 'comms', meetings and calls to action**



# Find the energy



In the  
context of  
the  
domain/  
practice  
area

What is your experience of  
CoPs/groups which share  
similar characteristics?

Are you interested  
in participating in  
a CoP?

What areas of the  
domain are you  
most interested  
in?

What do you need  
and what can you  
give?



# Be clear about your outcomes



Through co-creation, you will need to establish:



Relationships



A shared  
purpose



Ways of  
working



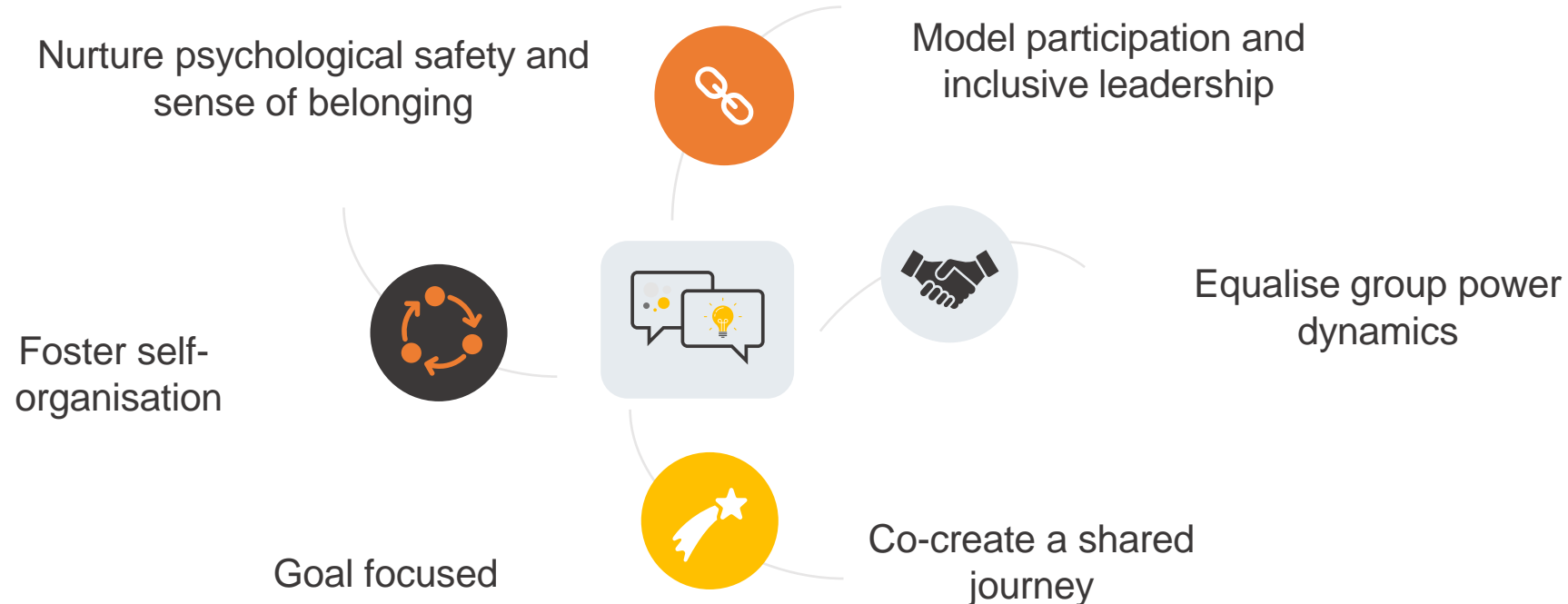
Clear  
priorities



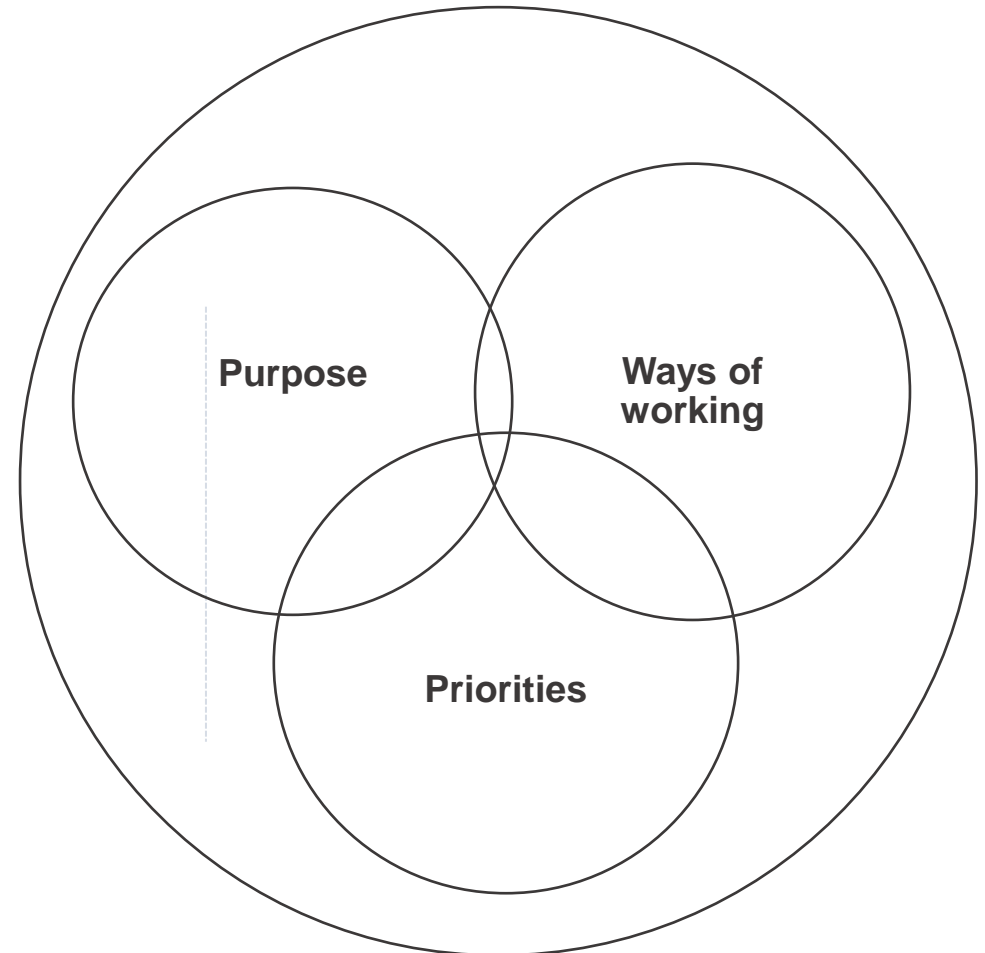
# Be purposeful in your design



Consider what conditions and behaviours need to be fostered in the set-up process to sustain a CoP:

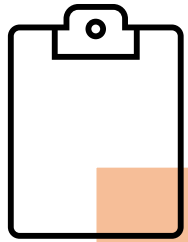


# Build from the bottom up





# Be creative with different tools and techniques



## Use polls to:

- Enable and model participation
- Enable open and honest contributions
- Surface diversity of thoughts and ideas
- Build consensus
- Nudge thoughts and ideas into new areas
- Build the story



## Use story-telling to:

- Build and foster a collective identity
- Align and 'live' values
- Create a compelling case for 'Why'
- Enable participation and ownership
- Celebrate community impact



# Case study: University College London



## Set up process

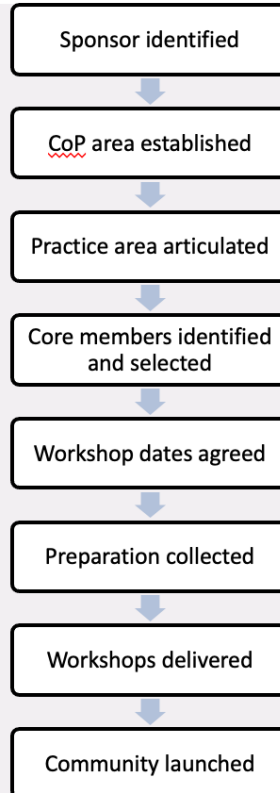


Agreement

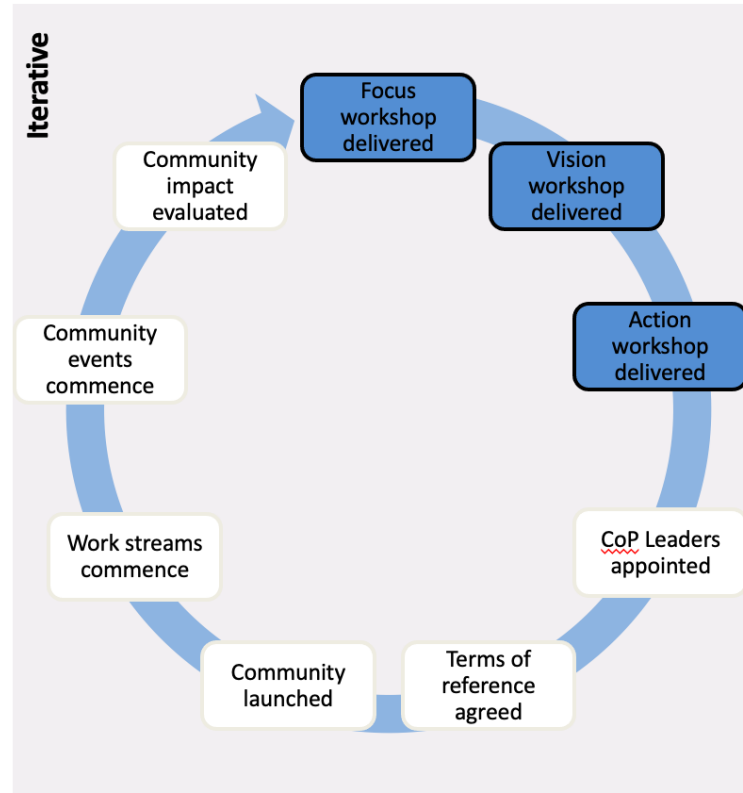
Contracting

Delivery

Set up



Iterative



# Case study: University of Glasgow



## Set up workshop objectives

### Workshop 1

- To bring colleagues who identified interest in setting up a CoP together and begin to build relationships
- To introduce the UofG CoP framework and characteristics
- To identify contributing factors and build consensus on the purpose of the community/vision



### Workshop 2

- To continue to build relationships within the CoP
- To identify a range of actions possible to be taken forward and build consensus on priorities
- To identify key roles and ways of working to facilitate CoP and deliver priorities
- To identify selection process



### Workshop 3

- To continue to build relationships within the CoP
- To introduce Co-Leads
- To share emerging ideas and seek feedback from Sponsor
- To identify next steps including approach/timeline to Launch



# Case study: Bournemouth University



## Facilitating successful workshops using the 8 P's

Know what you want to achieve from the workshop.  
Identify any specific outcomes.  
Consider how long the workshop will need to be to meet the required aims.

### Purpose

Identify who to invite  
Always introduce the session and participants.  
Consider how the attendees are likely to interact with each other.

### People

Select an appropriate way of presenting information to participants.  
Consider the best way to order topics and activities to keep the participants engaged.

### Presentation

Set up the room to encourage discussion.  
Clarify expected behaviours for the workshop.  
Confirm that notes will be circulated to all participants.  
Start with an icebreaker.  
Plan a range of activities.  
Invite questions.

### Participation

Location – home or away?  
Choose the right room/ space for activities.  
Plan what kit you will need.  
Organise catering.  
Facilities, e.g. parking for external visitors, access for wheelchair users etc.

### Place

Communicate the purpose/aims of the session.  
Consider days/times/busy periods.  
Create a schedule for the workshop with the more important topics earlier in the workshop in case things over-run.

### Preparation

Start with the end in mind. End with the start in mind.  
Be flexible with timings.  
Be prepared to adjust your plans if needed.  
End with a summary of what has been covered.

### Process



# Mobilise into action

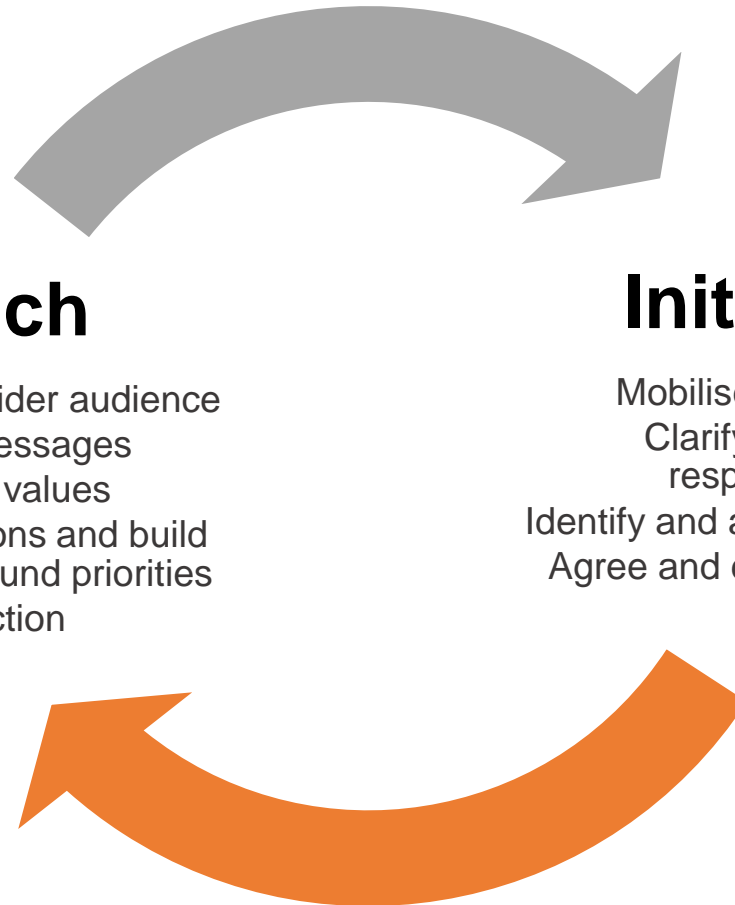


## Launch

Promote CoP to wider audience  
Share key messages  
Role model values  
Enable contributions and build engagement around priorities  
Call to action

## Initiation

Mobilise core group  
Clarify roles and responsibilities  
Identify and agree deliverables  
Agree and diarise check-ins

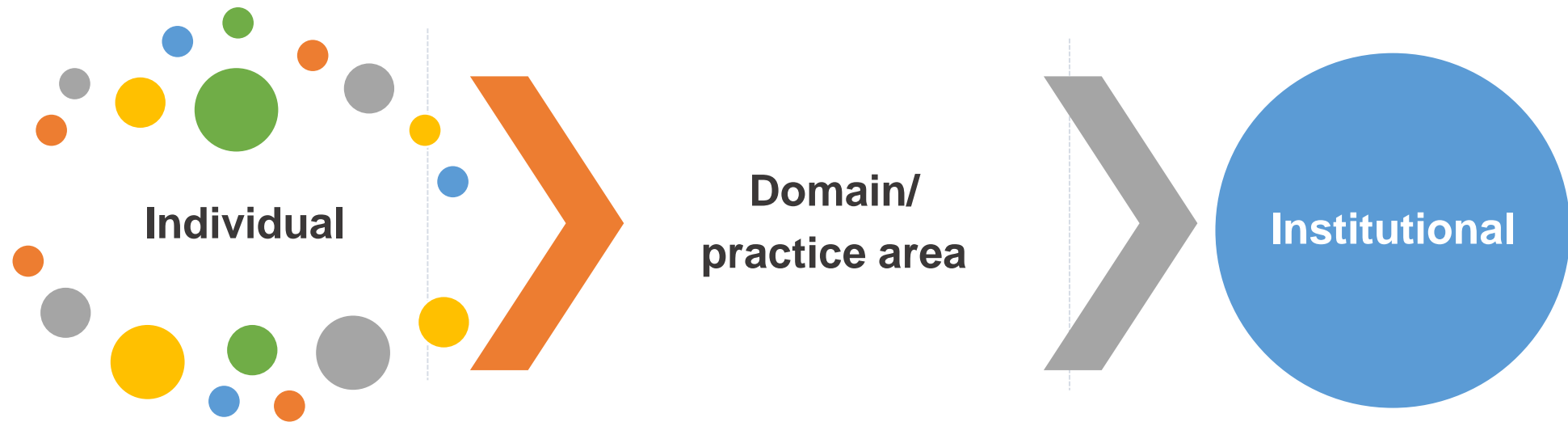




# Align objectives where possible



Where appropriate, link individual objectives to the CoP domain/practice area and overall institutional priorities



# Establish mechanisms to understand value creation



## What have you gained?

- Connections
- Skills
- Knowledge
- Practice
- Application
- Confidence
- Change

## How have you participated?

- Frequency
- Mode (e.g. discussions, meetings, learning events, projects)

## What insight can you share?

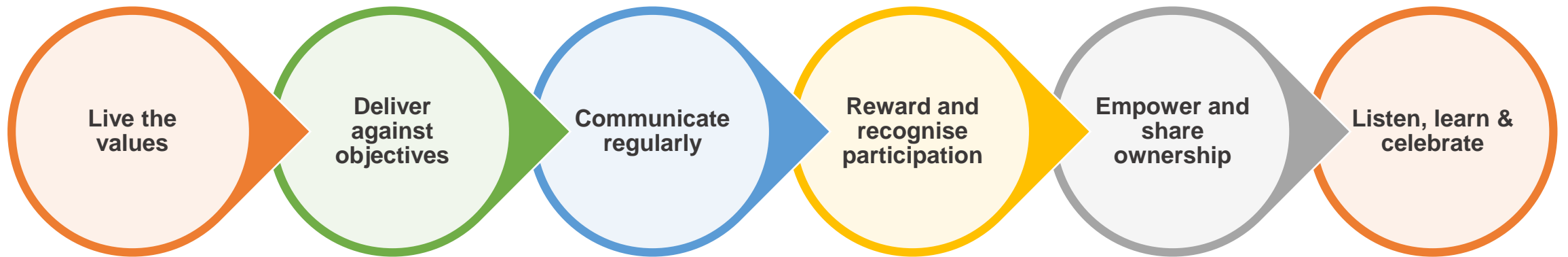
- Experiences of or barriers to participation
- Ideas & opportunities

## About you

- Job family
- Grade
- Organisational area
- Protected characteristics



# Enabling a Community of Practice



# Review & Renew activities



## Value creation

- Member Surveys
- Sponsor feedback
- Participation
  - Learning events
  - Projects
  - Teams

## Celebrate

- Create showcase
- Communicate value creation
- Celebration event

## Adapt & innovate

- Retrospective
  - What went well?
  - What was a challenge?
  - What lessons did we learn?
  - What will we do differently next time?

## Renew

- Utilise the set up process



# Our story to your story: Bournemouth University



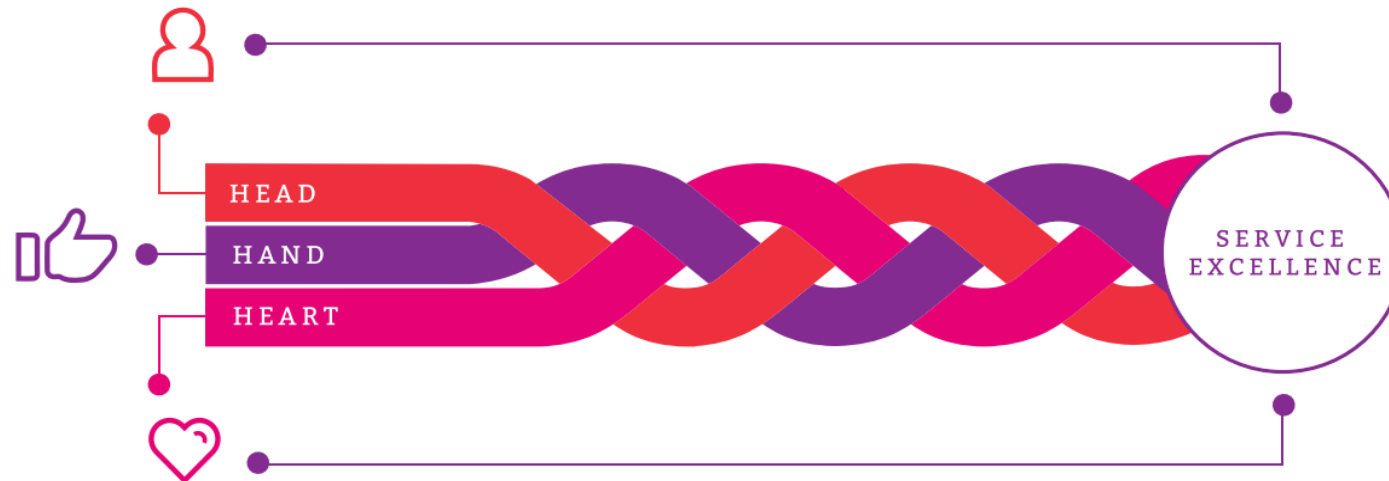
## Embracing humanisation through Communities of Practice

Formal organisational committees and meetings allow us to focus on performance and task, our CoP ethos focuses on the:

- Head - our knowledge and sharing with others
- Hand - how we do things and sharing best practice

### And importantly

- Heart - embedding kindness, care and a positive mindset by focusing on our sense of purpose



# Our story to your story: University of Glasgow



## Our Community of Practice Headlines

	Energy survey responses	Set up workshop participants	Community launch participants	Teams members (as of 08/21)	Activities (learning & projects)	Value created @ 6mths (Spring 21)
<b>Leadership &amp; Management</b> (Launched 11/20)	48	13	48	173	Leadership conversations, Seminar series, Monthly themed discussions, Action learning sets & Mentoring	100% acquired new knowledge and connections
<b>Project Management</b> (Launched 11/20)	38	13	52	96	Ad hoc Seminars & Monthly Themed Practice Workshops	100% acquired new knowledge
<b>Sustainability in Learning &amp; Teaching</b> (Launched 05/21)	28	15	40	63	Development of MOOC, Strategic alignment, Monthly coffee chats & Bi-Monthly Practice Workshops,	[Not applicable]



# Our story to your story: University College London



## UCL Communities of Practice win UHR Award 2019



**For the best organisational development and  
culture change initiative in the sector**

**20 CoPs set-up  
2500 core and wider members  
120 best-practice events delivered  
80 practice improvements projects**

- Full integration in the whole employee lifecycle
- From recruitment to inductions and appraisals
- Links with professional development objectives, career pathways and talent retention
- Bridged academic and professional services



# Articles (Embedded links)



## Communities of Practice

*Roles & Responsibilities*

Fred Nickols

© Fred Nickols 2003  
All rights reserved


Article

### Critical corridor talk: Just gossip or stoic resistance? Unrecognised informal Higher Education leadership

August 2018 · Higher Education Quarterly 72(2)

DOI: [10.1111/hequ.12174](https://doi.org/10.1111/hequ.12174)

Project: [Trust and Leadership](#)

 Jill Jameson

### Moving stories: exploring the LIFE session storytelling method as a way of enhancing innovative, generative outcomes in practice

**Edel Roddy, Tamsin MacBride, Annette Coburn, Anna Jack-Waugh\* and Belinda Dewar**

\*Corresponding author: University of the West of Scotland, Dumfries, Scotland

Email: [anna.jack-waugh@uws.ac.uk](mailto:anna.jack-waugh@uws.ac.uk)

Submitted for publication: 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Accepted for publication: 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Published: 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021

<https://doi.org/10.19043/ijpdj.111.006>

### White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack

by Peggy McIntosh

*"I was taught to see racism only in individual acts of meanness,  
not in invisible systems conferring dominance on my group"*

DAILY EFFECTS OF WHITE PRIVILEGE

### Encouraging Interdisciplinary Collaboration: A Study of Enablers and Inhibitors Across Silos in Higher Education

**Laura Roper**

Bournemouth University

 PDF

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24926/ijps.v8i1.3687>

PUBLISHED

2021-04-27

**keywords:** Interdisciplinary, Collaboration, Silos, Higher Education

### "I Am Because We Are": Exploring Women's Leadership Under Ubuntu Worldview

Faith Wambura Ngunjiri

First Published April 11, 2016 | Research Article |  Check for updates

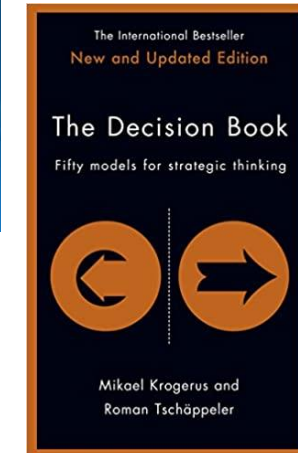
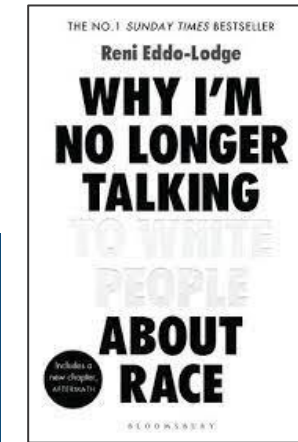
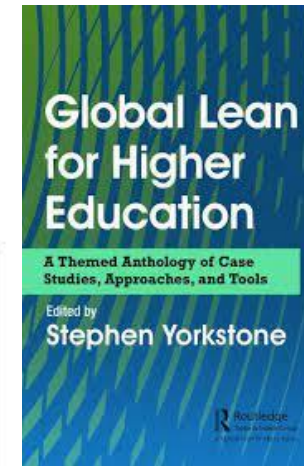
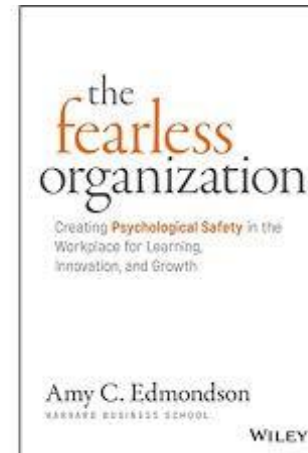
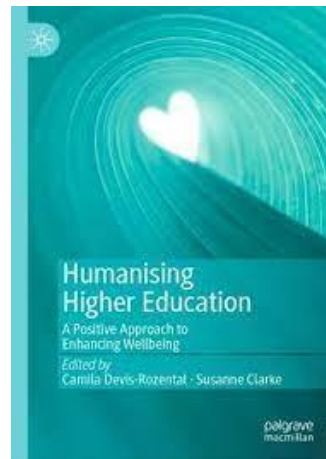
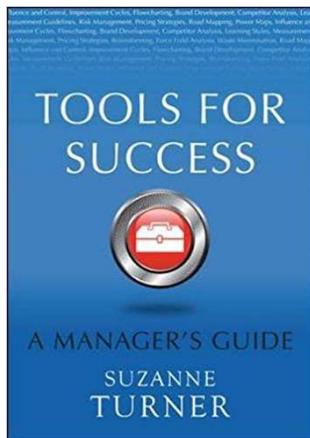
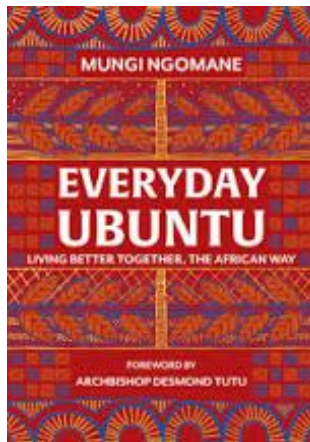
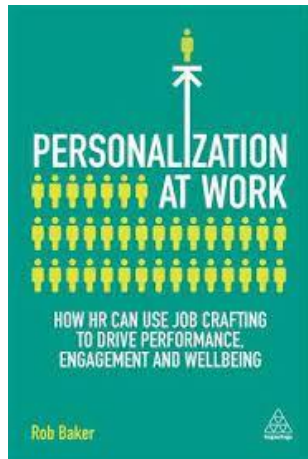
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422316641416>

[Article information](#) ▾





# Books (Embedded links)



# Guidance (Embedded links)



**Seeds for Change**  
In-depth guide



## Facilitation tools for meetings and workshops

A compilation of tools and techniques for working in groups and facilitating meetings or workshops

Rapport 18

## Promoting and assessing value creation in communities and networks: a conceptual framework

Etienne Wenger  
Beverly Trayner  
Maarten de Laat

Ruud de Moor Centrum

Open Universiteit  
rdmc.ou.nl



## The Why, What and How of Vertical Leadership Development

Heather Monro  
May 2021

 Brightspace  
www.brightspacelearning.co.uk

*A place to shine*

# Collaboration & Survey tools (Embedded links)



Otter Voice Notes



Jamboard



Polling

in Zoom Meetings



Google Forms

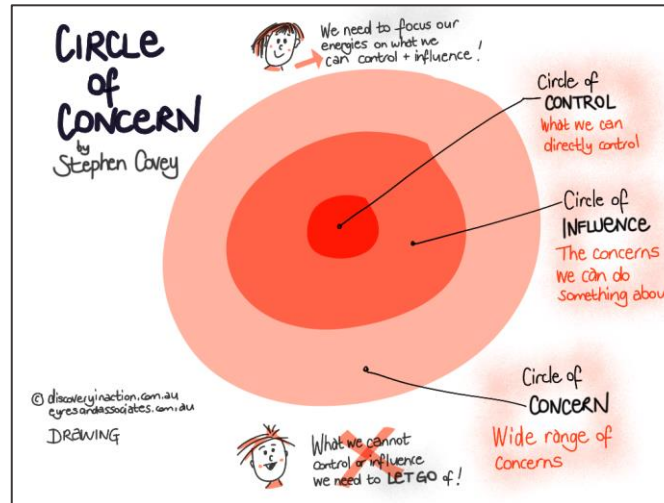
# Prioritisation, scope and action



**Get started with THE POMODORO TECHNIQUE**

- 1 Identify your tasks for the day
- 2 Set a timer for 25 minutes
- 3 Work for the duration of the timer
- 4 Take a five minute break

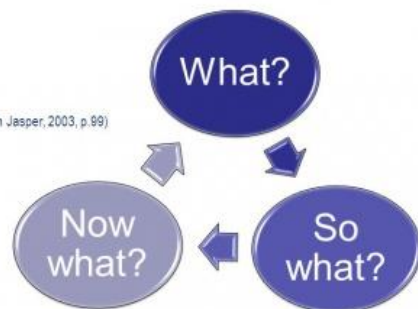
★ After every fourth break, take a longer break of 15-30 minutes



## THE EISENHOWER MATRIX

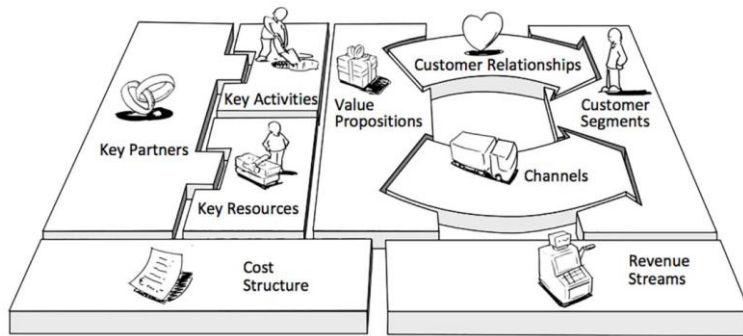
	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	<p><b>Do.</b></p> <p>Write my book.</p>	<p><b>Schedule.</b></p> <p>Workout weekly. Meditate daily. Launch new services. Network with community. Spend time with family.</p>
NOT IMPORTANT	<p><b>Delegate.</b></p> <p>Social media sharing. Scheduling meetings and appointments. Editing my posts.</p>	<p><b>Ignore.</b></p> <p>Read about sports. Binge watch Netflix. Check my phone constantly.</p>

### Borton's (1970) cue questions:





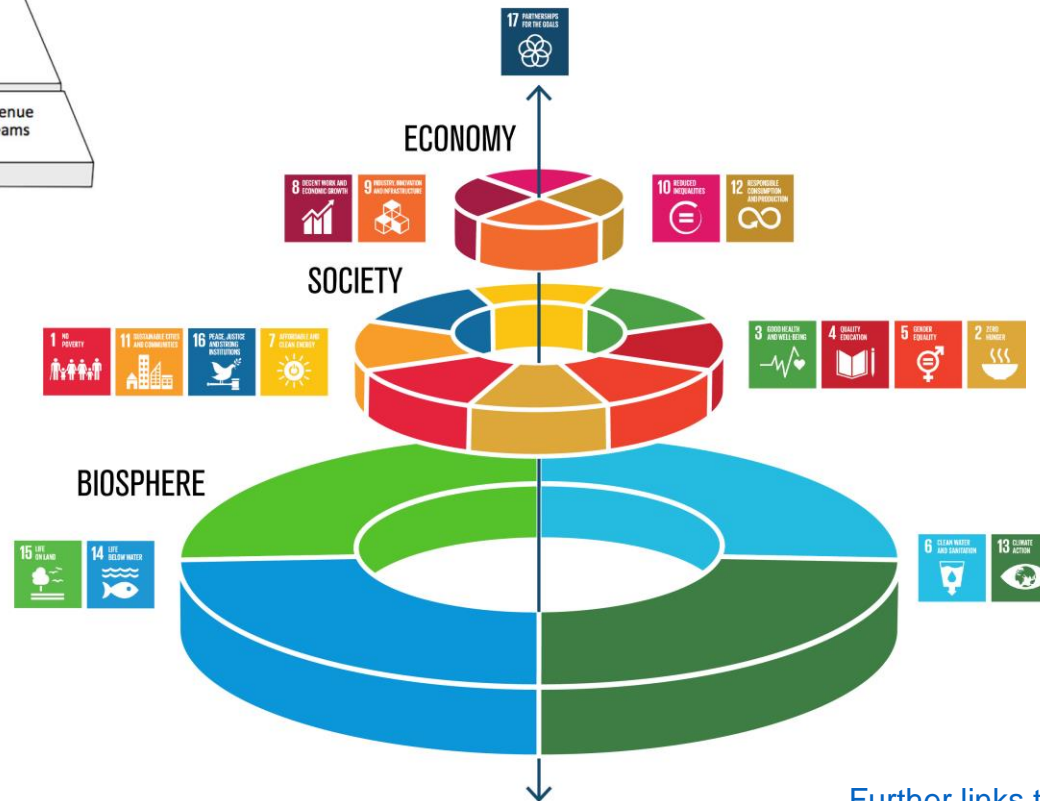
# Sustainability & alignment



Adapted from "Business Model Generation", Alexander Osterwalder, Wiley 2012.  
www.businessmodelgeneration.com  
Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License.

Business model canvas

## UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)



Doughnut economics

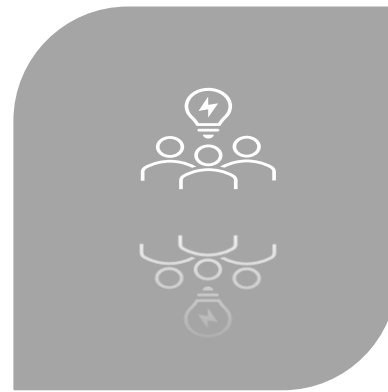
[Further links to resources on regenerative economics and business](#)

# Join us: Communities of Practice in HE

(Embedded links)



[Communities of Practice in HE](#)



[Bimonthly practice workshop](#)



[Virtual collaboration](#)

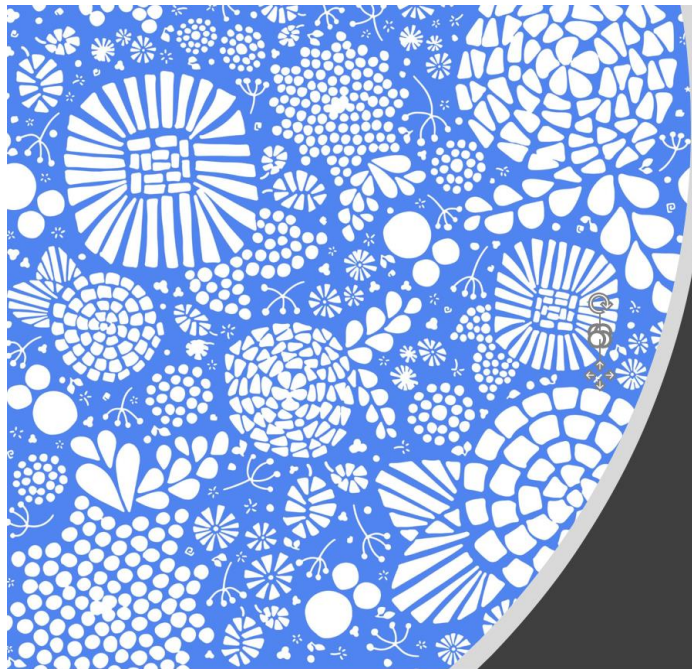
# Inspiration



It is always good  
to start with an  
activity

Create a safe  
space to share  
Chatham House  
Rules!

# Inspiration



Plan, but be ready to change in a heartbeat



We learn better when we are having fun!



# Inspiration



Nevertheless, she persisted

# With thanks to:



ODHE Network for funding this project.

Members of Communities of Practice in Higher Education, for their commitment to and generosity in sharing knowledge, experiences, practice and support.

## **Final note.**

We would kindly ask you to reference the authors if you repurpose or share any of these slides as follows:

**Communities of Practice in Higher Education on behalf of ODHE Network [Bultoc, D., Clarke, S., Devis-Rozental, C., Hubbard S., Roper, L., & Sinha, T. 2021]**