Weaving a network

In short

In this working method, you create an overview of the intended roles, duties and mutual dependence between participants in the research project. You make these interdependencies visible in a physical meeting by throwing a ball of wool back and forth. In this way, participants weave a safety net for the research project.

Outcome

A collective overview of the interdependencies in the project.

Approach

This working method has three steps:

1. The facilitator asks a participant to explain one of the roles chosen and to tell us about the relates tasks.
2. This person then indicates what he needs, and from whom, in order to complete this task properly. When discussing these, a ball of wool is thrown to the person needed. The person throwing the ball also keeps hold of the yarn. If a role/task is not present or represented in the room, you put an empty chair down for it, stick a post-it note on it with the name of the person, and wrap the yarn around it.
3. The recipient in turn explains one of the roles chosen, indicates the tasks and dependencies and throws the ball to the next person. This makes the positive dependencies visible and literally shows the connections between people. Together, you weave a safety net. The minutes secretary takes notes of the things being said. No ball of wool is thrown in an online meeting, but the rest of the working method can take place.

Example
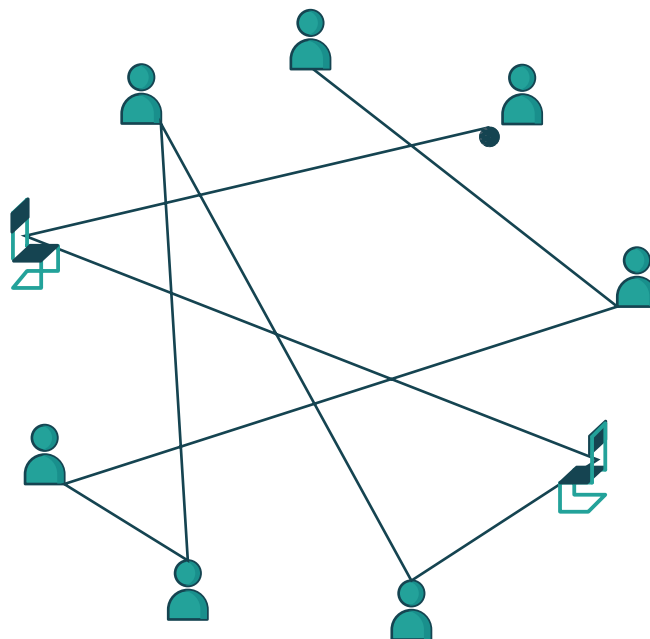
Tips for the manager

Prepare different possible roles and tasks, so you can help participants get started and so you have an overview of the necessary roles and tasks possibly not mentioned by the participants for the follow-up discussion.

- Hold a preliminary meeting with each participant and discuss their expectations and role.
- Some members may be unfamiliar with the working method; start with your own role and tasks.

Bases

- CAYR is based on the principle that everyone can contribute equally and may provide an equal contribution, and that everyone's voice is heard and taken into account. Regardless, there are different interests involved in the project, differences in knowledge (experience and/or expertise) and/or power (positions, roles, influences), or a difference in social and organisation background may apply, and so on and so forth (Smeenk, Köppchen & Bertrand, 2018). However, these differences serve a purpose and should be complementary.
- The working methods provides support in mapping the role of each person involved and the related tasks, connecting individuals by describing the different dependencies and needs.

Materials

- A ball of wool
- Chairs/stools representing someone who is absent, if applicable
- Post-it notes or sheets of paper to write the roles of those not present on