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“This organisational learning model was developed by ICLD using the SECI model as a basis. Åsa Lorentzi of the City of Gothenburg, a former project member in a municipal partnership and with extensive experience in working with change processes and social sustainability, has been of great help in this work.

Swedish and African municipalities have contributed to the model in workshops through identifying factors necessary to create sustainable organisational change.

We hope this model will contribute to sustainable change for social sustainability and improved local democracy.”





## Why organisational learning?

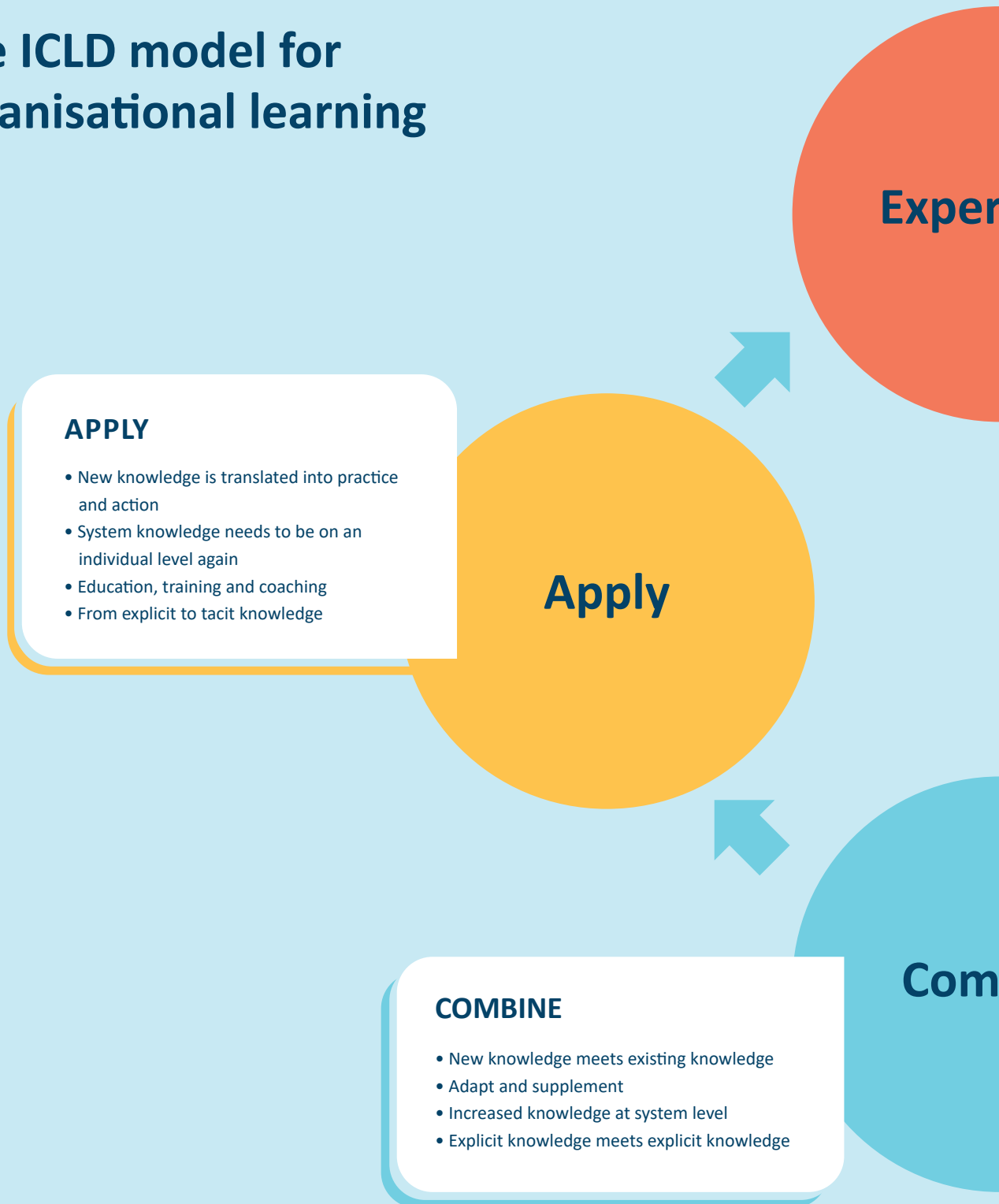
Organisational learning and organisational change are fundamental to ICLD in order to achieve stronger local democracy. Learning at an organisational level is key for participants in our programmes to be able to effect sustainable change that contributes to results on a societal level.

By using an organisational learning model, we can better understand the differences between learning at the individual and organisational levels. This handbook sets out the ICLD model for organisational learning and change.

We hope the model is simple and easy to understand and will support change work in municipalities and regions. The model is based on a theoretical model called the SECI model<sup>1</sup>. In adapting the theoretical model to how partnership projects and ITP training courses work today, municipalities from Sweden and countries on the African continent along with ICLD employees have contributed their experience and knowledge of the conditions needed to create organisational learning and change in practice. Along with the SECI model, these have been incorporated into the ICLD organisational learning and change model. The model should be treated as support and inspiration, with each municipality and region adapting work based on their local conditions, structures and challenges.

<sup>1</sup> The SECI model was originally designed by two researchers, Ikujiro Nonaka and Hirotaka Takeuchi. **The Knowledge-Creating Company: How Japanese Companies Create the Dynamics of Innovation.** Oxford University Press, 1995

# The ICLD model for organisational learning



## EXPERIENCE

- Takes place on site, field studies, side by side
- Observe others, do things together, participate
- Be inspired
- Tacit knowledge

## SHARE

- Reflect and express, formulate the new knowledge
- Concretise knowledge
- Spread the knowledge
- From tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge

Share

### To be able to apply this model you need to reflect on:

- A: Approach
- B: Supporting structures
- C: Tools and methods

This is described in more detail in the following pages.

## Detailed description of the different steps and the conditions required

### 1 Experience

An individual may be inspired to develop new ways of working or similar through observing other people who are good at what they do. The knowledge transferred is known as ***tacit knowledge*** and becomes part of personal and context-specific individual knowledge. This tacit knowledge can be described as a type of craftsmanship and at this stage is difficult to manage and transfer; it is not described in words or pictures and it is not possible for the knowledge to benefit others without personally demonstrating it to each person who should learn from it. Issues of trust, confidence and power play a significant role at this stage, as well as having enough time to observe and reflect. It could be that knowledge transfer is not best suited to a conference room but out in the field, on site where work is being done, during a walk or over a coffee break.

### 2 Share

Enabling, or at least facilitating, the transfer to organisational knowledge requires a step where individual knowledge is transformed into a concrete form. New ideas must be articulated and conceptualised into text or images, such as a new policy, updated guidelines or a handbook. At this stage, which in the original model is called ***externalisation***, the knowledge becomes much easier to use as a piece of the puzzle in one's own organisation and in this new state is known as explicit knowledge. The new guidelines can, for example, be sent to several people who can understand the knowledge without major problems as long as commonly accepted language and familiar concepts are used.

### 3 Combine

The new knowledge created, such as new working methods or procedures, will not exist in a vacuum. An organisation often already has a number of strategies, policies and other governing documents, manuals and checklists. The new knowledge generated through previous steps in the process must be adapted to complement the existing knowledge and step three in the model is therefore called ***combine***. It describes how explicit knowledge is linked to other sources of explicit knowledge to create complex and systematic sets of explicit knowledge. When this occurs, knowledge is considered to have increased on a systemic level in the organisation.

### 4 Apply

However, the above steps do not complete the process. The new knowledge must be used in practice. This requires a transfer from the systemic level to the individual level, something that in the original model is called ***internalisation***. It is important that employees not only know that descriptions of working methods and the like exist, but also feel confident in how they are to be used. This may require training or coaching and, not least, the ongoing monitoring of the new working methods.

## How to use

In order to make the model useful in practice, a matrix has been developed in which three unifying concepts have been linked to the model. These are called **approach, supporting structures and tools and methods** for moving forward. Together, the model and the three practical concepts form a matrix that can be used to plan and prepare actions to create good conditions and practices for organisational learning and change.



Photo: ICLD

### Approach

Values, human vision and worldview.

#### Questions we can ask ourselves:

Are we aware of how our own human vision, experiences and perspectives affect working methods and decisions? How can we increase that awareness? To what extent are we as a municipality prepared to open up to influence and allow ourselves to be affected/changed by different perspectives and different experiences? Do we have an inclusive approach that makes space for the rights and needs of different citizens?

### Supporting structures

The prevailing culture and structure in the organization.

#### Questions we can ask ourselves:

Does the leadership culture allow for an inquisitive, exploratory approach that is open to change? Are there meeting forms and structures that provide space for reflection, in-depth study and learning? Where and how do we meet? Is there competence in the organisation to lead reflective meetings and processes that make room for the uncertain, the new and for change to emerge? Does the organisation have a structure for collaboration and cross-border meetings between different levels and sectors? Is it underpinned by a culture and willingness to work together to create something additional and better together?

### Tools and methods

Skills, methods and tools that create action and movement.

#### Questions to ask ourselves:

Do we have the competence in the organisation to lead reflective and learning meetings? Do we have the knowledge and training to use methods and tools to harvest and analyse tacit knowledge and collective experience? Examples of methods and tools could be an individual reflection book to carry with you, a template for daily documentation individually and later in groups, and appropriate premises for meetings. It may also be about communication planning, film and social media.

# Matrix model

Here you can see the ICLD model in its entirety with examples picked for the different steps of how you can think.

<i>Examples of what you can prepare and plan</i>	<b>Approach</b> Values, human vision, worldview	<b>Supporting structures</b> The culture and structure of the organisation	<b>Tools and methods for moving forward</b> Skills, methods, equipment
<b>Experience</b>	<b>Curiosity</b>	Be there, experience, ask,	Different senses, food, have fun!
	<b>Citizen focus</b>	Why do we want change? What are the underlying needs?	Rights-based approach. Use inclusive and co-creative methods to increase participation and broaden perspectives.
	<b>Holistic approach and cooperation</b>	Schedule time for visits and reflective meetings on site and at home.	Make experiences for others visible through video, oral histories and pictures.
<b>Share</b>	<b>Participants in the project have a responsibility to share</b>	Plan how to document, make time to share these experiences at home. Municipal management needs to provide support and a mandate.	Visualise experiences and goals. Appreciative inquiry may be a method here – what if everything were possible?
	<b>Management needs to take responsibility for the change process</b>	Clarity from management about the project's mission and purpose.	A steering group may be appointed, resources allocated.
<b>Combine</b>	<b>Open and inclusive approach</b>	Involve young people, community leaders and general civil society in the change process.	Perform a stakeholder and target group analysis. For whom should this change make a difference? Who can participate and contribute? Invite to co-creative meetings. Use tools such as Open Space, World Café or Learning Village.
	<b>Willingness to work together</b>	Inventorise the available financial, human and material resources by involving a wide range of partners in the change.	Participatory Budget can be used in this phase to involve citizens. Update the communication plan and adapt it to the target group.
<b>Apply</b>	<b>Anchor in everyday-work</b>	Municipal management secures resources for implementation and investments.	Scale the project up step by step. Make good results visible and give "carrots" to those who are active in the change
	<b>Dare to try, dare to fail, dare to ask for help</b>	Maintain and create networks, involve more people in the implementation.	Get a "critical friend". Start with a pilot and let change emerge gradually.

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You can copy this matrix

<i>Examples of what you can prepare and plan</i>	<b>Approach</b> Values, human vision, worldview	<b>Supporting structures</b> The organisation's culture and structures	<b>Tools and methods for moving forward</b> Skills, methods, equipment
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<b>Share</b>			
<b>Combine</b>			
<b>Apply</b>			

## This is what reality could look like

**This is an example that did not actually happen but is pieced together from events that may have happened in a similar way.**

**A= Approach SS= Supporting structures  
TM= Tools and methods**

One area in a municipality experienced increasing concerns about young people getting into trouble, drug use, crime and insecurity among children and adults about going out. Executive management saw the problem.

An idea began to emerge to create a kind of meeting place where different functions, activities, services and meetings could take place under one roof, while at the same time being a place where people could see each other and feel safe in the evenings and weekends when the area was otherwise perceived as dark and unsafe. A premises became available in the square. Time to get started: which partners are needed? And how would citizens feel it was their place? The municipality applied for a municipal partnership to develop and work on this through this form of cooperation.

### Experience

**Curiosity:** The executive management of the municipality expressed a clear willingness to take up this challenge with an exploratory and curious approach. The work would be based on the needs of young people but also the experiences of others, in order to design the meeting place in the best way. Through the partnership, various meeting places were visited to gain inspiration. As there were complex and diverse needs, there was no obvious solution. (A)

Through being part of a partnership where the partner municipality faced similar challenges, various so-called multi-purpose centres were visited. (SS)

Within the framework of the partnership, on-site seminars were arranged where stories from both visitors and people responsible for these centres were listened to. Together, the municipalities reflected and learned lessons. (TM) Ideas began to emerge.

**Citizen focus:** From the very beginning, there was a focus on the citizens. (A) In order to gain a deeper understanding how residents experienced this insecurity and why, the municipality set up a dialogue where both children and adults could share drawings and stories about their experiences of living in the area. In addition, the university was consulted for an analysis of trust between people in the municipality. This turned out to be in decline. (TM)

**Holistic approach and cooperation:** Joint reflection and analysis was now carried out on the different perspectives gathered, such as residents perspectives, project-members own experiences of study visits and the university-report. It was now time to communicate this to the municipal management. But how? (F) It was decided to make a film to both capture and share experiences. PowerPoint presentations were also produced to complement the presentations. (TM)

### Share

**Responsibility to share:** A communication plan was made and, based on this, a meeting was organised to which colleagues, management, Agenda 2030-officers and those who might be responsible for the new centre (meeting place) were invited. At the meeting, ideas were presented and the film from the partner municipality was shown. After the presentation, everyone engaged in dialogue using the World Café method. Together they explored the opportunities and challenges of the ideas presented. Everyone was served coffee and treats inspired by the partner country. Through this, engagement increased and more important perspectives and links to other work could be included. (TM)

### **Management needs to have knowledge and take responsibility for change processes:**

As this was a burning issue in the municipality, with concerns about young people, increasing visible drug trafficking and other crime, senior management were clear in their commitment to the issue of creating this meeting place. (A) An application was made for funding from a central fund for social initiatives, which also made the issue known to the municipal board. (TM) Local councillors visited the site on a Friday evening and senior managers attended the meeting, which was organised to share experiences and lessons learned. This contributed to a strong collective focus and a high level of commitment among all present. (SS)

#### **Combine**

### **Open and inclusive approach and working methods**

The next step was to go out and meet the residents with questions about what they would like to do and what services they would like to have if a multi-purpose centre opened. They did this on a few Saturdays in the spring when they also set up barbecues and offered grilled sausages and festivities. In this way, they had more informal conversations and also created relationships with people. (TM)

They were also invited to a Learning Village with local associations, other stakeholders and committed residents who wanted to be involved in contributing to and creating this new centre. For one weekend, people gathered, ate together, shared experiences, developed ideas and started making action plans. The overall result of the weekend's work was that contacts were made, relationships began to develop and strengthen and a real will to create something together (TM).

### **Willingness to work together**

Through Learning Village, it became clear that there was a lot of ongoing work and involvement that could be linked to the municipality's wish for a multi-purpose centre. Some residents had started a re-create

workshop in a basement premises, while the municipality's business organisation had started a small business advisory service on another premises.

These and other ongoing activities could be merged and help each other with rent and staffing. (SS) A number of municipal units began to plan to leave their own premises and move into the new joint centre. Pooling resources became a way to create the conditions for the long-term sustainability of the centre. Everyone saw opportunities, but there were also difficulties in terms of putting the ideas into practice and bringing different operational perspectives together, as well as including civil society in the work. (TM) It was now time to enter the next communications stage and announce that the multi-purpose centre would become a reality. (TM)

#### **Apply**

### **Anchor in everyday-work**

Now that all the ideas and stakeholders had been tried, do we really want to? Are we ready to let go of what we have to be part of a merged and co-creative activity? (A) The earlier application for development funding was granted at a good time to start implementing some of the ideas that had emerged. It made this phase, which is also a difficult phase, easier. (SS) The heads of the various businesses decided to leave their own premises and move in together. Employees had had the chance to go on study visits, train in co-creative working methods and this was seen as stimulating. (TM)

### **Dare to try, dare to fail, dare to ask for help**

Throughout this process, the municipal partnership continued and the project had regular times to reflect together, both on-site and off-site. This provided the project manager with opportunities for reflection and critical perspective. (SS) The partner colleagues asked questions, challenged and were supportive throughout the journey. (TM)

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