

# The Constellation

*connecting local responses around the world*



## Final report SALT practical training for local residents

Stories about CONNECTION and CHANGE on IJburg and Zeeburgereiland

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## Summary with the most important outcomes

Following recruitment meetings in late 2019, the SALT field training began with 8 local residents on Saturday, February 29, 2020. This report explains what preceded this SALT field training, last year's process on the basis of the Community Life Competence Process, personal lessons from the participants and key plans and lessons from the learning festival.

Due to the COVID-19 lockdown, the practical training unexpectedly became an online training. There were a few moments before and after the lockdown when physical get-togethers were possible. Last year's experiences led connecting conversations among participants, personal insights, the discovering their own talents and connecting activities in the neighbourhood. The year was a journey of discovery, also for the facilitators/trainers of the training. The learning festival, for example, was organized online for the first time.

Page 12 shows the future plans of the participants. Also watch the retrospective film of the SALT practical training 2020 for an impression and an overview of the participants' personal lessons:

<https://youtu.be/5JhrbiLsnO8>

## 1. What happened before?

In early 2018, on Zeeburgereiland, with the project 'Common Ground', a start was made with the SALT-CLCP approach of The Constellation (hereafter called 'SALT').

Four volunteers (from IJburg and Zeeburgereiland) attended a SALT practical training. Afterwards, a number of neighbourhood projects were facilitated, among others 'Get to know your neighbours', ZeeburgConnect and Women's Café.

At the end of 2019, the district team of Amsterdam Oost (IJburg/Zeeburgereiland) gave the mission to The Constellation (NGO) to work in collaboration with the connectors of Zeeburgereiland and SALT facilitators to deliver a practice-based SALT training to local residents. A number of residents from informal neighbourhood networks in Zeeburgereiland and IJburg had already shown some interest in such a training. In order to make this powerful methodology available to a wider group of people, a number of training courses were available, information and introductory meetings were held, including in the community room on Zeeburgereiland and the "world living room" of [the co-housing facility] SET in IJburg. In collaboration with De Alliantie housing corporation, flyers have been put up in the porches of their housing complexes on Zeeburgereiland and local parties such as Dynamo and Vreedzaam Oost were informed of the training opportunity for local residents.



## 2. The training and COVID-19

On Saturday, February 29, 2020, the SALT practical training began with an introduction day. In the morning, in the world room SET on IJburg and, in the afternoon, in the community room on Zeeburgereiland, participants were told the year program and several participatory exercises were done, including "What makes us human? An exercise in which the participants concluded that the greatest common denominator was 'being human'. Besides presentations of the current SALT projects, the participants started their journey to discover their own strengths and which talents they want to use as connectors for their neighbourhood. They each chose a power animal from a deck of cards and so began the collaborative and personal journey of discovery.



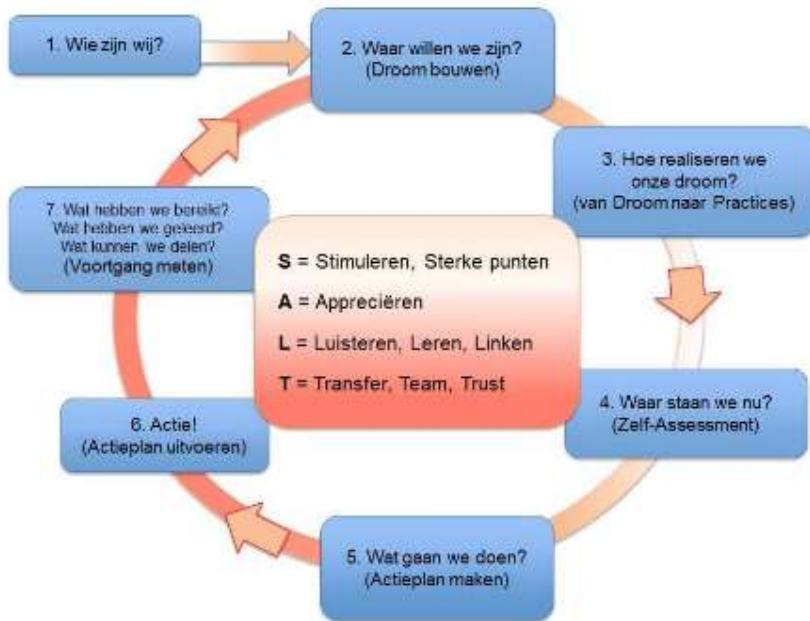
When COVID-19 was introduced to the world theatre, the first lockdown also became a fact in the Netherlands. Physical gathering was no longer allowed. Relatively quickly the facilitators and participants came together online, initially for meaning making about the new reality. Soon the need arose for weekly online sessions, so that contact with each other would not be lost and new plans could be forged. This is how the training took an unexpected turn.



The original schedule for the SALT practical training was to meet 8 times during a year. This became 14 meetings, 3 of which were physical and 11 online. In addition, approximately 12 online coaching sessions were held in subgroups and 3 SALT visits were conducted, 2 online and 1 physical. Of the 9 participants who applied, 8 started and 7 were able to complete the training. On Saturday, November 21, 2020, the training concluded with an online learning festival, about which more below. Yet first, what is SALT and Community Life Competence Process?

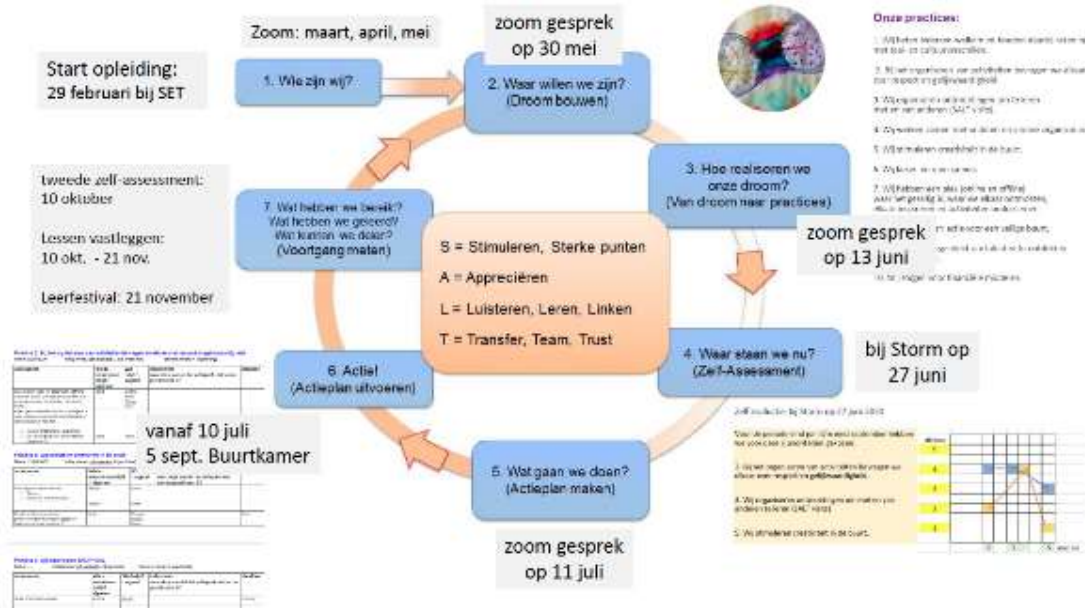
### 3. The group process - CLCP

SALT is a way of relating to each other that focuses on our equality as human beings. It is a way of thinking and working that strengthens confidence in one's own abilities and the group and encourages self-direction.



The Community Life Competence Process (CLCP)  
 Learning and action cycle for community building  
 The Community Life Competence Process describes the different phases that a group goes through as it becomes stronger in shaping its own future.

The Community Life Competence Process translated into this group:



### 3.1. Who are we?

The group of community residents get to know each other better during the year through appreciative conversations, exercises in the group and SALT visits (see Appendix 2, page 16). SALT visits are appreciative learning visits, where the visiting party and the visited party learn from each other.

### 3.2. Building the dream

During an online SALT session on May 30, 2020, participants will learn how step 2 of the Community Life Competence Process is facilitated: 'The Dream'. By self-formulating a dream, participants understand why developing a shared dream is so important. This ensures that the common interest is strengthened and joint steps towards 'action' can be taken.

The group dream, drawn by one of the participants:

The shared dream as connectors for the neighbourhood in 2025: "Creating a place for connection, where people can develop, where they can come together, do things together and make art."

### 3.3. From dream to practices

On June 27, 2020, the next step was taken at the Bij Storm café on Zeeburgereiland, namely the formulation of practices, so that from now on the dream can be translated into actions. The group identified practices 2, 3 and 5 as priorities for the coming time.

#### Onze droom als verbinders voor onze buurt in 2025



#### Onze practices:

1. Wij heten iedereen welkom en houden daarbij rekening met taal- en cultuurverschillen.
2. Bij het organiseren van activiteiten bevragen we elkaar over respect en gelijkwaardigheid.
3. Wij organiseren ontmoetingen om te leren met en van anderen (SALT visits).
4. Wij werken samen met anderen en andere organisaties.
5. Wij stimuleren creativiteit in de buurt.
6. Wij koken en eten samen.
7. Wij hebben een plek (online en offline) waar het gezellig is, waar we elkaar ontmoeten, elkaar inspireren en activiteiten ondernemen.
8. Wij ondernemen actie voor een veilige buurt.
9. Wij bieden gelegenheid om talenten te ontdekken en te ontwikkelen.
10. Wij zorgen voor financiële middelen.

### 3.4. Self-assessment

For each (priority) practice that the group has chosen, they determine based on 5 levels at which level they are at the moment and where they want to be in 3 months in three months:

Practices 2: When organizing activities, we question each other about respect and equality.  
Current level: 2 | Desired level: 4

Practice 3: We organise meetings to learn with and from others (SALT visits).  
Current level: 4 | Desired level: 4

Practice 5: We stimulate creativity in the neighbourhood.  
Current level: 1 | Desired level: 3

### 3.5. Action plan

For each practice, the group makes an action plan and decides together who is responsible for who is responsible for what task.

#### Practice 5: Wij stimuleren creativiteit in de buurt.

Datum 11 juli 2020

Huidig niveau zelf-evaluatie: 1 (goed idee)

Gewenst niveau: 3 (minstens 1x doen)

Actiepunten	Wie is verantwoordelijk? - eigenaar	Wie helpt? - support	Indicatoren: waar zie je aan als het actiepunt met succes gerealiseerd is?	Deadline
Vrouwenkoor Iofen werven: 1. Flyeren 2. Mond tot mond reclame	Ghalia	Rama		
	Ghalia	Rama		
Creatieve bijeenkomst over gelijkwaardigheid (mogelijk zelfde als bijeenkomst onder practice 2)	Ieske	Simona Oldoerz Rama		sept

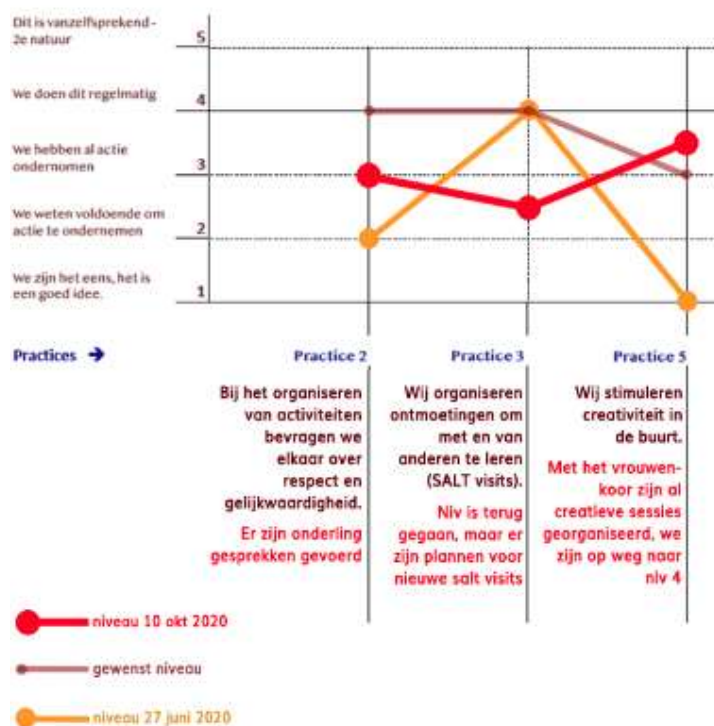
### 3.6. Action!

The implementation phase fell during the summer period. Appreciative conversations were held in smaller groups, this allowed the participants to develop a strong bond with each other. One participant mentioned that because of COVID-19, deeper conversations were had with each other, even online where connecting normally seems more difficult. For the new International Women's Choir, flyers were made and distributed to recruit members.

### 3.7. Measuring progress.

On October 10, 2020, the second self-assessment was done (see in the diagram below). The group concluded that they moved up a few levels in practice 2 and 5 (from orange line to red line) and practice 3 dropped 1.5 levels because they did not conduct SALT visits during the vacation period.

Levels ↓



## 4. SALT and Personal Developments

The participants discovered the power of SALT focused work (Stimulate, Appreciate, Listen and Team/Trust). In joint discussions they learned to really listen, summarize and ask questions. In this way they understood that conversation is not only a powerful tool in community building, but that it can also be used at work or with family and friends. One participant reported that his connection with himself and family has improved since he started using these tools.



During one of the sessions, a deeper conversation started about equality and privilege. 'As human beings, we sometimes take our privileges for granted and we don't always realize it.' Participants came to understand that despite the best of intentions, you can still have a coloured worldview. These conversations influenced some of the plans for the future.

Below are some quotes from participants in response to the question of what their pearls (lessons learned/insights) are:

'The SALT sessions have taught us to listen to each other better and to keep asking questions.'

'Having conversations about equality has allowed us to make real connections with each other. We have become friends.'

'We learned that you can do much more than you think and that you can make dreams come true. Things sometimes go differently than you had in your mind beforehand. At the same time, it doesn't have to be that complicated.'

'I am now better able, with friends from different backgrounds, to have conversations about cultural differences'

Through corona we have been able to connect with each other better'

'Expressing appreciations openly is very beautiful and adds value to the moment, to the other person and to yourself.'

'Sometimes you doubt yourself, then when you hear others say, "You can do it," I start thinking, "I can do it."'

'I hope to inspire other women through social music projects, so they feel more at home and follow their dreams.'

'I like having responsibility. To not only do something for myself, but also to do something for another person.'

'By expressing appreciations in conversations, we can better see the common denominator between us.'

## 5. The plans for connecting activities in the neighbourhood

Several plans have been formulated within the group by the participants. Some plans are already in the implementation phase, others will be started in the coming year.

The group of women from the Women's Café has already organized two high tea the mom afternoons (corona proof at 1.5 meters distance and just before the second lockdown) at Nautilus on Zeeburgereiland. In small groups they got to know new women from the neighbourhood during these meetings. A workshop was given, with a different theme each time, such as: "How to develop a positive lifestyle".

An International Women's Choir was formed, with women from the neighbourhood who will perform female hero stories in a future music performance in the neighbourhood. There are also plans for more SALT visits, a creative writing course and a gathering in the style of 1001 nights.

Another participant from Zeeburgereiland wants to develop a course 'animation film making' for children in the neighbourhood.

A mixed group from Zeeburgereiland and IJburg wants to organize light-hearted meetings on IJburg at the world living room SET and the FlexBieb about equality. They want to organize movie nights and facilitate conversations to build bridges between different cultures.

### Onze plannen voor Zeeburgereiland & IJburg



#### Vrouwencafé:

- High tea themamiddagen
- Internationaal Vrouwenkoor
- Salt visits
- Cursus creatief schrijven
- 1001 nacht feest

#### Cursus voor kinderen om animatiefilmpjes te maken

#### SET op IJburg:

- bruggen bouwen tussen verschillende culturen door cinema, samen eten, etc.
- gesprekken over gelijkwaardigheid

#### Filmavonden in de Flexbieb

## 6. The learning festival

During the online learning festival on November 21, 2020, participants shared their collective process and their personal learning journey with the invitees of the festival. Oed player Alsharaa provided a musical interlude. Among the invited guests were: municipality contact



agent Jeroen van Dalen, Marcelle Miles of Warm Welcome Foundation and other neighbours of Zeeburgereiland and IJburg.

The guests of the festival noticed the interconnectedness through the presentations of the participants and one invitee said, "If you can manage this interconnectedness online, you will surely succeed in real life!"

Finally, within the collective learning journey, two key topics were harvested:

- Working together and organizing community activities based on equality.
- Believing in someone's (your own) power to make dreams come true.

Together with the invited guests, participants went into two groups to discuss and they formulated these 5 tips for other neighbourhoods that want to work on more connectedness.

Tip #1:

Music is a tool to connect, even if you don't speak the same language, it connects directly to the heart. Look for ways and experiences to connect with people "without" the use of language.

Tip #2:

Instead of approaching someone from a label or a target audience, approach someone from his or her strengths. This is a more humane way of connecting and encourages equality.

Tip #3:

"Agree to disagree with each other. We are often tempted to convince each other convince each other of our own rightness or our own beliefs. There is a chance that the other person no longer listens sincerely to what you have to say. That is a waste of the quality of the conversation, but also of the relationship.

Tip #4:

Start by offering a listening ear and giving each other space. By offering a listening ear, you put the other person in their power. This gives the other person the space to take the first step and take initiative.

Tip #5:

Discovering and sharing your own strength provides motivation and inspiration for others to do the same.



## Appendix 1 - Participants, trainers, and documentation

SALT practical training participants:

- Simona Monizza
- Ghalia Jando
- Zohra ben Yerrou
- Mirjam Bensid
- Guus van der Meijden
- Jeske Rutgers
- Oldoez Moradi
- Rama Sultan

The trainers:

- Marlou de Rouw
- Birgitta Schomaker
- Yezeed Said

Documentation and rapportage:

- iSiZ

### Annex 2 - SALT Visits

In small groups, the participants of the SALT practical training organized three SALT visits to learn from local communities. During online SALT sessions shared what was learned with the other participants of the SALT practical training.

Two of the SALT visits took place online (via video calls) during the first COVID-19 lockdown:

- Warm Welcome North in Amsterdam North
- De Wereldkeuken in Haarlem

One visit was a site visit, after the first COVID-19 lockdown:

- The VerbroederIJ in Amsterdam Noord