

Effective leadership with structure, method and respect

Facilitated by Philip Springuel, former President of ESAE, Executive Director of the World Lottery Association

International organizations (of all sorts) often operate under circumstances that fundamentally challenge their internal management structures, such as a diverse and multi-cultural work environment, the challenge to engage volunteers, maintaining some degree of hierarchy while keeping flat structures, dealing with ineffective board members. Philip asked the participants to reflect on those issues on the basis of their personal experiences in such organizations.

In the first part of his workshop Philip offered a toolbox for abstract thinking by briefly outlining some relevant management theories, what is the basis of power, what is the purpose of management structures and how do those relate to attitudes, motivation and interpersonal culture.

In the second part, participants were asked to think about the most pressing management issue in their own organization. Having voiced those challenges, participants gathered in small groups to discuss these issues among themselves, guided by Philip's initial remarks and with his supervision.

Instead of bombarding participants with 'best management practice', Philips wanted the participants to learn from each other and to jointly elaborate solutions to management challenges that are shared by many international organizations. It became clear that participants from a variety of sectors and in a variety of sizes and cultural contexts agree on many practical strategies. For example, even when the nature of the organization makes it challenging, there is need of some degree of formalized structure, such as labour division, job descriptions, reporting and benchmarking schemes. However, respectful communication is crucial, and staff, board members and involved volunteers should have a stake in creating any structures adopted.

The primary message of the workshop was that reliance on a few basic principles will help one successfully carry out a managerial role, even if one has unintentionally slipped into that role rather than having chosen to take on such a leadership role.