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Kafka Brigade 'Manual' – RCT

Although every Kafka Brigade project is unique, some guidance, tools and principles are helpful for every project. In this document we provide an outline of these tools by presenting:

- a. the principles of the Kafka Brigade Method
- b. the six step approach
- c. the criteria for selecting a case
- d. a suggested time schedule
- e. the support available for the Kafka Project in RCT.

A. KAFKA METHOD PRINCIPLES

- Putting the citizen front and centre while involving all stakeholders
- Rules are necessary, but may be implemented much better
- Creating a safe environment: public servants are part of the solution
- No action without reflection, no reflection without action

B. SIX STEP APPROACH

The mission of the Kafka Brigade is to diagnose and remedy broken bureaucratic processes. We take on this challenge following a six-step approach.

Step 1: Explorative research & case selection

The Brigade begins by conducting an initial appraisal of the problematic situation. How frequently does the problem occur? Who experiences the problem? Is anyone already working to address the situation? If so, what resources do they have at their disposal? Which parties are responsible for the issue, whether directly or indirectly? These and other exploratory questions are asked in order to define precisely the causes, characteristics and gravity of the problem.

Once the problem is defined, we search for an individual case (a citizen's personal experience) which can be studied in depth to understand how the system failed for them – and what might be done to fix it. The criteria for selecting each case are set out under section C – crucially, the case must be representative of the broader problem so that maximum value can be derived from the lessons learned. The explorative research report is starting point for searching.

Products

- Explorative research report
- Suitable, representative, case



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Data analysis and case selection meeting

At this stage in the project Irwin Turbitt - Kafka Brigade senior researcher - will meet the core project team and the reference group to finalize the data analysis and select one or more representative cases.

First site visit Kafka Brigade coach

Two weeks later (approximately), after the board meeting, one of the Kafka Brigade Coaches will meet the core project team to prepare the citizen and professional interviews (step 2 and 3) and do some interviews together.

Step 2: Case research & preliminary reports

A second, more detailed investigation is then performed focusing on one or more individual cases. This stage of research involves interviews with the citizen(s) in question, and detailed analysis of how their 'case' was handled.

Two preliminary reports are prepared. The first report is a narrative description of the citizen's experience, sometimes accompanied by a short movie-interview. This is deliberately subjective – telling the story from their perspective. The second report is a factual, step-by-step description of the processes that were applied. This process is visualised graphically in a flow chart.

Products

- Narrative report (examples will be provided)
- Process Map (examples will be provided)

Step 3: Expert critique of the preliminary analysis

In step 3, the Brigade's initial findings and analysis (i.e. the two preliminary reports) are carefully reviewed with front line staff, policy makers and other experts. By subjecting these findings to critical scrutiny, the Kafka Brigade gains additional insight into the problem and confirms whether the initial analysis is on track.

Products

- Expert critique document: including brief reports of the professional interviews (approximately half page each)

Second site visit Kafka Brigade coach

At this stage in the project one of the Kafka Brigade Coaches will meet the core project team to work on the preparation of the collective performance review.

Step 4: Collective performance review (CPR)

In step 4, it's time to bring everyone with a stake in solving the problem together. A special meeting is designed – bringing together the individual citizen(s) whose cases are the subject of the study with the relevant front line staff, managers, policy professionals and other concerned parties.

The meeting is carefully planned and moderated to ensure that all participants remain engaged, focused and committed to solving the problem. Not by talking about grand (re)designs or simply pointing fingers or blaming the system, but by



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formulating small first steps. The three desired outcomes of this meeting are, respectively, to (i) arrive at a shared definition of the problem, (ii) identify and explore possible solutions, and (iii) agree on an initial set of corrective actions to take which will lay the foundation for a broader, more systemic remedy. Commitment from all parties to carry out the first set of corrective measures is necessary to move the process forward and build support and momentum for subsequent reforms.

Products

- Half day session with all the people at stake.
- Action plan: the Kafka Brigade presents its final recommendations in the form of a concise, high impact action plan. This includes a (short!) practical list of actions for all participants in the project: mentioned during the CPR or recommended by the core team. The recommended actions are designed to address structural weaknesses in the organisation, not just remedy the original problem which sparked the investigation.

Step 5: Action

Stakeholders come into action to work on the corrective actions they committed themselves to during the CPR. Next to this the project team discusses the recommended actions with stakeholders and ask them to come in action on these issues.

Products

- Set of implemented practical solutions: first steps to the broader, more systemic solution.

Step 6: Follow up review

Three to six months after the submission of each final report, the Kafka Brigade will help the three area teams to revisit the organisations involved to assess the extent to which the recommendations have been implemented - and their overall effectiveness. Has the service improved? If not, why are problems continuing to occur? Which recommended actions have been put into effect? Which others still need to be implemented? Have other unanticipated problems arisen? How do the front line staff and managers feel about the changes that have been made? What's working well that needs to be reinforced? What's still not working that needs to be fixed? The proof of the pudding is in the eating!

Third site visit Kafka Brigade coach

At this stage in the project one of the Kafka Brigade Coaches and the core team will meet the 'authorizing environment' to discuss the achievements concerning the corrective actions so far. We'll ask them for support on actions that haven't been implemented yet.



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C. THE CRITERIA FOR SELECTING A CASE

What is a Kafka Brigade case?

In short a Kafka Brigade case is the experience of a citizen, who is tangled in a web of dysfunctional rules, regulations and procedures – in essence, who has been failed by the system.

Because we want to draw out improvements for citizens with similar experiences, it is important to select a case which meets the following criteria:

- The case shares characteristics with an identifiable larger class of citizens
- Their problem situation is obvious and recognizable
- It is a complex problem: more than one organisation (or department) is involved
- No single organisation is fully responsible for the problem
- Your own organisation may be helpful in creating a solution.
- It's not a conflict situation (legally or political)

How to find potential cases?

- Think of problem situations in your own (work) environment
- Ask your colleagues and organisations or stakeholders in your network
- Check complaints logs and ombudsman information
- Check the media
- Use less conventional, informal channels

When you find potential cases, please try to answer the following questions:

1. What seems to be the problem?
2. Who experiences the problem?
3. Do many people have the same problem? Which organisations are involved?
4. Is anyone already addressing the situation? If so, what resources do they have at their disposal?
5. Which parties are primarily responsible for the issue, whether directly or indirectly?

D. SUGGESTED TIME TABLE

The Kafka Brigade project in RCT has three different stages:

Stage 1: introduction meeting on the 23st October 2008, the Kick off meeting in the week beginning with 10 November.

Stage 2: Research project. The collective performance review meeting will ideally be organized in February 2009.

Stage 3: plenary reflection session. The reflection session will take place after step four of the Kafka-method (Collective performance review). We'll evaluate thoroughly the research method and the results with all participants. We'll also look



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at the usability of the method in the context of Wales' public services, plus follow-up opportunities.

Stage 4: Check back meetings. A 'follow up review' three to six months after the Collective is included in the Kafka Brigade approach. However we will come back for two extra check back meetings. During those check back meetings we reflect on the last couple of months and discuss what is needed to proceed in the next months. The check back meetings will be scheduled in the third and fourth quarter 2009.

The timetable below indicates the proposed phasing of the projects, and the time available from the Kafka Brigade and the Welsh Assembly Government coordinators. There is of course some flexibility.

Stage 1		Stage 2				Stage 3	Continue 2		Stage 4
Introduction class	Kick off meeting	Step 1 Explorative research	Step 2 Case research	Step 3 Expert critique	Step 4 Collective performance review	Reflection session	Step 5 Action	Step 6 Follow Up review	Check back meetings
Week 43	Week 46	Week 47 start	Week 49 start	Week 50 start	Early February 2009	TBC, depends on CPR	TBC, depends on CPR	2 nd quarter 2009	3th and 4 th quarter 2009

NB: we suggest that the preparation for the collective performance reviews starts just before the holidays or immediately after. It is our experience that convincing people of joining the collective performance review will take some time.

E. SUPPORT AVAILABLE

Kafka Brigade researchers will be available to participate in every step of the process. The Kafka Brigade guarantees *training on the job*, through a mix of remote and on-site support:

- At least every week we'll be in touch to follow the individual progress per pilot and provide coaching.
- We will also arrange conference calls for collective consultation and coaching. Coaching here is the transfer of *tacit* knowledge and skill building by working side by side on case work.
- Three visits will be arranged for the project, before the collective performance review: after step 1 (to finalize data analysis/case selection and to prepare the citizen and professional interviews) and after step 3 (to prepare the CPR).
- The fourth site visit by the Kafka Brigade will be for the collective performance reviews. Irwin Turbitt is available for moderating this meeting.

As well as the core Kafka Brigade, the project has a Welsh Assembly Government coordinator, Charlotte Maidlow.



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Specification Kafka Brigade approach

Activities	Senior <i>Kafka</i> researcher	Medior <i>Kafka</i> researcher	WAG <i>Coordinator</i>
Step 1: Explorative research & case selection		2	2
Step 2: Case research	0,5	3	3
Step 3: Expert critique	0,5	2	1,5
Step 4: Collective Performance Review	2	3	4,5
Step 5: Action	1	3	2
Step 6: Follow up review	1	2	2
Total for one pilot (in days)	5	15	15

CONTACT

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