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in Research and Academia

4.2.3. Tools and techniques to use in a co-creation process

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Name of the technique: **Lotus blossom**

Minimum number of participants:	4
Maximum number of participants:	8

What is a lotus blossom?

Lotus blossom is a brainstorming or idea generation technique. There are various techniques to generate and stimulate ideas. Lotus Blossoms are part of the "multiplier" techniques, using the analogy of flowers which are blossoming.

The advantage of the Lotus blossom is its simplicity, versatility (useful for a brainstorm on any subject) and visual impact through the use of a poster.

How to make a good lotus blossom?

One starts by putting the question or problem at the centre of the poster.

Participants are asked to generate ideas to solve the problem, put them on sticky notes, and the sticky notes are positioned around the central problem, in the first row around it.

When 8 ideas have been found, these ideas are copied in the next layer, put in the centre of the sections. Participants will then search for additional ideas starting from each of the 8 initial ideas, using these as inspiration for additional, related ideas.

The ambition is to fill the poster. The figure below shows an example of how the technique is applied.

The rules for 'good' brainstorming apply to the lotus blossom as well: all ideas are good during the exercise, work with small groups (maximum 6 - people are more creative, and have less inhibitions to express themselves), and keep it short. A lotus blossom can take time to fill, but take into account that people will lose energy quite fast. Brainstorming longer than 30 minutes on one single problem is a maximum.

What are lotus blossoms used for?

As mentioned above, Lotus Blossoms are used to generate ideas or to define a problem in more detail.

They can also be used to find ideas around an ambition, an objective or a problem.

When different small groups have each worked on the same subject, it is good to share results in plenary. Groups react to each other, which can generate new ideas or insights.