



PHONE CIRCLE IN VOLUNTARY WORK

Leena Viukari

Definitions

Conference Call / Tele Meeting

- chairman
- business purpose, sharing information
 - integrative communication

Phone Circle

- moderator / facilitator
- scheduled
- exchange of information and experiences, to guide, activate and help
- in voluntary work and in social care
 - integrative and creative communication

Group Call/Family Circle

- no moderator
- unpredicted, informal discussions
- in families, among friends etc.
 - creative communication

Tele chat

- anonymous participants

Phone Circle – “Puhumalla Paras”

- The project began March 2006
- Two groups of six persons with two facilitators have had phone conversations during the summer 2006
- The facilitator called the group about once a week
- Themes for conversations have been agreed earlier
- The duration of one call is about one hour
- There are six new groups since September

The Partners and Funding

- The owner of the project is Finnish Pensioner' Federation (FPF)
- Two partners are Finnish Association of Mental Health (FAMH) and
- TeliaSonera (TS)
- Finland's Slot Machine Association (RAY) is funding the project

The Roles

- **FPF** launched the project by a training week where the facilitators learned to call the group and the groups learned to join the meeting
 - In the second training late summer the group members learned to call their own groups
- **FAMH** is responsible for how to handle the conversations with the group
 - Facilitator's role is very important
- **TS** provided the technological solution (Conference Call Mobile Client – trial version)
 - Facilitator needs this service in a mobile phone
 - Others may use even fixed line phones

How it all began?

- Phone circle as a Catalyst for Social Capital, in Heinola 2003
- The results from Heinola project were very encouraging
- **FPF** heard about the project and wanted to apply the same idea in their work
- We plan to continue the project 2007

The Need For Phone Circle

- The loneliness and experiences about loneliness are increasing among elderly persons
- The work in Finnish Pensioner' Federation is mainly done by volunteers
 - Phone Circle would be a solution to use efficiently narrow human and economic resources
- Finnish Association for Mental Health sees Phone Circle as a possibility to improve their service
 - They receive more calls than they are able to answer
- The test group of pensioners (61 – 75 years) are very excited and are bubbling of ideas where Phone Circle could be used

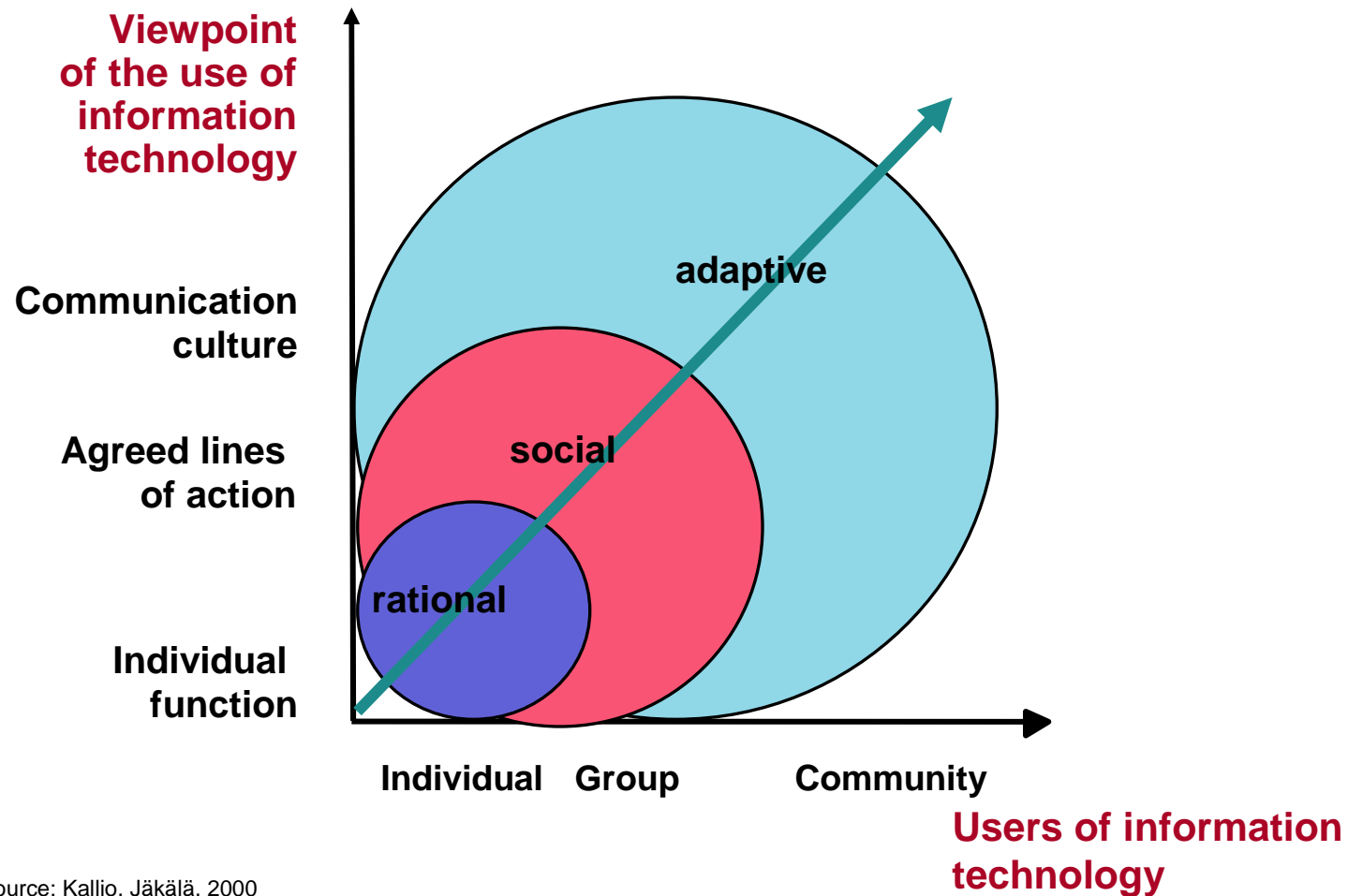
Benefits of the Phone Circle Method

- When we tried to find creative ways to use the technology it was sensible to approach elderly people because phones are familiar tools
- In general ICT for elderly people is thought to be for security and control reasons
 - But it is obvious, that elderly people need tools for their social life, self development and meaningful life, etc.
- There are studies (E.g. M Hyyppä) proving that social capital has a very important impact on person's health and life expectancy
 - The Phone Circle method it is an excellent and cost effective way to increase social capital

Challenges

- The role of the facilitator
- How to root Phone Circle Method as an every day custom?
- How to develop a service that is handy to use?

Transmission of Information Technology



Source: Kallio, Jäkälä, 2000



The Nordic and Baltic
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TeliaSonera